Personalisation of Employment-Oriented Interventions Targeting Immigrant Jobseekers in NAV

Mariya Khoronzhevych

OSLOMET

PhD i Social Sciences with specialization
in Social Work and Social Policy
Faculty of Social Sciences
Oslo Metropolitan University

Spring 2024

Acknowledgment

Finally, I must express my appreciation to my students, who have been a source of inspiration and motivation, propelling me to enhance my knowledge and teaching skills.

Oslo, June 7th, 2024

SUMMARY

The increasing global mobility has made the integration of immigrants into labour markets a key focus in social work research and policy. However, despite Norway's well-established welfare system and employment interventions, it still faces challenges in ensuring favourable employment outcomes for immigrants. Studies show a significant employment rate gap between immigrants and the native-born population, which lessens but persists for up to a decade after their arrival in Norway.

Previous research questioned standardised approaches in employment-oriented follow-up, especially for individuals with complex support needs and those outside the labour market, including immigrants. Simultaneously, there is a growing view that personalised support facilitates better employment outcomes. More recent studies emphasise the need for further investigation into the application of personalisation in employment interventions. Aiming to improve outcomes for the immigrants participating in employment interventions, this dissertation explores the personalisation of employment interventions for immigrants in Norway, particularly within the framework of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

This article-based dissertation addresses the following overarching research questions:

1) How do immigrants experience personalisation of the employment-oriented interventions provided to them by NAV?

2) How do NAV's interventions, intended to be personalised, reflect the principles of personalisation?

The empirical data were collected through a combination of interviews and observations with employment specialists and immigrant jobseekers participating in employment-oriented interventions at one of the NAV offices. These interventions utilised supported employment, a personalised employment-oriented method, for follow-up with immigrants participating in the Introduction Programme and Job Chance. In total, 18 immigrant jobseekers and 4 employment specialists were interviewed. Furthermore, 10 observations were conducted, focusing on the interactions between the employment specialists and immigrant jobseekers during their meetings. Concurrently, the study incorporated a systematic scoping literature review. The data collected formed the basis for the three articles comprising this dissertation.

The first article, titled "Participant Engagement in Supported Employment: A Systematic Scoping Review", presents a systematic scoping literature review aiming to conceptualise

participant engagement in supported employment. It identifies key themes, such as empowerment, self-determination, and collaboration. This article proposes a comprehensive definition of participant engagement in supported employment as 'an active, multifaceted process that involves the empowerment of participants, participants' exercise of self-determined informed choice, and their collaboration with supported employment practitioners (employment specialists) in the working alliance'.

The second article, named "How Congruent is Person-Centred Practice with Labour Activation Policy? Person-Centred Approach to Vocational Interventions on Immigrant Jobseekers in Norway", delves into the congruence between person-centred practice and activation policies within NAV. It uncovers tensions between the policy-driven objectives of employment interventions and the principles of person-centred practice. This reveals the challenges in implementing truly personalised interventions within a policy framework that emphasises intervention efficiency and fast employment outcomes.

The third article, titled "Career Agency of Immigrants Participating in Employment Interventions in Norway" explores the impact of disrupted life courses and experiences of temporality on the career agency of immigrants. Utilising the life-course perspective and the concept of temporality, this article offers a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by immigrants and how these influence their career decisions during the process of integration into the labour market of the country of settlement. The article suggests that immigrants might overlook job opportunities due to family obligations, or opt for low-skilled professions, seeking an exit from temporal liminality. The traumas endured, followed by temporal suspension, prompt the pursuit of vocations that are less mentally taxing.

Based on the findings incorporated in the three articles, the answers to the two broad research questions posed by this dissertation can be summarised as follows:

Immigrants' experience of personalisation within employment-oriented interventions is deficient. Employment specialists often revert to *standardised individualisation* methods, defined as traditional or standardised methods, which previously showed positive outcomes for users within the target group. Additionally, the results indicate the presence of what I refer to as *pseudo-personalisation*, wherein the semblance of personalisation is maintained, yet the fundamentals such as self-determination and empowerment of the user are often lacking. Furthermore, the practice of personalised interventions within NAV is closely connected to professional discretion and coping strategies. This connection can result in attempted

personalisation that ultimately reverts to standardised individualisation, while coping strategies appear to result in pseudo-personalisation.

Positioned within the broader context of social work and social policy research, this dissertation contributes to the research on the personalisation of employment-oriented interventions targeting immigrant job seekers, and offers nuanced insights into their employment-related challenges. While the research is anchored in the Norwegian setting, its findings and conclusions offer perspectives and strategies that could be adapted to countries with similar welfare apparatus targeting labour market integration of immigrants.

SAMMENDRAG

Som følge av økt mobilitet globalt har integrering av innvandrere i arbeidsmarkedet fått stor oppmerksomhet innen sosialarbeidsforskning og politikk. Til tross for et robust og etablert velferdssystem, der arbeidsrettede tiltak inngår, har Norge fremdeles utfordringer med å oppnå positive sysselsettingsresultater for innvandrere. Forskning viser en betydelig forskjell i sysselsetting av innvandrere og den lokale befolkningen. Selv om forskjellen reduseres over tid, vedvarer den opptil et tiår etter ankomst til Norge.

Tidligere studier har vist at standardiserte metoder for arbeidsrettet oppfølging ikke er effektive, særlig for personer som står utenfor arbeidsmarkedet og har komplekse behov. Dette gjelder for eksempel mange innvandrere. Det er økende enighet om at personalisert støtte kan forbedre sysselsettingsresultatene. Nyere forskning understreker at det er viktig å utforske ytterligere bruken av personalisering i arbeidsrettede tiltak. Målet med denne avhandlingen er at man oppnår bedre resultater for innvandrere som deltar i arbeidsrettede tiltak i Norge som tilbys av Arbeids- og velferdsforvaltningen (NAV).

I denne artikkelbaserte avhandlingen diskuteres følgende overordnede forskningsspørsmål:

1) Hvordan erfarer innvandrere personaliseringen av de arbeidsrettede tiltakene som NAV tilbyr dem?
2) På hvilken måte gjenspeiler NAVs tiltak, som er tiltenkt å være personaliserte, de essensielle prinsippene for personalisering?

De empiriske dataene ble innhentet gjennom en kombinasjon av observasjoner og intervjuer med jobbspesialister og innvandrere som deltok i arbeidsrettede tiltak ved et NAV-kontor. Disse tiltakene anvendte 'Supported Employment', en personalisert metode for arbeidsrettet oppfølging, for innvandrere som deltar i Introduksjonsprogrammet og Jobbsjansen. I alt ble 18 innvandrere og 4 jobbspesialister intervjuet. I tillegg ble det utført 10 observasjoner der målet var å studere samspillet mellom jobbspesialistene og innvandrerne i møtene dem imellom. Studien omfatter også en systematisk scoping litteraturgjennomgang. Samlet utgjør disse dataene grunnlaget for de tre artiklene i denne avhandlingen.

Den første artikkelen, "Participant Engagement in Supported Employment: A Systematic Scoping Review ", er en systematisk scoping litteraturgjennomgang. Målet med den er å konseptualisere 'participant engagement' i Supported Employment. I denne artikkelen foreslås en definisjon av 'participant engagement' i Supported Employment som 'en aktiv, mangefasettert prosess som involverer deltakernes empowerment, utøvelse av selvbestemt

informert valg, og deres samarbeid med praktikere i supported employment (jobbspesialister) i arbeidsalliansen'. Med arbeidsalliansen menes det samarbeid mellom bruker og veileder som tar utgangspunkt i et tillitsbasert forhold som er sentralt for å oppnå et mål de er enige om.

I den andre artikkelen, "How Congruent is Person-Centred Practice with Labour Activation Policy? Person-Centred Approach to Vocational Interventions on Immigrant Jobseekers in Norway ", utforskes samsvaret mellom personsentrert praksis og aktiveringspolitikk. Det avdekkes spenninger mellom politikk for arbeidsrettede tiltak og grunnprinsippene i personsentrert praksis. Slik belyses utfordringene ved å iverksette genuint personaliserte tiltak innenfor en politisk ramme der effektivitet og hurtige sysselsettingsresultater er målet.

I den tredje artikkelen, med tittelen "Career Agency of Immigrants Participating in Employment Interventions in Norway ", utforskes hvordan karrierevalgene til innvandrere påvirkes av forstyrrelser i livsløp og oppfatning av tid. Ved å benytte livsløpsperspektivet og begrepet 'temporalitet', nyanseres forståelsen av utfordringene innvandrere står overfor, og hvordan utfordringene påvirker karrierebeslutninger i løpet av integreringsprosessen i arbeidsmarkedet i deres nye hjemland. Det ser ut til at innvandrere kan unnlate å gripe jobbmuligheter på grunn av familiære forpliktelser, eller tendere til å velge mindre kvalifiserte yrker som en vei ut av opplevelsen av 'temporal liminalitet'. Traumer og etterfølgende periode med opplevd temporal suspensjon kan lede til at de søker en jobb med lavere psykisk belastning.

Basert på funnene i de tre artiklene, kan svarene på de to forskningsspørsmålene stilt i denne avhandlingen oppsummeres som følger:

Innvandrernes erfarer at personalisering er mangelfull. Jobbspesialister går ofte tilbake til standardiserte individualiseringsmetoder, definert som tradisjonelle eller standardiserte metoder, som tidligere har vist positive resultater for brukere innen målgruppen. I tillegg indikerer resultatene tilstedeværelse av det jeg kaller pseudo-personalisering, hvor et skinn av personalisering opprettholdes, men de grunnleggende elementene som selvbestemmelse og empowerment av brukeren ofte mangler. Videre er gjennomføringen av personaliserte tiltak i NAV sterkt forbundet med profesjonelt skjønn og mestringsstrategier. Dette samspillet kan føre til et forsøk på personalisering som ofte ender opp som en tilbakevending til standardisert individualisering, mens bruken av mestringsstrategier synes å resultere i pseudo-personalisering.

Innenfor rammen av sosialarbeids- og sosialpolitikkforskning bidrar denne avhandlingen til kunnskapen om tilpasning av arbeidsrettede tiltak for innvandrere. Den gir grundig innsikt i utfordringene innvandrere møter når de skal inn i arbeidsmarkedet. Selv om forskningen er forankret i norsk kontekst, er dette innsikt og konklusjoner som er relevante for arbeidsmarkedsintegrering av innvandrere også i andre land med sammenlignbare velferdssystemer.

Table of Contents

<u>Appendices</u>

<u>Articles</u>
Article 1. Khoronzhevych, M., Maximova-Mentzoni, T., Gubrium, E. and Muller, A. E. (2022). *Participant engagement in supported employment: a systematic scoping review.* Published in: *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*

Article 2. Khoronzhevych, M. & Fadyl, J. (2022). *How congruent is person-centred practice with labour activation policy? Person-centred approach to vocational interventions on immigrant jobseekers in Norway.* Published in: *European Journal of Social Work*

Article 3. Khoronzhevych, M. & Eriksson, R. *Career Agency of Immigrants Participating in Employment Interventions in Norway.* Resubmitted after comments from reviewers to: *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*

1 INTRODUCTION

Driven by the ever-increasing global mobility of individuals (Kuptsch & Sparreboom, 2018), the integration of immigrants into the labour markets of the countries of settlement, facilitating employment outcomes and promoting their self-sufficiency and social inclusion, has become a significant area of social work research and social policy concern (Eugster, 2018; Sainsbury, 2019).

Norway, a country renowned for its well-established welfare system and comprehensive employment-oriented interventions for the unemployed, still faces challenges in achieving favourable employment outcomes for immigrants (Mozetič, 2022a, 2022c; SSB, 2020b; Stein & Fedreheim, 2022; Ugreninov & Turner, 2021). Similar to other OECD countries, immigrants in Norway, particularly those coming from outside the EEA-area, are disproportionately represented in the unemployment statistics (Olsen & Bye, 2022; SSB, 2020a). In 2019, 45% of social assistance benefits receivers were immigrants, a number that has risen (SSB, 2021). Immigrants, especially refugees, are more likely to be employed in part-time and temporary positions that are common in the sectors where they find employment, such as cleaning services or grocery sales (IMDi, 2022c). Even in high-skilled professions such as nursing, immigrants report a prevalence of part-time contracts and lower pay compared to the native population (Dahlen & Dahl, 2015). Studies indicate a significant disparity in employment rates between immigrants, especially those from non-Western countries, and the native-born population, particularly during the initial years of residency. This gap gradually diminishes over time, with the minimum disparity observed only after 10-11 years of residency (Bakker et al., 2017; SSB, 2022).

In its pursuit to enhance employment rates for both the native population and immigrants, and to address long-term unemployment and dependence on social assistance benefits, Norway employs activation strategies. These include both incentives and stricter requirements, aimed at providing more effective assistance and support (Sadeghi & Fekjær, 2019; Sagatun & Smith, 2012). Recently, individually-tailored personalised employment-oriented interventions have come into the spotlight, including the introduction of person-centred supported employment, intended to facilitate better employment outcomes for the target groups, including immigrants (Nøkleby & Hernes, 2017; Sveinsdottir et al., 2020). Simultaneously, previous research has raised concerns about numerous challenges surrounding the practice of personalised interventions (Berg et al., 2021; Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a, 2019b;

Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2019), prompting an examination of the extent to which these interventions truly embody personalisation principles. These considerations, coupled with the persistent challenges pertaining to immigrant employment, have sparked interest and inspired this PhD research project.

I approached this project with first-hand experience as a caseworker in the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), at a time when NAV was actively refining its approach to employment-oriented follow-up. The aim was to make it more personalised and increase the focus on user involvement. Having experienced the demands placed on NAV caseworkers to deliver high employment outcomes within tight timeframes, I could not help but question the possibility of incorporating a personalised aspect with the more time-demanding follow-up methods, such as the much-touted supported employment, into the everyday work routine of a NAV caseworker. Hence, the primary motivation behind selecting the research subject for this PhD research project stems from the inherent tension I encountered as a NAV employee. This tension between the need for efficiency and the goal of personalised support later inspired Article 2 in this project.

On the other hand, being an immigrant myself but also having earlier completed the Master's in Peace and Conflict Studies and being interested in globalisation, I made the decision to focus my research on immigrants, a population group most relevant to my interests. This topic also held personal significance for me because I had first-hand experience of the challenges associated with entering the Norwegian labour market. I had experienced the challenges of a journey one must undertake to land a high-skilled job, similar to that of a caseworker in NAV, including ensuring an income and saving money to apply for my residence permit, first as a self-financed student and then as a jobseeker. This process also involved taking jobs that were not necessarily fulfilling, such as a preschool assistant, while simultaneously investing time and money into the Norwegian language courses to enhance my language proficiency. This experience evoked strong emotional engagement and felt both familiar and meaningful.

1.1 Aim and research questions

With this PhD research project, I aim to contribute to the research on employment of immigrants in Norway by exploring the personalisation of employment-oriented interventions tailored for immigrant jobseekers within the context of NAV.

The study addresses the following overarching research questions:

1) How do immigrants experience personalisation of the employment-oriented interventions provided to them by NAV?

2) How do NAV's interventions, intended to be personalised, reflect the principles of personalisation?

This research aims to contribute to the advancement of personalisation of employment-oriented interventions for immigrants by exploring their experiences within NAV. Through this exploration, this study seeks to generate insights that could enhance the employment outcomes of immigrant jobseekers in Norway. While conducted in Norway, the findings and insights from this research may be relevant to other countries with similar welfare apparatus targeting labour market integration of immigrants, facilitating their self-sufficiency and social inclusion.

1.2 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation comprises three articles and the *Kappe,* which establishes a theoretical framework for the dissertation and provides a connecting background for the three articles. The full versions of the articles can be found in the Attachments of this dissertation. Table 1 provides an overview of the articles, including their aims and primary findings.

The Kappe is structured as follows:

Introduction establishes the rationale for conducting this PhD research, provides insight into the structure of the dissertation and outlines the application of key terminology. **Research Background** addresses activation policies as a backdrop to the employment-oriented interventions implemented by NAV. It also provides a brief historical overview of relevant immigration and integration policies in Norway, the establishment of the Introduction Programme and Job Chance and examines efforts to personalise NAV's employment-oriented interventions. **Theoretical Framework** offers an overview of the theoretical and conceptual foundations underpinning this research. It conceptualises key concepts of the dissertation, including personalisation, immigration, and street-level practice in NAV. **Methodology** elucidates the phenomenological perspective as both an epistemological and an ontological standpoint. It engages with the methods used for data collection and analysis, which are described in detail. Ethical considerations pertaining to the research are also addressed here. Several methodological challenges are reflected upon, including conducting research as an insider. The Chapter ends by considering the validity and transferability of the findings. The **Results** section presents the findings of this dissertation project, as manifested in the three

articles. The section on **Discussion** addresses the research findings and their interpretation in connection with the research questions presented in the Introduction and the broader research field. This chapter also provides suggestions for social work and social policy, offering recommendations for future research in this field. Finally**, the Contribution and Conclusion** section summarises this PhD research project contribution and offers concluding remarks.

Before I proceed to Research Background, I would like to define the key terms of the dissertation to ensure a common understanding.

1.3   Application of terminology in this dissertation

Immigrants: In this dissertation, the definition correlates with those provided by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (IOM, 2019) and is as follows: individuals who migrated from their home countries and settled in other countries for an extended period, usually one year or longer. This definition includes refugees who are classified as forced migrants. The term 'refugees' is used within this research where such specification is important and relevant to the discussion.

Immigration: In this dissertation, immigration is viewed as a complex process wherein individuals seek to establish long-term residency (lasting a year or more) in a new country. This process is often shaped by ongoing transnational ties and the retention of values from their home country, a characteristic increasingly common among modern immigrants (Schiller et al., 1992). With a specific focus on the significance of employment for social inclusion and self-sufficiency in a new country, immigration is also considered as a process involving the revaluation of resources, or capital, that immigrants bring with them to the new country, potentially enabling them to secure and maintain sustainable employment within the local labour market. The concept of immigration is addressed in Chapter 3 of this Kappe.

Personalisation: In this research project, personalisation is a practice of tailoring employment-oriented interventions to specific users. The cornerstones of this approach include a person-centred approach and active involvement by the user in the decision-making process, where the intervention is aligned with the user's unique needs and self-determined goals. This concept is addressed in detail in Chapter 3.

User: There has been an ongoing discussion about the appropriateness of the term client or user in the social work practice and research, changing between client, member, service receiver, participant or jobseeker. Although the point of using this term was that "user" implies being an "active" user, while "client" conveys a passive recipient of benefits, the

discussion is still ongoing as to whether the "user" is an appropriate term and actually implies a voluntary and active service user (Jenssen, 2012a). In this dissertation project, I use the term "user", which is a direct translation of the Norwegian *bruker* and is the current designation for recipients of NAV services. I use **participant** when referring to the NAV users participating in employment-oriented interventions. **Client** is used in direct quotations and discussions related to Carl Rogers' person-centred approach, in accordance with his use of this term.

Employment-oriented interventions: These include strategies, tools, measures and programmes aimed at improving employment outcomes for users and participants, for instance, work trials, the Qualification Programme, Job Chance or supported employment.

Caseworker: In this dissertation, a 'caseworker' corresponds to the Norwegian term *veileder* - an employee who works in the frontlines of NAV and has direct contact with the users (e.g. Øversveen & Forseth, 2018), advises; counsels; informs about the services; and provides the follow-up, including meetings, career mapping and job-hunting support. A caseworker also prepares paperwork to support a user's application for unemployment benefits, including work capacity assessments. Usually, a caseworker may have up to 200 users in her /his portfolio (Statsforvalteren, n.d.), depending on the support needs of the user groups with whom the caseworker is working.

Employment specialist: This refers to a caseworker who provides employment-oriented follow-up according to the supported employment method. Typically, employment specialists are not involved in processing applications for benefits. They have a significantly lower caseload, with up to 20 users assigned to them, allowing them to provide personalised support to each individual (e.g. Bakkeli & Breit, 2022).

Other important specifications:

Participant engagement, is a term used in Article 1 of this research, which is synonymous with **user involvement**.

9

Table 1. Articles in the dissertation

Articles	Aims	Key Findings
Article 1: Participant Engagement in Supported Employment: A Systematic Scoping Review	Conceptualisation of participant engagement in the context of supported employment	Various authors have explored self-determined choice, collaboration/working alliance, and empowerment as three components of participant engagement in supported employment interventions. Participant engagement was defined as 'an active, multifaceted process that involves the empowerment of participants, participants' exercise of self-determined informed choice, and their collaboration with supported employment practitioners (employment specialists) in the working alliance'.
Article 2: How congruent is person-centred practice with labour activation policy? Person-centred approach to vocational interventions on immigrant jobseekers in Norway	Exploration of how person-centred practice in NAV is congruent with the activation context.	The findings highlight employment being an overarching focus in the interventions, while employment specialists often overlooked non-employment problems; employment specialists used strategies to manage outcomes, such as exclusion and 'structured' choice. Employment specialists largely used directive counselling, with a focus on the responsibilities of jobseekers in the process of obtaining employment.
Article 3: Career Agency of Immigrants Participating in Employment Interventions in Norway	Exploration of how immigrants' disrupted life course and experiences of temporality can influence their career agency, defined as making and pursuing choices and decisions related to one's career trajectory.	Immigrants' career agency is influenced by several factors, including the management of family obligations and temporal asynchronies, career history, temporal liminality, and coping with past traumas and temporal suspension. Immigrants might overlook job opportunities due to family obligations, or opt for low-skilled professions, seeking an exit from temporal liminality. The traumas endured, followed by temporal suspension, prompt the pursuit of vocations that are less mentally taxing.

2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I outline the research background of the dissertation. Initially, activation policies are introduced as a backdrop to the employment-oriented interventions implemented by NAV. Subsequently, the challenges of integrating immigrants into the labour markets of their host countries are explored, with a focus on the Norwegian context. This includes a brief historical overview of relevant immigration and integration policies, encompassing the establishment of the Introduction Programme and Job Chance, both of which are programmes designed to facilitate immigrant employment. Finally, the chapter examines the efforts to personalise employment-oriented interventions within NAV, including implementation of supported employment.

2.1 Activation

In the context of escalating unemployment during the 1970s and substantial social assistance expenditures, Western nations focused on *activation* of passive social assistance recipients. The introduction of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) in Europe aimed to stimulate both labour demand and supply, adapting the labour force to meet new market demands (Lødemel & Dahl, 2000; Lødemel & Trickey, 2001). The concept of workfare originated in the US in the 1990s, evoking interest in Europe and leading to the shift from unconditional welfare to conditionality. This shift made an engagement in work-related activities a prerequisite for receiving social assistance benefits, aiming to enhance the efficiency of the welfare state (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001).

Replacing traditional welfare that had previously been perceived as an unconditional guarantee of social citizenship, the concepts of "social exclusion" and "dependency" (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001) were used to justify the adoption of workfare. The main arguments were to reintegrate marginalised individuals, enhance self-sufficiency, and mitigate the adverse effects of unemployment at the individual level. At the societal level, the objective was to bolster the labour supply, promote integration, and reduce financial strain on the welfare state (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001, p. 15). At the same time, workfare's punitive nature, linked to social assistance without providing any additional safety nets, became 'an offer you can't refuse' (Lødemel, 2009). It highlighted the limited options for recipients, raising concerns about the balance between rights and responsibilities (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001). While workfare was focused on securing paid employment, often with minimal financial support, European activation policies encompassed subsidised work programmes

11

and training components, broadening their scope beyond mere economic activity (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001). Therefore, in Europe, the concept of workfare mainly served as a benchmark, highlighting what European activation policies were not, despite adopting the principle of conditionality (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001). These policies incorporated both punitive ("sticks") and supporting ("carrots") components (Moreira & Lødemel, 2014; Rihter, 2024; Sadeghi & Fekjær, 2019).

 The supporting aspect, referred to as "carrots" in the activation framework, is grounded in the intrinsic value of working, when work is seen as a meaningful activity and a means of economic independency, preventing poverty and contributing to better health and social inclusion for marginalised populations (Brodtkorb & Rugkåsa, 2015; Hagaseth, 2019; Kleppe & Glemmestad, 2019; van Berkel & Valkenburg, 2007). Through activation interventions, the state takes responsibility for assisting the unemployed to (re)enter the labour market (Hagaseth, 2019), offering support in the job-searching processes, or (re)qualifications. The controlling aspect – "sticks" – manifests through the potential loss or significant reduction of benefits if participation is refused (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001). Behavioural conditionality, particularly, has become more stringent, controlled by sanctions aiming to urge the unemployed to comply with the demands of the employment agencies and thus, arguably a faster transition into paid employment (van Berkel, 2020; van Berkel & Valkenburg, 2007). It is justified by the financial capabilities of a welfare state, which needs as many of its citizens as possible to contribute to the welfare budget through paid employment (Brodtkorb & Rugkåsa, 2015) while eliminating the "free-riders"(Larsen & Caswell, 2022).

In the activation context, where the link between employment status and welfare benefits has grown increasingly stronger, more researchers are pointing out the dual nature of the welfare system, providing different services for its insiders and outsiders (Römer, 2017). Weak and flexible labour market attachments increase 'social and labour market vulnerability' (Schwander & Häusermann, 2013, p. 250): individuals with strong labour market attachment, including secure and stable jobs, referred to as the insiders, may benefit from various protections by labour laws, and have access to better welfare benefits. On the other hand, those with weak or no labour market attachment, known as the outsiders, may lack access to these benefits and protections afforded to insiders (Häusermann et al., 2015). Insiders are eligible for a full range of supporting ALMP programmes, whereas outsiders are often restricted to workfare-guided strategies (Gubrium et al., 2014; Lødemel, 2001).

In this context, immigrants, lacking connections to the labour market in their country of settlement, are positioned as outsiders subject to strict requirements and sanctions. This highlights a distinct stratification within both the labour market and activation interventions, influenced by their immigration status. In addition, welfare benefits for this population group are frequently limited, not only because they did not have any previous attachment to the local labour market but also in order to deter further immigration (Gubrium et al., 2014; Lødemel, 2001; Römer, 2017).

2.1.1 Activation in Norway and NAV

The Norwegian welfare system is rooted in universality, guided by principles of solidarity and the 'contribution ethic' (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012b, p. 7). The *workline* as a central principle in the Norwegian post-Second World War social policy expected all capable individuals to contribute according to their abilities, with welfare distribution according to individual needs (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012b; Øverbye & Stjernø, 2012). Similar to other European countries, the adoption of the concept of workfare, formalised by the 1991 Social Services Act (Lødemel, 2001), marked a shift in the Norwegian social policy by highlighting work obligations as a condition for social assistance benefits. This shift granted municipal authorities the authority to require employment-oriented activities as a condition for benefit eligibility (Øverbye & Stjernø, 2012; Lødemel, 2001).

In 2001, the NAV reform was initiated, aiming to facilitate users' contact with the "many-doors" of the Norwegian welfare apparatus, aiming to make welfare services more accessible for the users, with a particular focus on those with complex support needs (Knutsson et al., 2017; Lægreid & Rykkja, 2014; Skjefstad et al., 2018). In 2005, municipal social services, social security services and employment agency (AETAT) merged, creating the one-stop-shop NAV (Knutsson et al., 2017; Lægreid & Rykkja, 2014). Its role was to follow-up on both the users of the state- and municipality-provided benefits and services (Knutsson et al., 2017; Skjefstad et al., 2018), while implementing the goal of activation: more people in paid employment and less receiving "passive benefits" (Terum et al., 2012, p. 79). It particularly focused on *work inclusion* of labour market outsiders—such as the long-term unemployed, social support recipients, and those without attachments to the labour market (Frøyland et al., 2018; Glemmestad et al., 2019; Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a; Spjelkavik, 2019).

Having been influenced by neo-liberal policies and performance-monitoring practices under New Public Management (Brodkin, 2011), together with the economic crisis of 2009 (Kratochvíl & Sychra, 2019; Moury & Afonso, 2019), the activation rhetoric in Norway

became more tangible. This shift aimed to increase control over the conditions for receiving unemployment benefits and reduce dependency on the welfare budget (Eurostat, 2018; Kamali & Jönsson, 2018; Skjefstad et al., 2018; van Berkel et al., 2011). In accordance with the dual modus of activation, employment-oriented follow-up in NAV encompasses two somewhat opposing principles: (1) corrective and disciplining and (2) preventive and supportive. The former focuses on quickly moving the unemployed back into the labour market, by shortening the benefit periods or imposing sanctions for non-compliance, such as refusal of job offers. It also requires active job-seeking efforts for benefit eligibility (Brodtkorb & Rugkåsa, 2015; Hagaseth, 2019; Kleppe & Glemmestad, 2019; NAV, 2019a). The latter, in contrast, is geared towards supporting those unable to work through a supportive, dialogue-driven approach (Håvold, 2018) and providing training, information and treatment. This has seen a recent shift towards more user involvement and individualisation, reflecting a trend in the Norwegian welfare system towards a more support-oriented approach (Frøyland et al., 2018; Håvold, 2018; Terum & Jessen, 2015).

Driven by the intention to increase its efficiency and ensure that every user in the country received the same quality of service, NAV aimed to standardise its services. In 2013, it introduced a tool – Standard for the Work-Related Follow-Up of Users (*Standard for arbeidsrettet brukeroppfølging*) (Langeland & Galaasen, 2014). However, recent studies have pointed out that standardisation led to automatisation of routines (Ellingsen et al., 2021), with services becoming tailored, not to individual users but to user categories. This "McDonaldisation of NAV" (Skjefstad et al., 2018) has been criticised for neglecting the principles of social work addressing every single user's needs and providing holistic follow-up (Skjefstad, 2013). Instead, users were categorised and herded to the standard employment-oriented interventions (Skjefstad et al., 2018). As Christensen and Pilling (2014) pointed out, users did not have a right to a specific service or an intervention, but rather had the right to an assessment of their needs. Only after conducting a work capacity assessment (Nor.: *behovsvurdering* and *arbeidsevnevurdering*) and concluding with one of the 'individual support needs' categories – including standard, situation-dependent, specially adjusted and permanently adjusted follow-up – a caseworker makes a decision if the user's support needs make him or her eligible for employment-oriented interventions and which intervention would best suit their needs (Gjersøe, 2016; Glemmestad et al., 2019).

Following research that raised concerns about the lack of individualised support and user involvement in NAV services, NAV aimed to adopt a more user-focused strategy to better

address the unique needs of its users (Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet, 2015). Tailored support was identified as a means of achieving better employment outcomes. Recognising the diversity of the populations receiving support led to the incorporation of tailored support into NAV's service guidelines (e.g. Meld. St. 32 (2020–2021); Meld. St. 33 (2015–2016); NAV, 2019a).

2.2 Labour Market Integration of Immigrants

Over the past two decades, the stream of migration to the OECD states has increased. The preceding Eurozone economic crisis from 2009 to 2013 (Kratochvíl & Sychra, 2019; Moury & Afonso, 2019), together with the armed conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa between 2014 and 2016 (Stockemer et al., 2020), which had been the main sources of humanitarian migration, were followed by Russia's war against Ukraine in 2022. Projections indicate that migration of the working-age population, particularly for economic and humanitarian reasons, will only increase in the near future (Kuptsch & Sparreboom, 2018). These events question the ability of welfare states to effectively accommodate and integrate newcomers. This concern includes not only the earlier prioritised social inclusion of immigrants, but underscores the growing importance of their participation in the labour market and their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency. This has become a focal point within the social policy agenda of host states (Eugster, 2018; Sainsbury, 2019). Attaining employment has been posited as a significant milestone for successful integration, impacting the overall quality of life for immigrants. It facilitates self-sufficiency, enabling independent living without reliance on welfare benefits, while also fostering social inclusion within the host society and facilitating psychosocial adjustment (Abkhezr & McMahon, 2017; Ager & Strang, 2008; de Vroome & van Tubergen, 2010; Sultana, 2022).

Studies in labour market integration of immigrants have approached the challenges faced by immigrants in the labour market from various perspectives. The "deficit approach" (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019) attributes immigrants' struggles to factors such as language barriers and a lack of familiarity with the culture, way of life, traditions, rights, obligations, and values in the country of settlement (Berg & Ask, 2011; Campion, 2018; Früh, 2016; Sultana, 2022). Immigrants' prior experiences and qualifications are frequently deemed irrelevant in the new labour market context. Studies indicate that language and cultural barriers often impede immigrants' ability to navigate and adapt to the new work environment and culture, including the 'norms, shared values, and basic assumptions' (Ali et al., 2015, p. 162) regarding

accountability, commitment, teamwork, and leadership (Ali et al., 2015). Due to the nature of their migration, refugees, who constitute the most vulnerable immigrant group, particularly stand out. Often, they are unprepared for the destination country at the time of departure simply because the final destination might be uncertain (Gericke et al., 2018). Moreover, documentation validating formal qualifications and experiences obtained in the home countries, particularly for those forced into migration, is unavailable (Ager & Strang, 2008; Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019; Dumont, 2016). Additionally, many of them experience a range of health problems resulting from the traumatic experiences associated with forced migration (Ballard-Kang, 2017; Moinolmolki et al., 2020; Potocky, 2016).

The "discrimination approach" (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019) looks at the problem from another angle and highlights that a labour market can intentionally or unintentionally exclude individuals based on their ethnic backgrounds (Leung, 2009). Immigrants globally are often overrepresented in the secondary segment of the labour market, engaging in low-skilled or 3D jobs – 'dirty, dangerous and degrading' (Stalker 2000, 2001 in Lusis & Bauder, 2010), taking the jobs that the native population are unwilling to take due to the jobs being physically challenging, having a low status or both, such as construction work, cleaning, or sanitation work (Erel, 2010; Friberg, 2012; Lusis & Bauder, 2010; Reyneri, 2004; Sultana, 2022). For instance, in Australia, refugees are often offered low-status jobs that are not desired by the locals, such as cleaning or elderly care (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). In Canada, immigrants, particularly racial minorities, receive lower wages and experience slower wage growth (Banerjee et al., 2019). In Italy, immigrants tend to be excluded from the non-manual labour market (Fullin & Reyneri, 2011). In some cases, immigrants are hired solely to fulfil a company's diversity goals, while their qualifications and career growth within the company are secondary concerns (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013)

Being trapped in the "undesired" jobs and experiencing "brain waste" and 'de-skilling' lead to frustration, demotivation and low self-efficacy, which restrain the pursuit of new employment opportunities (Fossland & Aure, 2011; Sultana, 2022; Yakushko, 2006). This is supported by earlier studies (e.g. Judge & Bono, 2001; Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010; Van den Broeck et al., 2008) suggesting that employees who are predominantly driven by extrinsic factors, such as financial incentives, without experiencing internal satisfaction and self-fulfilment, are more prone to job dissatisfaction and face an increased risk of burnout and job loss. Moreover, they are less inclined to engage in proactive job search behaviours, which subsequently heightens their vulnerability to unemployment.

2.2.1 Evolution of Immigration and Integration Policies in Norway

As Brochmann and Hagelund (2012a) point out, immigration to Norway in modern history is a relatively recent phenomenon compared to many other European countries. Traditionally, the migration influx is traced back to the 1960s, when Norway experienced an influx of labour migrants primarily from India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Morocco, followed by subsequent family reunifications. While the male migrants often secured employment easily, they faced other challenges, such as issues in securing independent housing, often tied to employer-specific terms, and a lack of proficiency in Norwegian. These factors could lead to problems such as employer mistreatment, limited job mobility, below-standard living conditions, and potential discrimination. (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a). To address these issues, in 1970, the government initiated the provision of 150 hours of Norwegian language courses specifically designed for labour immigrants. Then, in 1975, the "immigration stop" decision was made to comprehensively assess the needs of immigrants, aiming to better address these needs and prevent their social and economic marginalisation (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a; Stein & Fedreheim, 2022).

The discussion on how to incorporate the newcomers into the Norwegian society included either them adopting Norwegian culture (assimilation), or retaining their own culture and national identity while adapting to the majority society (integration) and participating in the life of the society (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a). This discussion was in parallel with the establishment of immigrant offices throughout Norway. The offering of Norwegian language courses was expanded to include immigrant family members. A primary emphasis was placed on the language skills to enable access to vocational courses. Specialised, vocation-focused language programmes emerged in major urban areas, although their availability varied across municipalities in Norway (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a; Stein & Fedreheim, 2022).

During the 1980s, in Norway, settled labour migrants, particularly women, faced employment challenges and unemployment due to language barriers and limited opportunities. This period also saw rising refugee numbers, increased social benefits for immigrant families, and growing anti-immigrant sentiments, leading to stricter immigration laws and more control-oriented policies (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a). Concurrently, there was a political debate on the necessity of immigrant labour market participation to support the welfare state, emphasising the need for coordinated immigration management (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a; Stein & Fedreheim, 2022). In 1988, the government established the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) to oversee immigration matters, including asylum-seekers,

family reunifications, and citizenship processes, as well as providing information and interpretation services. Norwegian language education was transformed into a level-based system, offering up to 3000 hours of instruction for those with minimal schooling. Attendance was voluntary, but municipalities could require it for social benefit eligibility, although very few enforced this requirement (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a).

As the Norwegian welfare policy pivoted towards activation in the 1990s, the concept of citizenship evolved into a landmark for integration and active participation. Citizenship no longer simply denoted a legal status; rather, it implied a commitment to uphold the values of the host country, including principles such as human rights and gender equality (Djuve et al., 2012; Øverbye & Stjernø, 2012). Active citizenship entailed heightened responsibilities, expecting citizens to be flexible and active in the labour force, wherein gaining language skills and societal knowledge became naturalisation prerequisites (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a). Within this context, the Norwegian immigration policies emphasised integration of immigrants via work and education, seen as participation arenas, and underscored the individual's obligation to participate (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a, p. 184).

A perceived "crisis" in integration emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, intensified by the attacks of 9/11. This crisis questioned the cultural and religious compatibility of non-Western immigrants with the western population (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a; Chami et al., 2021; Levy, 2005). There were calls for stricter immigration- and integration-control measures (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a). Coupled with increasing welfare payments to immigrants, it prompted the exploration of alternative approaches to social benefits that placed a significant emphasis on viewing 'integration and participation as an obligation' (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a, p. 187). In response to these challenges, there was an effort to create integration interventions targeting specifically the inclusion of immigrants, particularly refugees and their families, within the workforce. This approach aligned with other European countries, where integration became a mandatory requirement closely tied to employment and the obligation to contribute (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a). Commencing in 2001, Norway entered the "integration era" (Stein & Fedreheim, 2022, p. 622), focusing on work inclusion of immigrants as the key to integration.

2.2.2 The Introduction Programme and Job Chance

In 2003, the first law within the field of integration, known as the Introductory Act, was passed. It led to the establishment of the **Introduction Programme**, which extended integration as both a right and an obligation for immigrants, with a particular focus on work

inclusion of refugees and their families, facilitating either fast transition to employment or education (IMDi, 2021). Municipalities had the task to ensure the availability and accessibility of the Programme throughout Norway. Participation in the Programme became a condition to receive benefits, which were closely linked to active participation in the full-time Programme and potential benefit reductions or suspension in case of undocumented absence (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a; Øverbye & Stjernø, 2012). The Programme emphasised the importance of integration and adherence to societal values, actively encouraging individuals to 'qualify for participation' (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a, p.193) in the Norwegian society. The programme did not allow for any adjustments for women, such as part-time participation, to ensure their equal inclusion and integration.

Starting in 2005, the Introductory Act obliged immigrants 'to make active efforts' (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a, p. 193) to participate in the life activities of the society and to qualify for a permanent residence permit and citizenship (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a). Participation in the Introduction Programme, lasting up to two years, became the right and an obligation of refugees. Moreover, the labour and family migrants were required to complete a 300-hour course in Norwegian language and social studies in order to be eligible for a permanent residency permit and citizenship. Economic demands and active labour market participation became stringent requirements for family reunification. These changes were argued to signify a shift in the immigration and integration policy towards a more controlling approach (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a; Djuve & Kavli, 2019a).

In 2006, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) was established to oversee immigrant integration in Norway, including the Introduction Programme, marking the state's role in implementing and coordinating integration interventions targeting immigrants (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012a; Stein & Fedreheim, 2022). Within the frames of the Introduction Programme, NAV was responsible for the employment-oriented interventions introducing the Programme participants into the Norwegian labour market (Djuve & Kavli, 2019b). Individually tailored follow-up aims to bridge the local employment opportunities with the immigrants' qualifications by providing the necessary support needed to obtain employment (Fernandes, 2015; Sultana, 2022). Employment-oriented interventions targeting immigrants have mainly used the supply-side approach, aiming to minimise disparities between the foreign or absent qualifications, language proficiency, and skills of immigrants and the requirements of the Norwegian labour market. This approach places a specific

emphasis on (re)qualification and train-then-place methods (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019; NAV, 2021b).

Work trials at Norwegian employers aim to acquaint immigrants with Norwegian work culture, improve their language skills, and help them gain local work experience (Djuve et al., 2012). Research has highlighted that the earlier immigrants receive support to obtain employment, the more likely they are to succeed in the labour market (Kuptsch & Sparreboom, 2018), increasing their chances to reap the benefits of successful integration (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016; Sultana, 2022). Consequently, developments in the Introduction Programme have enabled participants to start employment-oriented interventions in their first year, a shift from the previous approach of introducing these interventions in the final stages (Bjerck et al., 2018; Tronstad, 2019).

Despite the Introduction Programme's objective of achieving a 70% participation rate in the labour force or education within one year of programme completion, the actual rates stood between 61 and 66% during 2020-2022 (SSB, 2020a, 2020b, 2022). As Stein and Fedreheim (2022) point out, even the implementation of the fast placement of the qualified participants at the employers in need of the labour force, known as "fast track" approach (IMDi, 2022b) did not yield improvements, signalling that limited attention has been directed towards addressing the circumstances and challenges faced by immigrants in the integration process. In 2021, the new Integration Act came into effect, imposing stricter requirements on participants in the Introduction Programme, emphasising earlier integration into the labour market, retaining employment or pursuing education (Stein & Fedreheim, 2022).

Another well-established programme provided by municipalities in collaboration with NAV, and gaining more popularity in recent years, is **Job Chance**. It aims to offer a tailored follow-up approach for every participant, with the goal of qualifying them for employment in the Norwegian labour market (Meld. St. 16 (2015–2016)). It includes various activities, such as language courses, on-the-job language training, work trials, and CV-writing workshops (Høgestøl & Kristoffersen, 2022).

While the Introduction Programme primarily catered to newly arrived refugees and their families, there remained a significant number of settled immigrants who had spent years in Norway but still had no or limited attachment to the labour market. To address this issue, IMDi launched the New Chance project in 2005, which was later replaced by the permanent

Job Chance in 2013 (Djuve et al., 2012; Frøyland & Neumann, 2012; IMDi; Meld. St. 1 (2012–2013)).

Originally designed as an intervention targeting specific groups of settled immigrants, such as immigrant women, men, or youth (Lerfaldet et al., 2017; Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a), the Job Chance programme underwent a shift in focus towards settled stay-at home females, argued to be a preventive measure against child poverty, while also promoting equality and social inclusion (Meld. St. 6 (2012-2013)). Eligible women were those who did not have a connection to the labour market, currently receive benefits from NAV or participate in other NAV interventions (IMDi, 2020).[1] It also included those who needed additional employment-oriented follow-up after completing the Introduction Programme (IMDi, 2023; Lerfaldet et al., 2021; Lerfaldet et al., 2017; Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019b). Women participating in the Job Chance programme receive modest financial support, which can be reduced in case of undocumented absence (IMDi, 2023).

While showing good employment outcomes for many of its participants (Lerfaldet et al., 2017; Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019c), studies have also reported the difficulties encountered by Job Chance in adequately meeting the support needs and facilitating employment for participants who are hard to employ due to complex challenges, such as health problems, language skills, or frequent absences (Høgestøl et al., 2019).

2.2.3 Immigrants in the Norwegian labour market: current situation

Both the Introduction Programme and the Job Chance have shown increased employment rates among their participants; however, the sustainability of their employment has been a matter of debate. Particularly, integration into the primary segment of the labour market – that is, permanent full-time jobs with career and salary development opportunities – remains a challenge. Immigrants who have completed the Introduction Programme are often employed in part-time positions, earning significantly lower incomes than their native counterparts (SSB, 2020b). For example, Proba Samfunnsanalyse (2020) interviewed refugees who lived in Norway for longer than 5 years. They found that work trials, as part of the Introduction Programme, often result in temporary jobs that do not lead to permanent employment. The former programme participants reported that they frequently secured temporary, part-time,

---

[1] As of the moment of data collection for this research project. In recent years, receivers of social support benefits also became eligible for participation in the programme. IMDi. (2023). *Jobbsjansen*. https://www.imdi.no/tilskudd/jobbsjansen/

and physically demanding jobs with little opportunity for career or salary growth. These jobs were often characterised by long gaps between employments and limited opportunities to develop language skills, hindering their ability to establish permanent connections within the labour market.

The development of the Norwegian labour market is characterised by increased demands for employees with higher education and formal qualifications (Røe, 2011). At the same time, employers at the Norwegian workplaces often question the applicability of education and qualifications obtained abroad, limiting immigrants' employment opportunities (Berg, 2015; Ugreninov & Turner, 2021). Often, experience gained in their home countries is not easily applicable in the highly digitalised work environments in Norway (Proba Samfunnsanalyse, 2020). This development appears as a challenge, especially for women, for whom education plays a more significant role in obtaining employment (Bjerck et al., 2018). Moreover, the proportion of the immigrants in Norway without completed secondary education has increased since 2014 (IMDi, 2022a).

Immigrants in Norway continue to face challenges when seeking employment, including direct and indirect discrimination by employers, insufficient language skills in Norwegian, and limited knowledge of the Norwegian labour market and work culture (Bjerck et al., 2018). Particularly, immigrants from non-western countries experience discrimination at the workplace that they attribute to their different cultural and religious backgrounds (Midtbøen, 2019). Immigrants from African and Asian countries might find themselves not being invited for interviews or being discriminated against within the workplace (Birkelund, 2014; Duell et al., 2009). Refugees face the most difficulty in obtaining employment, as many of them, in addition to challenges common among all the immigrant groups, have limited education and significant family caregiving responsibilities (Proba Samfunnsanalyse, 2020).

Research also points out that immigrants who do secure employment experience challenges in adapting to the Norwegian work environment. These challenges may include difficulties in establishing relationships with colleagues, fulfilling job responsibilities, engaging in discussions regarding salary, managing workloads (Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a), developing language and communication skills, and the ability to fit-in into the work environment (Bjerck et al., 2018; Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2019; Proba Samfunnsanalyse, 2020). Not all workplaces provide adequate opportunities for language learning, communication skills development, or adequate supervision and support for immigrant employees (Bjerck et al.,

2018). As a result, immigrants with limited language proficiency may struggle to find new employment opportunities if they lose their current job (Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a).

Research exploring these challenges indicates that NAV, responsible for delivering employment-oriented interventions, might not be tailoring follow-ups sufficiently to the individual needs of participants (Lerfaldet et al., 2021; Mozetič, 2022a, 2022b; Røysum, 2021). Moreover, in his study, Tronstad (2019) noted that refugees often have limited influence on the goals and content of the Introduction Programme, with some not receiving the legally required individual activity plan. Furthermore, low-skilled immigrants with non-western backgrounds and limited language skills often have fewer opportunities for self-determined vocational choices and work trial placements (Lerfaldet et al., 2021). Further, some studies suggest that there is a tendency to treat all immigrants as a homogeneous group, which may lead to a lack of diversity approach. This overlooks factors such as reasons for migration, cultural background, gender, age, and professional and social status (Mozetič, 2022b; Spehar, 2021; Volckmar-Eeg & Vassenden, 2022). This can result in a disregard for participants' professional backgrounds (Mozetič, 2022b), with high-skilled immigrants sometimes experiencing a devaluation of their occupational histories and skills (Mozetič, 2022b). At the same time, low-skilled refugees may feel demotivated, struggling to cope with the tasks they are given by their caseworkers to address independently, contrary to their expectations of support (Spehar, 2021).

2.3 Personalisation of employment-oriented interventions

The concept of personalisation in activation strategies, while gaining recent prominence, is not a novel idea. The idea of user-centred services, voluntary participation and encouraging user involvement while tailoring interventions to cater to individual needs has been advocated for some time, arguably due to its effectiveness (Alve et al., 2013; Frøyland et al., 2018; Mikkelsgård et al., 2014; Terum & Sadeghi, 2021). Withing the frameworks of NAV, several interventions, primarily targeting the work inclusion of labour market outsiders, are well-established.

Introduced in 2001, the Individual Plan was intended to be an individually tailored user-driven empowering tool to help users achieve their self-determined goals. This municipality-delivered intervention caters to users with complex mental health problems who require prolonged and coordinated follow-up by multiple services (Holum, 2012b; Kjellevold, 2016), as well as participants of the Qualification Programme, addressed further, who also have the

right to an Individual Plan. Users are given the autonomy to decide whom, a person or a service, to invite to participate in their plan, including health services and other actors from whom they receive services. While the municipality holds the main responsibility for the provision of the Individual Plan, NAV can become responsible for work inclusion activities for users interested in employment-oriented follow-up (Alve et al., 2013; NAV-loven, 2005).

While the Individual Plan aimed to be person-centred and tailored to the user's needs, encouraging independent functioning (Breimo, 2016; Breimo et al., 2015; Holum, 2012a), some studies questioned if the service was personalised indeed (Brodtkorb & Rugkåsa, 2015). Research highlighted a disparity between the services anticipated by the user and the services actually delivered, exposing the deficiencies in holistic follow-up, coordination, and consequently, the ability to meet the self-determined goals and needs of the user (Holum, 2012b; Kjellevold, 2016). Moreover, some studies argued that the Individual Plan appeared to be a move towards contractualisation of the relationship between the user and the state, making it a tool for controlling users and allowing sanctions if the Plan was not followed (Breimo, 2016; Kjellevold, 2016).

The Qualification Programme, established in 2007, was designed for the long-term enhancement of human capital. This programme, delivered jointly by the municipality and NAV, aims to facilitate the transition to employment for the long-term unemployed who depend on social assistance benefits or are at risk of becoming dependent on them (Natland & Hansen, 2014; Spjelkavik, 2016). Often, the participants are individuals with complex support needs, such as health issues that do not qualify for sickness-related benefits, lack of qualifications, or family-related problems. The programme is designed to offer close, customised employment-oriented follow-up and includes full-time activities tailored to the participants' support needs. Fundamental to the programme are the principles of user involvement and co-production of a personalised activity plan (Hansen, 2019; Haavorsen & Hernes, 2010; Natland & Hansen, 2014). The Individual Plan can also be used in case there is a need to coordinate multiple services. The activity plan may include both organised activities such as qualification courses, courses in personal economy, or CV-writing workshops, but also self-determined activities such as visits to the library, aiming to meet all aspects of a person's needs or problems (Natland & Hansen, 2014; Syse, 2019).

However, studies have shown that personalisation of the programme has often encountered obstacles, primarily due to financial limitations, legal regulations, or geographical availability of activities (Gubrium et al., 2014; Hansen, 2019). The programme's local application did not

consistently include non-employment activities, such as addressing health issues. Furthermore, the programme's duration appeared insufficient for the needs of its target group. The voluntary aspect of the programme was also not clear-cut, as opting out was frequently perceived as violating the eligibility terms for social benefit (Gubrium et al., 2014).

2.3.1 Supported Employment

Following research that critiqued standardisation and raised questions about the presence of tailored support and user involvement in NAV services targeting work inclusion of marginalised groups, NAV shifted its focus. The aim was to ensure a more user-oriented and tailored approach to meet individual users' needs (Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet, 2015). Additionally, the supply-side approach faced criticism for its inadequate results in assisting outsiders, including an unproductive train-then-place approach, while the number of social support benefit recipients remained constant, indicating unsuccessful attempts at work inclusion for marginalised groups (Hernes, 2014; Spjelkavik, 2014). At the same time, research indicated that user satisfaction with the follow-up, a sincere aspiration to attain employment goals, and a place-then-train approach — where the user is placed with an employer promptly and receives on-site training and support — proved to be more effective (Frøyland et al., 2018; Spjelkavik, 2012, 2014; Spjelkavik & Frøyland, 2014). Supported employment, underpinned by a person-centred approach (EUSE, 2010a), was identified as an example of a personalised place-then-train practice. This not only focuses on user needs but also leads to better employment outcomes for people with complex support needs compared to other interventions (Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet, 2015; Spjelkavik, 2014).

Research refers to supported employment as an approach, a method, and less frequently, a theory of vocational rehabilitation (e.g. Frederick & VanderWeele, 2019). In recent research, however, supported employment is more often referred to as either a method in itself or an umbrella term for vocational interventions rooted in the supported employment 5-stage model. These interventions, such as Individual Placement and Support (IPS) or Customised Employment (CE), are tailored to a particular group and, therefore, may diverge from the original 5-stage model. The work-oriented follow-up in supported employment is delivered by employment specialists, i.e. the caseworkers, who guide and support the supported employment participant through the 5-stage process of (1) engagement, (2) vocational profiling, (3) job finding, (4) employer engagement and (5) on-and-off job support (EUSE, 2010a). The core principles of supported employment include individuality, respect, self-

determination, informed choice, empowerment, confidentiality, flexibility, and accessibility (EUSE, 2010a; Larson et al., 2014; Solar, 2015). A key element for its success is building a trust-based relationship between the employment specialist and the participant, which facilitates a working alliance that enhances the likelihood of a successful intervention (EUSE, 2010a; Poremski et al., 2016).

Supported employment has been referred to as 'the most effective approach to labour inclusion' (Nøkleby & Hernes, 2017, p. 74) and has gained global recognition. According to previous international research, more than 60% of supported employment participants end up in long-term integrated employment compared to approximately 20-30% of other job seekers with various forms of disabilities (Bond et al., 2008; Hoffmann et al., 2014). Thus, supported employment has been actively adopted by state and private vocational agencies and organisations worldwide (Modini et al., 2016; Waghorn & Hielscher, 2015).

The five-stage process of supported employment and the supported employment-based IPS have received attention in Norway from the 1990s, known as Work with Support (Nor.: *Arbeid med Bistand*). Initially, it targeted work inclusion of job seekers with developmental disabilities but subsequently expanded to include other groups of job seekers (Qvortrup & Spjelkavik, 2013; Spjelkavik, 2012; Sveinsdottir et al., 2020). While Work with Support was provided by the external agencies that had an agreement with NAV, eventually there was a goal for NAV to have its "own" employment specialist teams. In 2013, within the scope of these objectives, the first project to implement the supported employment method within the Qualification Programme was initiated (Spjelkavik, 2016), leading to more NAV offices eventually contemplating the establishment of their own SE/IPS teams. These initial projects underscored the importance of not just training employment specialists but also of reassessing their job responsibilities. This included differentiating between the roles of a caseworker and an employment specialist, emphasising that the latter was responsible for addressing the complex and diverse support needs of the users through comprehensive follow-up (Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2019).

In 2016, there were attempts to implement the supported employment method in several other locations within the Introduction Programme and Job Chance (Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2019; Sveinsdottir et al., 2020). While the research on the implementation of SE in these interventions is limited, due to its recent introduction, there were earlier studies that highlighted the challenges. For instance, Maximova-Mentzoni (2019a) noted the difficulties in establishing trust-based relationships between immigrant participants and employment

26

specialists, leading to delays in recognising or addressing the support needs of the participants promptly. Studies have also noted the insufficient attention to refugees' health concerns and the need for tailored support for women unaccustomed to independent decision-making (Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a; Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2019). The "institutionalized work-trial trap" (Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019b, p. 45), where continuous unpaid work trials were perceived as unfair by participants, also contributed to a sense of mistrust towards the interventions in which they were participating.

These concerns resonate with recent findings by Berg et al. (2021) who suggest that supported employment might not necessarily produce significantly better outcomes compared to other NAV interventions. However, the authors note a lack of voluntary participation, as participants were predominantly referred to supported employment by their caseworkers. This fact raises questions regarding the adherence to the supported employment method, particularly in terms of personalisation and the intervention participants' self-determination. The authors suggest additional challenges that could impede improved outcomes in supported employment, such as a lack of fidelity control, including control of personalisation. Additionally, the intervention design, initially tailored for individuals with mental health conditions, might not be as tailored for people with different support needs.

Research highlights concerns with NAV's standardised approach to employment-oriented follow-up, particularly for those with complex support needs and who are outside the mainstream labour market. Studies focusing on the labour market integration of immigrants have observed a tendency to apply generalised follow-up methods, rather than accounting for the individual differences among immigrants (Mozetič, 2022a, 2022b; Volckmar-Eeg & Vassenden, 2022). There is a consensus among researchers that individualised support and personalisation could lead to improved collaboration between immigrants and caseworkers, potentially resulting in better employment outcomes for immigrants in these interventions (Chung et al., 2011; Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a, 2019b; Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2019; Sultana, 2022). Scholars suggest more personalised interventions that take into account the diversity of participants and their individual needs (Gubrium & Leirvik, 2021; Mozetič, 2022a). Considering recent research questioning the extent to which interventions are tailored to their target populations, there appears to be a need for further exploration into the practice of personalisation in employment-oriented follow-up. This PhD dissertation intends to address this gap in the literature.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this dissertation draws upon a diverse range of perspectives to provide a comprehensive theoretical background of the research topic. In this chapter, I aim to clarify and contextualise the central concepts used in this research, establishing a conceptual foundation (Plager, 1994) for the dissertation. Considering the aim of the dissertation, personalisation emerges as a central concept that I conceptualise first, contrasting it to the concept of individualisation and emphasising the importance of user involvement and a person-centred approach as cornerstones of personalisation. Thereafter, I address the concept of immigration by highlighting disruption of life courses as a result of migration and the revaluation of one's capitals when integrating into the labour market of the new country of settlement, approached through the lens of Bourdieu's capital theory. The final part of this framework provides a theoretical background for the concept of street-level practice in NAV approached through the lens of Lipsky's (2010) street-level bureaucracy. Specifically, I explore the discretion and the coping strategies used by street-level bureaucrats in this context.

3.1 Conceptualising personalisation

3.1.1 Individualisation or personalisation?

In English language research, *personalisation* is often used in the same context and interchangeably with *individualisation*, with some scholars acknowledging that definitions of these concepts are vague and imprecise (van Berkel & Valkenburg, 2007). Although some authors use both individualisation and personalisation in their publications (e.g. Gubrium & Leirvik, 2021; Lloyd, 2010; O'Brien, 2011), there tends to be a lack of explicit definition for these concepts, leaving it unclear how the authors distinguish between them and what each concept implies. As this dissertation research project builds upon sources published both in English and Norwegian, the case becomes even more complicated, as the Norwegian term *individualisert* can be widely found in relevant literature while *personalisert,* although it exists in the language, is not commonly used.

With some authors mentioning that personalisation is "an individualisation in a non-market context" and is achieved through person-centred approach (Spicker, 2012), to complicate the story even more, *person-centred approach*, the concept I address later in this chapter as a core of personalisation of employment-oriented interventions, can be used interchangeably with *individualisation* (McCormack & McCance, 2010). Moreover, it can be translated from

original texts in English into Norwegian as *individualisert*, or not translated at all. For example:

in English: *One method of **a person-centred approach** is "Personal Future Planning" (EUSE, 2010a, p. 59).*

In Norwegian: *En metode som bidrar til å sikre **en individuell tilnærming** er «personlig fremtidsplanlegging» (Personal Future Planning)* (EUSE, 2010b, p. 61).

The juggling of such concepts, in addition to their vague definitions and varying meanings in different contexts, may hinder the reader from fully understanding the message the author attempts to convey. Particularly in the case of personalisation and individualisation, where the key difference, as I argue, is a compulsory presence of empowerment and self-determined choice in the latter. In this case, misunderstanding the theoretical background behind the concept of *personalisation* could lead to deficient practices in personalised services.

Therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation research project, I define the concept of personalisation, contrasting it with individualisation and specifying the key difference between them, namely, the unequivocal empowerment and user participation in the decision-making process. As this dissertation project is in the English language and both terms are used in the relevant literature, I build on the English-language publications to define the concept of "personalisation".

From the literature, it is evident that *individualisation* involves tailoring a service to the individual circumstances of the user in order to increase the effectiveness of the service (van Berkel & Valkenburg, 2007). This means caseworkers decide which activation measures were most suitable for each user, in accordance with their skills and needs (Rice, 2013). For example, some authors find it necessary to specify that they talk of 'service individualisation and client involvement (Bakkeli, 2022), thus implying that user involvement in individualisation is not self-given.

To clarify the distinction between individualisation and personalisation, I would like to reference Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein delineates three levels of participation: the lowest level being non-participation, which includes manipulation, therapy, and informing. Next is tokenism (or symbolic participation), which encompasses consultation and placation. At the highest level is citizen power, which includes partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. What is important for my

argument is Arnstein's observation that merely claiming a person's participation and involvement does not necessarily ensure that the person's voice will be genuinely heard and the person *empowered*, that is, enabled and supported to act to achieve desired outcomes (Galiè & Farnworth, 2019; Rodwell, 1996), and to influence the decision-making process. For instance, providing information about an action plan but disregarding the user's desire to make changes may appear to involve the user, but in reality, it does not.

If we look at *individualisation* through the prism of Arnstein's ladder, the individualisation of a service may not rise over the initial steps of non-participation and tokenism, implying passive presence, attendance at meetings and compliance with decisions made by others. Hence, individualisation might imply a paternalistic tailoring – that is matching services to the users' needs (Spicker, 2012) – and compliance of the users, with decisions made by the caseworkers, advising the users or simply informing them about the decisions already made on their behalf. In contrast to *personalisation*, user participation and empowerment are random and not emphasised.

Personalisation, if looked at through the prism of Arnstein's ladder, is on the upper steps of the participation ladder – the steps of citizen power. It is closely connected to the concept of power, encompassing the shift of power from the service provider to the service user and empowerment of the user to make a choice in the decision-making process, and ability and support to follow it (Christensen & Pilling, 2014; Duffy, 2010; Lymbery, 2014). Thus, *personalisation* marks a shift from controlling, paternalistic and directive follow-up towards a non-directive approach that empowers individuals to pursue personal goals and aspirations (Breimo, 2016; Duffy, 2010).

Hence, while individualisation often involves the tailoring of the service based on the caseworker's discretion, *personalisation* is a *practice* where the service is tailored through user involvement and empowerment. Hence, the intervention is tailored according to the user's self-determined choices, so-called co-production of services (Leadbeater, 2004; Spicker, 2012). Personalisation occurs during interactions between the user and the caseworker, when the user expresses his/her preferences, ideas or wishes, and the caseworker allows space for these ideas or wishes to be followed, thus tailoring the services to meet the user's needs and wishes (Spicker, 2012). It implies negotiation between the caseworker and the user of the service, where the **person-centred approach** towards the user (Dunk-West, 2018; Kokkinn, 2005; Murphy et al., 2013) and **user involvement** in the decision-making process appear to be the keys to the personalised collaborative process, allowing the user to

co-produce and consequently personalise the service he or she receives (Spicker, 2012; van Berkel, 2020).

3.1.2 Person-centred approach

The concept of a person-centred approach, originally derived from psychotherapy and medical contexts, has been increasingly used in the field of social work, particularly in the realm of social care for the elderly (e.g. Botbol, 2013; Carvajal et al., 2019). However, in recent years, there has been growing focus on the application of Carl Rogers' person-centred approach theory (Rogers, 1967; Rogers, 1963) in broader social work practice (Dunk-West, 2018; Kokkinn, 2005; Murphy et al., 2013), particularly as a tool for relationship-building between a service-provider and a service-user. The ability of the service provider to show unconditional respect, positive regard, care and empathy to the user is emphasised (Kondrat, 2014).

With its origins in humanistic psychology, a person-centred approach is rooted in a holistic view of a person, including the importance of interpersonal relationships, personal acknowledgement of one's own actions and their consequences, and self-determination. The possibility of choice and self-determined goals is argued to motivate individuals and influence their agency (Bugental, 1964). Therefore, the founder of person-centred approach, Carl Rogers, emphasised the non-directive nature of counselling and the involvement of clients in the decision-making process, asserting that individuals possess the best understanding of their own needs and the necessary measures to be taken to satisfy them. Consequently, he regarded directiveness as a hindrance rather than a productive strategy, as it undermines the intrinsic capacity of individuals to navigate their own way towards self-sufficiency (Rogers, 1963, 1967).

Rogers claimed that holistic and non-directive approaches in counselling, as well as involving clients in discussing their problems and the decision-making process, were crucial components in creating a self-aware individual who trusts their own judgements and is capable of making independent decisions – 'a fully functioning person' (Rogers, 1967). To achieve this, the person-centred approach places strong emphasis on the ability of the counsellor to empathise, genuine desire to understand the client and create a trust-based relationship with the client, who needs to feel heard and understood. According to Rogers, these approaches promoted 'growth, development, maturity, improved functioning' (Rogers, 1967, p. 69) of a person, and enhanced their ability to cope with life's challenges.

Rogers underlined that individuals experience the world through a phenomenological 'internal frame of reference' (Rogers, 1963, p. 78), comprising experiences and knowledge accumulated throughout their life course. Paying attention to the environment in which the person is situated, as well as knowledge of past and present experiences, provides insights into understanding an individual's current agency, including their choices and plans, and the development of personalised interventions (McCormack & McCance, 2010; McCormack & McCance, 2016).

3.1.3 User involvement

Discussing user involvement, it is important to clarify that user involvement within social services, including employment-oriented interventions, may represent both a right and an obligation for the user, particularly in frames of behavioural conditionality, and the view of the user as the one responsible for their own well-being (Djuve & Kavli, 2015; Jenssen, 2012b). User involvement within the framework of personalisation represents a right that is facilitated by caseworkers.

User involvement alters the power dynamics between users and social service providers, empowering users to define their support needs and actively collaborate in finding effective solutions to their challenges (Berg & Ask, 2011). User involvement 'entails precondition that the user's activity has an impact on the service process' (Julkunen & Heikkilä, 2007, p. 89). Beyond being empowering, user involvement not only provides opportunities for self-determination and the ability to influence the service process (Olsen et al., 2019; Aasmundsen & Sagvaag, 2012), but it is also therapeutic through fostering the development of coping strategies, consequently enhancing the overall quality of life (Rogers, 1967; Aasmundsen & Sagvaag, 2012).

Successful user involvement fosters a functioning working alliance – a mutual collaboration between the user seeking a change and taking an active position to achieve this change and the caseworker (Appleton & Dykeman, 2007; Solheim, 2019). Bordin (1979), who elaborated on the concept of working alliance, posited that the working alliance is an essential element in facilitating the desired changes through counselling. According to Bordin, the working alliance consists of three key components: mutually agreed-upon goals, reasonable tasks designed to achieve these goals, and the cultivation of 'bonds of trust and attachment' (Bordin, 1979, p. 254). Trust is an essential component for the user to be able to open up and share sensitive information with the caseworker, uncovering the critical needs to be addressed (Appleton & Dykeman, 2007; Bordin, 1994; Oterholm, 2015), and is particularly important in

long-lasting relationships between service users and the frontline service workers (Bordin, 1979, 1994).

The establishment of a trust-based 'person-professional partnership' (Jesus et al., 2022, p. 7) and the development of a working alliance are argued to be predictors of successful intervention outcomes (Appleton & Dykeman, 2007). They help to establish a clear understanding of the intervention participant's needs, strengths, and preferences. This understanding can then be used to develop a personalised employment-oriented follow-up that addresses the intervention participant's individual challenges, needs and goals.

3.2 Conceptualising immigration

Earlier migration research conceptualised immigration as a straightforward 'individual, or transgenerational process of integration into the new context' (Mecheril & Velho, 2014, p. 1181), focusing predominantly on the host society's mechanisms that either impeded or fostered the social integration of immigrants. Yet, an increasing number of scholars challenge this 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002), contending that anchoring the concept of immigration in the modern world of globalisation and easy geographical mobility solely within the framework of the host nation is inaccurate (Chernilo, 2011; Joy et al., 2020; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

In this dissertation, I conceptualise immigration as a multi-faceted process. On the one hand, I approach the concept through the lens of life course theory, which highlights the disrupted life course resulting from migration and encompasses "linked lives", familial ties within the country of settlement and the sustained connections abroad. Embracing a life-course perspective can contribute to a more nuanced comprehension of the challenges encountered by immigrants in their host country (Hansen & Gubrium, 2022; Mozetič, 2022b; Omar, 2022). On the other hand, emphasising the importance of employment for successful social integration and self-sufficiency in the country of settlement, immigration is also viewed as a process that entails integration into the labour market of the country of settlement and revaluation of various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 2018). Combining these two perspectives allows us to see the connection between contextual changes across the life course as a result of migration and labour market integration, including an understanding of challenges for employment.

3.2.1 Life-course perspective and a disrupted life course

The life-course perspective refers to the interaction between diverse and interconnected trajectories, or "states" (Macmillan & Eliason, 2003), such as employment or parenthood, which occurs across a person's lifespan (Elder et al., 2003). Elder et al. (2003) describe the five fundamentals of the life-course framework: lifespan development, agency, time and place, timing, and linked lives. The socially accepted and expected timeline for transitioning through different life stages and life-course events, 'social time' (Moen, 2016), may marginalise those who do not meet the age- and gender-appropriate 'deadline' (Elder et al., 2003; Moen, 2016; Settersten Jr, 2003). The expectations of the timing of significant transitions along the main life course trajectories are related to gender, age, and life stage, shaped by the social environment and influencing individual decision-making (Elder et al., 2003; Macmillan & Eliason, 2003; Moen, 2016).

Traditionally, life course has been strongly connected to work-life. The 'tripartite life course' (Heinz, 2003) includes education, employment, and retirement stages, with employment being a more crucial indicator of life stage transitions and social status in society than age (Leisering, 2003). Culturally grounded stereotypes appear to drive employment decisions. As Moen (2016) points out, in many societies, an adult male is expected to transition into the breadwinner and wage earner, while the female is expected to become the mother and caretaker. With more active female labour participation and more flexible employment pathways, the tripartite approach to the life course has been criticised for lacking family considerations and disregarding possibilities for other 'biographical decisions' (Heinz, 2003, p. 196).

Migration to a new country, whether it is intended, such as family reunification, or as an outcome of an unintended distressing or, even traumatic, event, such as war, results in a disrupted life course (Cwerner, 2001; Griffiths, 2014), characterised by deviations from anticipated life course trajectories and transitions through different life stages and life-course events, primarily due to the dramatic change of the social context. Social changes resulting from migration often entail economic shifts that influence individual agency. Choices, frequently grounded in prior experiences and anticipations, evolve over time in response to the current social context and the challenges and opportunities it offers, shaping future aspirations and plans (Elder et al., 2003). The initial conditions leading to migration— whether due to conflict, economic struggles, or other reasons—coupled with the timing of migration, such as the age and life stage of the person, young or old, newly educated or with a

rich professional history, play an important role in shaping agency in the new setting and its corresponding "social time" (Moen, 2016).

Upon migration, immigrants face the challenge of re-establishing their life course in the new country. This includes adapting to the new "social time" (Moen, 2016) and continuing their life course trajectories within this new social context, such as uncertain and time-consuming 'occupational recovery' (Castagnone et al., 2015) of the age-appropriate employment trajectory, including education and participation in the labour market (Heinz, 2003). Specifically, asylum seekers and refugees are confronted with an inability to re-establish their life course as a result of prolonged waiting periods, abrupt changes beyond their control, and a multitude of bureaucratic processes upon arrival in their destination country, consuming significant amounts of time.

Furthermore, the linked lives of immigrants, encompassing their family in the country of settlement, their networks, and also significant ones who remain abroad, play an important role in their decision-making processes. The familial dynamic can invoke caregiving responsibilities, whether for young children, ailing spouses, or elderly parents, changing the family trajectory dynamics and influencing an individual's agency on other life course trajectories as well. The new social networks in the country of settlement can serve as 'turning points' (Elder et al., 2003, p. 13) in an individual's life trajectory, potentially acting as catalysts for positive change—such as pursuing higher education—or, conversely, functioning as impediments, for instance, by failing to encourage progress.

Therefore, the immigration process into a new country emerges as complex and multidimensional. It is marked by constant negotiation between the past life-course and the social time of the home country and the present context of the country of settlement, followed by the process of identity contestation (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014). Immigrants might find themselves feeling suspended between past experiences and an uncertain future, coupled with the inability to re-establish their life course (Bendixsen & Eriksen, 2018; Folke, 2018; Griffiths, 2014). It is often accompanied by stress or trauma and consequent health problems (DeWaard, 2016; Jasso, 2003).

Linked lives and a transnational life course

Linked lives in the life course paradigm assume a significant role in understanding the disrupted life course resulting from migration. While this concept is predominantly associated with spousal relationships or the core family (e.g. Heinz, 2003), it is also applicable to other

familial connections and close friends (Crosnoe & Benner, 2016). Even as immigrants settle within their new country of settlement, many remain actively engaged in maintaining familial connections in their countries of origin (Cwerner, 2001; Upegui-Hernandez, 2014), maintaining 'complex social and economic linkages with communities at the places of origin' (Lusis & Bauder, 2010, p. 31) and 'building social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement' (Schiller et al., 1992, p. 1).

Within this transnational life course, immigrants develop familial, economic and social relations (Schiller et al., 1992) and 'experience bifocal lives, and feel attached to more than one nation-state' (Upegui-Hernandez, 2014, p. 2009), shaping their identity and influencing their agency. At the same time, resource-intensive transnational activities require consideration and prioritisation between the life course connected to the family trajectory in the new country of residence, where immigrants strive to establish themselves, and the family trajectory as a member of the family residing in other countries. The influence of transnational family obligations and pressure of transnational living and 'doing family across distance' (Acedera & Yeoh, 2019) impact lives in the country of settlement by being resource consuming and "stealing" time and energy from re-establishment in the country of settlement (Acedera & Yeoh, 2019; Cwerner, 2001).

The life-course perspective allows a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges immigrants encounter in their host country (Hansen & Gubrium, 2022; Mozetič, 2022b; Omar, 2022). Making a choice and acting intentionally to achieve a certain presumptive outcome, that is, *agency* (Elder et al., 2003; Leisering, 2003), in the context of this dissertation, highlights the interplay between individual choices and the environmental constraints and opportunities (Zacher & Froidevaux, 2021) within the country of settlement. Personal histories appear to be an information source of what matters the most for the individuals, including past traumatic experiences, ambitions and hopes for the future (Kampen & Tonkens, 2019), thereby facilitating the follow-up process through understanding what guides the service recipient's life choices and goals. Addressing the challenges immigrants experience, it is important to consider not only their life course in the country of settlement but also their pre-migration life course that was disrupted, including their connected lives with families abroad, thus creating a transnational life-course perspective. This perspective enables a deeper understanding of immigrants' experiences and agency, including when integrating into the local labour market.

3.2.2 Segmented labour market and capital revaluation

The segmented labour market theory posits that the labour market is stratified into distinct segments, making it challenging for individuals to transition between these segments. While various forms of labour market segmentation exist, a common distinction is made between the primary and secondary segments, collectively referred to as the dual labour market (Berglund et al., 2022; Pulignano et al., 2015). The primary labour market is characterised by stable employment opportunities, higher wages, and the potential for upward career advancement. In contrast, the secondary labour market is characterised by temporary jobs, low wages, and limited prospects for career progression (Reich et al., 1973). As pointed out earlier in this dissertation, working conditions within the secondary labour market segment may contribute to unemployment spells and diminish individuals' motivation to pursue employment opportunities (Judge & Bono, 2001; Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010; Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

As highlighted in the Research Background, various studies consistently show that immigrants often end up in the secondary labour market, characterised by low-paid, unskilled, part-time, and temporary jobs. This can be attributed to various factors within the labour market and its demands, including the requirement of fluency in the native language for jobs in the primary labour market segment, which tend to be filled by native workers. On the other hand, there is a demand for seasonal or part-time low-skilled labour that does not require language skills, and this is easier to obtain for immigrants who agree for less favourable working conditions, often non preferred by the local population (Friberg, 2012).

As a result, in certain secondary labour market occupations, there may be an overrepresentation of immigrant employees, creating an immigrant *niche* (Eckstein & Peri, 2018). Here, immigrants are not only offered employment, but they are even more preferred than the local population by employers, arguably due to being less selective about working conditions and more adept at physically demanding jobs. Employers often use their current employees' network to fill such job openings. Since the immigrant employees' network often consists of individuals from the same ethnic background (Friberg, 2012; Scott & Rye, 2021), certain ethnicities tend to be overrepresented in particular secondary labour market niches, such as Poles in the 'global strawberry industry' (Scott & Rye, 2021, p. 473).

The above-mentioned process, however, while allowing for an understanding of *how* seasonal labour migrants end up in the secondary labour market, it does not explain *why* the career trajectory of highly skilled immigrants often continues in the secondary labour market of their

country of settlement. When viewed through the lens of Bourdieu's capital recognition and capital devaluation, the process of devaluation or revaluation of the assets of highly skilled immigrants upon their arrival to a new country sheds light on the problem of unsuccessful 'occupational recovery' (Castagnone et al., 2015) from another perspective.

In brief, Bourdieu (2018) claimed that an individual's resources appear as different forms of capital that are interdependent. In addition to economic capital, represented by money, property rights and valuables that can be directly converted into money, Bourdieu distinguished between cultural, social and symbolic capitals. **Cultural** capital includes embodied aspects (e.g. personal knowledge and skills, including previous work experience and linguistic capital – knowledge of the language peculiarities typical for the individual's social group), objectified aspects (e.g. possession of art objects that can be transferred into money or are status symbols) and institutionalised aspects (e.g. education) (Friesen, 2011; Joy et al., 2020). **Social** capital includes the benefits derived from one's network (Friesen, 2011), for example, providing a job or assisting on the way to obtaining a job (e.g. help with CV or taking care of the children). **Symbolic** capital can be seen as a result of recognition of other forms of capital, manifested through, for example, social status or professional reputation, which are socially recognised (Southerton, 2011). All forms of capital depend on social recognition and therefore rely on the social context, the *field* (Joy et al., 2020). How an individual behaves in this field depends on his/her *habitus*, that is, internalised social norms and values, which "tell" the individual what is appropriate behaviour in various situations and 'facilitates appreciation of the value of their capital' (Joy et al., 2020, p. 2547). This includes, for example, being able to navigate in the work environment and fit-in. Often, this happens on a subconscious level, and it takes years to form the "habitus" of the society one lives in (Joy et al., 2020).

In line with the above-mentioned considerations, as Leopold and Shavit (2013) astutely noted, 'cultural capital does not travel well' (Leopold & Shavit, 2013). Upon migration, certain assets and resources, such as education credentials and professional status from one's home country, are not socially recognised in the new country and, therefore, are not transferred into capital within the new context. Erel (2010) warned against such a 'rucksack approach' to employment-obtaining, and viewing it as a plain process of "unpacking" (Huot, 2016) and converting one's existing capital into employment. For instance, education obtained in the home country might not necessarily be recognised and its value converted into a capital in another country (Crossley, 2014). Moreover, the further the fields are situated spatially or

culturally, the higher are the likelihood of capital devaluation (Joy et al., 2020). For example, migrants from Africa to Europe might experience higher chances of capital devaluation compared to those from within Europe.

Acquiring social capital in the form of networks and friends who could have helped to find employment, initially seen as an asset, can be misleading. However, as described above, an immigrant community might open doors to the low-skilled secondary labour market niche, facilitating an easy-come employment in the secondary labour market while offering little assistance in entering the primary labour market segment (Lusis & Bauder, 2010). Social capital within the same sociolinguistic community of immigrants from the same country of origin not only might hinder development of language skills but also limit job opportunities to the secondary labour market (Erel, 2010; Huot, 2016; Lusis & Bauder, 2010).

Individuals targeting high-skilled employment in the primary labour market segment often face the challenge of making their own way into such jobs (Friberg, 2012). However, no knowledge of the local labour market and work culture (Sultana, 2022; Yakushko, 2006) result in inability to locate and apply for the relevant jobs in the primary labour market segment. Conversely, the labour market's increasing demand for skills, necessary for navigating new technologies and job complexities, poses additional challenges for the low-skilled and labour market outsiders. Within these contexts, as part of their efforts to revalue their capital and re-establish their professional identity, migrants adopt adaptation strategies (Schiller et al., 1992) and engage in 'coping with uncertainty' (Landolt & Thieme, 2018). Erel (2010) suggested that immigrants engage in a process of not only negotiating with institutions to mitigate devaluation of the capital but also actively creating 'mechanisms of validation for their cultural capital' (p.642). This involves the development of new, migration-specific forms of cultural capital that combine transnational and local resources, allowing immigrants to leverage these resources in their pursuit of employment (Erel, 2010). Finding ways to validate their capital, for instance, through volunteering or applying for internships, immigrants may accept 'a survival job' (Huot, 2016) to gain locally-relevant and therefore recognised cultural and social capital (Landolt & Thieme, 2018).

In this discussion, it is impossible to overlook language fluency, which emerges a commonly debated obstacle to employment, particularly within the framework of **linguistic capital**, a form of cultural capital (Huot et al., 2020). The employability of high-skilled migrants in the primary labour market segment is often linked to their proficiency in the language of the country of settlement (Landolt & Thieme, 2018; Mozetič, 2022a).

Friesen (2011) highlighted that even achieving general language fluency is often not enough to succeed because a professional identity and its value, and consequently its transferability into a new setting, is expressed via linguistic capital. Therefore, in addition to fluent every-day language skills, there is a need for mastering professional jargon, tacit communication including norms of professional communication, communication with clients and 'navigating conflict situations' (p.82). Immigrants' struggles to understand professional jargon lead to the devaluation of linguistic capital, causing it to be ineffective in the new setting (Huot et al., 2020). Proficiency in professional language is required in order to be able to acquire updated knowledge, take proficiency tests or transfer the skills (Huot, 2016). Linguistic capital facilitates communication within professional networks, thus facilitating employment opportunities. Even after 2-3 years, language proficiency remains the greatest barrier for high-skilled immigrants who struggle with navigating the professional linguistic space (Friesen, 2011). In addition, there are often certain criteria, such as right dialect or accent, which might in some cases facilitate in entering professional communities that can be unattainable (Huot, 2016). Thus, neither the possession of higher education and a profession, nor even mastering the new language, can help to predict how the career path of an immigrant will unfold in the new context.

3.3   Conceptualising street-level practice in NAV

Within the realm of social work, practice is directed by policies that are formulated and developed at the macro-level to guide the overall direction and objectives of the social service system. At the meso-level, policies are operationalised, and the services are delivered in accordance with the mandates of respective institutions, such as NAV. At the micro-level, street-level bureaucrats implement these policies, delivering services to the users (Caswell et al., 2017; Julkunen & Heikkilä, 2007; van Berkel & Borghi, 2008; van Berkel et al., 2018; van Berkel & Valkenburg, 2007). With the focus of this dissertation on experiences of users in contact with the street-level bureaucrats, the dissertation conceptualises street-level practice within NAV as a process that unfolds at the micro-level between the user and a street-level bureaucrat. Here, the street-level bureaucrat implements an idea, for example, of personalisation, within the context of the corresponding organisation (Aarons et al., 2011), such as NAV.

Despite the professional autonomy street-level bureaucrats possess, they are bound by the policy-rooted organisational constraints and frameworks. As Zacka (2017) pointed out, the

context or environment of the organisation in which the street-level bureaucrats work has a direct impact on their discretion. While the extent to which the professional training of these bureaucrats impacts their application of specific concepts, such as personalisation, can be debated (Evans, 2010; Hill, 2003), the primary concern often lies not in their professional education background, which is interdisciplinary in NAV (NAV, 2019b), but rather in how well the organisational frameworks facilitate the practical application of certain ideas. Although the practice is contingent on professional discretion, the crucial factor lies in how the organisational goals and resource constraints influence their approach.

In their practice, street-level bureaucrats navigate personalisation within a dual framework. They must adhere to the objectives of their employing organisation, such as NAV, while also aligning with the principles of the concept they are applying in practice, like personalisation, and adhering to organisational routines, including reporting successful outcomes. This involves striking a balance between NAV's primary work-first objective and the principles of personalisation in employment-oriented interventions for immigrants. Amidst these potentially divergent goals, street-level bureaucrats may utilise discretion and adopt coping strategies (Lipsky, 2010; Zacka, 2017) to manage the challenge of aligning organisational objectives with the practice of personalisation.

3.3.1 Discretion vs coping strategies

Discretion refers to the authorised use of one's professional expertise to make informed decisions in addressing the issues presented by service users (Carrington, 2005). These decisions framed within organisational goals, laws, and eligibility requirements for the provided services (Zacka, 2017). Guided by laws and regulations that create the framework within which professional discretion is exercised, street-level bureaucrats wield the power to select a course of action and determine whether to act or refrain from doing so (Carrington, 2005).

As emphasised by Carrington (2005), discretion becomes particularly relevant in cases where the law does not provide a definitive answer or a step-by-step course of action, requiring interpretation within the context of each specific situation. Initially perceived as a means to effectively apply the law for the benefit of the service users, it has since been argued that professional discretion can have both positive and negative consequences for them.

The challenge, as Lipsky (2010) argued, lies in the contradiction between the desire 'to provide fully, openly and responsively for citizens' service needs exists alongside the need to

restrict, control and rationalise service inadequacies and limitations' (p. 191). In addition, emotional engagement in the cases encountered by street-level bureaucrats, coupled with the sheer number of cases they handle, can potentially lead to physical burnout (Zacka, 2017).

These challenges may contest the professional expertise of the street-level bureaucrats. To safeguard themselves against emotional overload and burnout due to time pressure and 'resource inadequacy' (Zacka, 2017, p. 29), they often use coping strategies, such as withdrawal and adopting a 'pragmatic indifference' (Zacka, 2017, p. 93), bending to organisational goals while prioritising their own well-being. This affects the performance of street-level workers, turning them into indifferent, law-abiding bureaucrats (Zacka, 2017). The users' goals become subordinate to the goals of 'mass processing' and the pressure of organisational 'efficiency and cost effectiveness' (Zacka, 2017, p.45).

In order to cope with the challenging work situations and align with organisational goals, street-level bureaucrats exercise power, using tactics to enforce compliance through the use of incentives and sanctions. Furthermore, the notion of personal responsibility for one's welfare is emphasised, often leading to victim-blaming and a tendency to prioritise working with users who are deemed easier to assist, known as "creaming", to meet the organisation goals despite the lack of resources (Zacka, 2017). Encouraging users' compliance allows street-level bureaucrats to conserve energy for demanding cases and showcase organisational efficacy in achieving their organisational goals (Berg & Ask, 2011; Zacka, 2017).

In this context of contradicting goals, limited resources and pressure to deliver organisational outcomes, standardisation that supposedly ensures equal and just service for all users is more of a coping strategy that provides a legitimate excuse for not being flexible, as flexibility is time consuming (Zacka, 2017). As Skjefstad et al. (2018) note, the system efficacy goals guide the work of caseworkers, who are controlled by quantitative measurements. In this context, the *McDonaldisation* of NAV (Skjefstad et al., 2018) appears not only as an organisational goal of equal treatment of the users. It sets a precedent for the caseworkers to be 'directing and adjusting of the service user's attitude and patterns of behaviour' (Skjefstad et al., 2018, p.143) through sanctioning. It also creates fertile ground for "creaming" by prioritising users who can achieve results faster and thus, meeting the performance goals of the organisation.

4   METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this dissertation research project is grounded in the phenomenological perspective. This chapter starts with a concise introduction to phenomenology as a philosophical standpoint, highlighting its significance in the knowledge-generating process of qualitative research. It is followed by an examination of my positionality and pre-understanding as a researcher. Furthermore, I outline and contemplate the research process, encompassing ethical considerations, methodological challenges, procedures for data collection, coding, and analysis. Finally, I address the validity and transferability of the findings.

4.1   Phenomenology: epistemological and ontological standpoint

This study adopts a phenomenological standpoint, aiming to gain an understanding of immigrants' experiences of personalisation of employment-oriented interventions they participate in. Phenomenology, as a field of philosophy, investigates the conscious experience of things from the subjective standpoint of the individuals experiencing them (Smith, 2018). Two main variations of phenomenology as a field of philosophy are distinguished: Husserlian, or descriptive, named after the founder of this philosophical tradition, Edmund Husserl; and Heideggerian, or interpretive, named after Husserl's student Martin Heidegger (Abalos et al., 2016; Bachkirova et al., 2020; Fjelland & Gjengedal, 1994). In connection with these two perspectives, the role of the formal – or discipline-relevant – theory, as addressed in the previous chapter, may need clarification.

Husserl suggested that the method for understanding phenomena involves phenomenological reduction. This implies separating the mind from all the previous knowledge on the studied phenomenon – *bracketing* or "epoché". In this way, the researcher achieves 'transcendental subjectivity' by not allowing pre-knowledge to interfere with the cognition of the studied phenomenon and thus, experiences the subject as it is at the moment of study (Abalos et al., 2016; Bachkirova et al., 2020; Moustakas, 1994; Willig, 2007).

Heidegger challenged Husserl's idea of the pre-knowledge-free mind and argued that epoché is impossible to achieve. Heidegger's ontological view of existence as 'being-in-the-world' informed the idea that a person or an action is inseparable from the surrounding world and its interpretation should be undertaken with this consideration (Heidegger, 2010). Therefore, an individual's behaviour, actions, values and motivation can only be understood within a

context (Leonard, 1994). A researcher, as a 'being-in-the-world' attempts to comprehend a phenomenon that also appears as 'being-in-the-world'.

The methodology for this PhD project is inspired by foundations of Heideggerian phenomenology: while acknowledging that adopting a formal theory creates the boundaries of the mind, it underlines that there is a certain reason for choosing the specific phenomenon for study, aiming to develop a new, discipline-specific knowledge (Mitchell & Cody, 1993). A studied discipline comprises theories and concepts that would be impossible to avoid (Mitchell & Cody, 1993). The role of theory is not to create 'the grid' (Leonard, 1994, p. 58) through which the data will be siloed but to form the researcher's pre-understanding of the phenomenon with which he/she enters or re-enters the hermeneutic circle during the inquiry process (Leonard, 1994).

Theory allows the possibility for different angles for understanding a phenomenon and enables 'a more tactful and thoughtful practical engagement with the phenomenon under investigation' (van Manen in Leonard, 1994). It also contributes to a shared understanding of the phenomenon, or what Heidegger calls world-disclosing or 'the clearing' (Plager, 1994).

Starting the exploration of the subject of study, I brought with me a pre-understanding of the phenomenon, which resonates with Heidegger's notion of a fore-structure of understanding (Leonard, 1994). This comprises the pre-existing knowledge of the phenomenon (fore-having), the angle of the phenomenon or preliminary research lens applied (fore-sight), and the understanding of what constitutes a question and answer in the scientific inquiry (fore-conception) (Leonard, 1994). The formal theory, as presented in the Theoretical Framework of this dissertation, played a role of fore-sight, namely the interpretive lens through which I approached the researched phenomenon upon entering and re-entering the hermeneutic circle (Leonard, 1994) while writing the three Articles, and later when writing the Kappe. This formal theory also allows for a critical reflection on the relevance of the questions asked in the inquiry (Benner, 1994) within the field of social science research.

In the knowledge-making process, the role of context in the interpretation of experiences is highlighted, giving rise to the possibility of multiple interpretations depending on the context (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). It includes the 'meaning research participants give to their experiences' in this particular context (McAllum et al., 2019), or their experience of adaptation to it (Hiles et al., 2017). Naming a phenomenon of research as *personalisation,* appeared as a 'constitutive act' (Willig, 2007, p. 216) that initiated my interpretation process

even before the phenomenon was being observed. The phenomenon of personalisation, the existence of which is unquestioned in this dissertation project, is tied to a specific context (Järvensivu & Törnroos, 2010; Van den Belt, 2003), in this case – NAV. Conceptualising immigration and street-level practice in NAV allowed me to not only place the phenomenon within a certain disciplinary field but also created a common contextualisation with the reader of this dissertation.

My pre-understanding was shaped by the prior professional and personal experiences, beliefs, and subjective knowledge within the discipline, including understanding of the concepts under investigation. This influenced the selection of research subjects, motivation to initiate the scientific inquiry, choice of theories, interpretation of findings, selection of findings to be presented to the public, and the manner in which they are communicated to the intended audience (Esin et al., 2014; Jackson, 2013; Malterud, 2001; Moser, 2008). Throughout the data interpretation process, personal experiences and knowledge, including insights derived from previous NAV work experience engagement and interaction with the theoretical and conceptual framework presented in the preceding chapter, are intertwined with subjective comprehension of the studied phenomenon.

These factors influence the interpretation process and ultimately impact the research outcome (Jackson, 2013; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). Pre-understanding and the researcher's positionality can manifest as both biases and strengths within the study (Malterud, 2001): they enable the researcher to "see" particular aspects of the subject matter while potentially leading to the oversight of others (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). To clarify the origins of my pre-understanding of the researched phenomena, I further explore my positionality and pre-understanding and how they have influenced this dissertation.

4.1.1 Positionality and Pre-understanding

Building upon the foundation laid by my previous experience at NAV, this dissertation research project was informed by my first-hand knowledge of the NAV practices. The Public Sector PhD scholarship, under which this research was conducted, was instrumental in guiding the selection of themes. These themes, while initially proposed by NAV, were further shaped by my personal interests and past experiences.

My four years of experience at NAV, particularly in assisting individuals with complex support needs, provided me with an insider's perspective. This experience was instrumental in understanding NAV's operational guidelines, priorities, and the expectations set for 'genuine

jobseekers' willing to accept any type of employment anywhere in Norway (NAV, 2021a). I also knew that the effectiveness of our work as NAV caseworkers was monitored by our office head through a monthly updated a target card (Nor.: *målekort*). This tool was used regularly to report the number of users we followed-up who obtained employment or returned to work, independently or after NAV's follow-up. The results from these reports were presented during office meetings, where we analysed why we did not achieve expected outcomes, or would set new, higher goals if our performance was already deemed satisfactory.

Therefore, based on my understanding, the role of a NAV caseworker was to transform the "målekort" from the red colour, indicating low productivity to the green colour, representing high productivity by making the welfare recipients "active" workers. There was an implicit sense of competition with other offices that had better employment numbers, and it was expected that we would do our best to "eliminate" unemployment from our office's caseload and rapidly "produce" employed individuals.

Although the concept of *personalisation* was not commonly used within the office, *tailored follow-ups* started gaining popularity. *User involvement* or *brukermedvirkning* was a familiar term. It was understood as the user's responsibility and meant making users aware of their obligation to actively cooperate in their own cases, as they were considered the owners of their cases. Non-cooperating users, including those who failed to attend scheduled meetings and interviews arranged by NAV, could face sanctions in the form of benefit reduction or being marked as inactive in NAV's database of active users. As a result, the increasing emphasis on tailored interventions, as well as the rising popularity of supported employment, often felt like a hindrance that took time away from performing my primary duties. On the other hand, these understandings were reinforced by the tightening of policy demands placed on benefit recipients, particularly those with long-term health issues. For instance, the duration of the Work Assessment Allowance (AAP) was reduced from four to three years, justified by the aim of expediting the return-to-work process for AAP recipients (NAV, 2021c).

Considering the target group for my research, I held certain presumptions about the immigrants I would be interviewing. I expected them to have experiences similar to mine, or to be labour immigrants from countries like Poland or Lithuania. It was unexpected to me that the majority of the immigrants I managed to enrol in my study came to Norway from non-western countries, either as refugees or through family reunifications. Drawing from my

experience at NAV, I was aware that our users with backgrounds from non-western countries often encountered difficulties in securing employment in Norway. My pre-knowledge about the reasons for their employment struggles, beyond language or cultural disparities, such as variations in greeting traditions (e.g. hand-shaking customs) or adherence to workplace dress codes (e.g. the use of headscarves), was rather limited.

Thus, my pre-understanding not only allowed me to get an idea of areas that needed exploration and helped to formulate the research questions, but also allowed me to contextualise the research for NAV, particularly within the first-line services where I had worked. However, as an insider, I could be limited by my pre-understanding, which, on the one hand, guided me towards the topics 'where the shoes are rubbing' , such as NAV's focus on a work-first approach in the follow-up of the users, and even allow a more in-depth understanding not obvious to outsiders, for instance, knowledge of the "målekort" system. On the other hand, my background as a practitioner, coupled with emotional engagement, could carry the risk of a narrowed perspective and limit me from seeing other problems that needed to be addressed. As a researcher who had prolonged experience in the field I studied, it was important to distance myself from my previous experience. At the earlier stages of research, my questioning of the compatibility between the activation policy and personalised employment interventions in NAV inspired Article 2. However, as my work progressed, I gradually incorporated relevant theoretical knowledge from the field of social science, as presented in the preceding chapter, particularly at the later stages of my research, including when working on Article 3. Acquiring new theoretical perspectives allowed me to 'adopt an open attitude' to a certain degree (Norlyk & Harder, 2010), and balance my pre-understanding of the phenomenon with new insights.

4.2 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative methods of data collection have several ethical dilemmas to be addressed, including 'values, norms, and institutional arrangements that help constitute and regulate scientific activities' (The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities, 2016 p. 5).

Prior to the start of the fieldwork, I applied for and received approval from the Data Protection Official for Research at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). This approval ensured that the data containing personal information linked to the participants will be properly saved and that 'free and informed consent' to participate in research will be

obtained (The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities, 2016 p. 23). I also contacted Norwegian Labour and Welfare Directorate, NAV county and NAV local offices where I planned to conduct the research. I sought permissions to conduct the research and confirmed that I received approval from the NSD.

In the field, I obtained the signed informed consent forms from the intervention participants at the beginning of the individual interviews or observations after I had introduced myself and my research project. Consent for interviews and meeting observations was obtained separately. I explained that the data will be anonymised, ensuring that neither their names nor the names of the towns they resided in, whether in Norway or their home countries, would be identifiable. Five of the immigrant research participants did not agree to be recorded: two said they did not understand the usage and purpose of a voice recorder, while the other three did not offer an explanation. A corresponding note with this detail was added to their consent forms. However, these participants consented to hand-written notes being taken during interviews. After the interviews, the notes were immediately decoded into plain text to safeguard the retention of information. All employment specialists signed the consent forms before the group interviews were conducted. All the interviews with employment specialists were voice recorded.

Data anonymisation included giving the research participants and places new names, together with the transcribing of interviews and re-writing of the observation notes after the field work. The audio records, the transcribed material and observation notes were stored on the digital platform at Oslo Metropolitan University, protected by password. Audio records and initial field notes containing personal data were deleted after the transcription process was over.

4.3 Methods of data collection and analysis

The phenomenological stance of this dissertation project determined the methods of data collection as well as the subsequent analysis. In interpretivist research, data usually comes from text analogues, such as transcribed interviews, observation notes, and field diaries written by the researcher (Leonard, 1994). Some scholars argue that using two data collection methods on the same subject, such as interviews and observations, can help mitigate potential biases associated with a single method (Oppermann, 2000). Initially, following Yin's (2009) recommendation to utilise multiple sources of evidence in a case study, I had planned to incorporate interviews, observations, and documents, such as reports or meeting summaries commonly used in NAV and other intervention providers. However, when I requested access

to such documentation in the field, I was informed that it was not part of the regular workflow for supported employment job specialists at that location, resulting in the absence of such documents or similar records.

Hence, the primary empirical data in this dissertation research project includes qualitative semi-structured interviews and observations. At the same time, other information sources were used, such as academic publications, reports, and public policy documents. These sources provided context, background information, and insights into relevant academic discussions. They also allowed to situate the primary data findings within a broader theoretical framework, as presented in this dissertation.

4.3.1 Systematic scoping literature review

A systematic scoping literature review was conducted as the first study in this PhD research project. It aimed to identify existing knowledge and establish the research agenda for further investigation, allowing to learn 'what we have already learnt' (LeCompte & Preissle, 1992, p. 816 as cited in Eisenhart, 1998) regarding user involvement in supported employment. In this study, the concept of *user involvement* was conceptualised as *participant engagement*, drawing inspiration from *client engagement*, which forms the initial phase of the Supported Employment method (EUSE, 2010a). We transitioned from the term *client* to the more contemporary *participant*, thereby focusing on involvement and engagement of participants in supported employment interventions. As supported employment employs a person-centred approach with a focus on personalisation of the employment-oriented follow-up, the goal was to explore user involvement within the frameworks of supported employment. This aimed to synthesise a definition of participant engagement in supported employment based on how this phenomenon was approached in the reviewed studies.

The method of systematic search follows a compulsory step-by-step procedure of literature search (PRISMA, 2015), while making it a systematic *scoping* review aimed to include a broader choice of studies and used a descriptive approach in presenting the study results (Pham et al., 2014).

As part of the preparation stage for developing a systematic search strategy, I conducted an initial search in Google Scholar supplied by the manual search for the academic publications on "supported employment". This search enriched my knowledge of supported employment, including its models such as IPS and CE. I also searched for publications on *participant engagement* in contexts other than supported employment and explored how authors defined

this concept in other settings. This provided a pre-understanding of "participant engagement" as it could appear in academic literature. For instance, the study by Yatchmenoff (2005) offered a range of synonyms for "engagement" including *cooperation, involvement, collaboration,* and *participation*. At the same time, studies on supported employment emphasised a person's conscious decisions to participate in a programme, emphasising informed choice, active voluntary participation in occupational activities, and collaboration in tailoring supported employment to personal preferences (e.g. Drake & Bond, 2011; Drake, Bond, & Becker, 2012; Larson, Sheehan, Ryan, Lemp, & Drandorff, 2014; Solar, 2015) as well as a person-centred approach to supported employment (EUSE, 2010a; Griffin, 1999; Menchetti & Garcia, 2003; Wehman et al., 1996). These studies made it possible to develop a search strategy for 'participant engagement in supported employment', presented in Table 2.

Table 2 A search strategy used for Article 1

("Support* employ*" OR "Customized Employment" OR "Individual Placement and Support" OR "supportive employment" OR "supporting employment" OR "customized support") AND ("Engage*" OR "person-centered" OR "person-centred" OR "client-centered" OR "client-centred" OR "collaboration" OR "cooperation" OR "partnership" OR "alliance" OR "relationship" OR "motiv*" OR "self-determination" OR "choice" OR "choose" OR "empower*")".

The databases were chosen based on the recommendations from the OsloMet university librarian and co-authors, including EBSCO host (Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Ultimate, ERIC, SocINDEX, CINAHL, PsycINFO, MEDLINE), SCOPUS, Social Care Online, and JSTOR as the major databases, comprising publications relevant for social science research.

The study selection process is presented in the PRISMA Flow Diagram in Article 1. The systematic search located 4,968 studies in the initial database search. The studies were uploaded into the EndNote, resulting in 1,755 records after the duplicates were removed. In the further selection process, I read the titles and abstracts of the studies, choosing those I thought were relevant for further full-text analysis. The title and the abstract had to contain information that the intervention the publication addressed was a supported employment, or one of its models such as IPS or CE. I also looked for other keywords from the search strategy or any other words that I interpreted as involving intervention participants in follow-up, their collaboration, participation or anything that could be interpreted as "engagement", as described in other studies I read preparing for the search. I selected 118 articles to be

presented to the co-authors and read them in full. Finally, 16 studies were included in the final qualitative synthesis.

Due to the constraints inherent in a PhD research project, including limitations in time and resources, we agreed with the co-author team to limit the final choice of the studies included in the systematic scoping review to the peer-reviewed empirical articles published in English. This limitation could have unfortunately excluded informative studies, including studies published in other languages, which are generally often neglected when conducting review studies (Neimann Rasmussen & Montgomery, 2018); and "grey literature" that can arguably be a source of information for a literature review study despite challenges of standardisation and identification of such a search (Godin et al., 2015).

Data analysis for Article 1

Article title: "Participant Engagement in Supported Employment: A Systematic Scoping Review"

The data analysis of the reviewed articles was inspired by the thematic framework data analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002) and was performed with the help of NVivo v12 software.

The process of coding included deductively "recognising" the patterns in the text based on pre-knowledge of participant engagement gleaned from the literature on participant engagement in similar contexts. This information was acquired during the preparation phase for the systematic search and the development of the search strategy. As not all the authors used the wording "participant engagement" or "participant involvement", the analytical task involved 'logical and intuitive thinking' (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002, p. 180), looking for connections between processes in the interventions described and participant engagement.

For instance, in the included systematic review article by McDermott and Edwards (2012), which addressed 'self-determination for older workers', the right of supported employment participants to defer emerged as a manifestation of participant engagement. This empowered participants to actively shape their own narratives, enabling them to exercise their agency by making self-determined decisions, including the option to discontinue their participation. The expression of self-determined choice subsequently became one of the four themes that emerged after the data analysis was completed.

This Article took two years to complete and publish, including time needed for submission for publication, rejections and revisions. The initial knowledge of the subject at the outset of the

study process developed and changed by the time Article 1 was ready to be submitted to the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, where it was finally published. During this time, I not only was developing as a researcher but was completing my work on Article 2. I immersed myself in the person-centred approach in counselling, including the importance of creating a working alliance between the counsellor and the client (intervention participant), and self-determination. As a result, while preparing the article for a new submission, I experienced "seeing" new information that I did not notice when reading the article and coding the data for the first time. This discovery triggered the abductive process in my interpretative data analysis as I re-visited my previous analysis having new information. I felt that I needed to read more on supported employment and person-centred practices, which allowed me to return to the data analysis with new knowledge and a new understanding, moving in the hermeneutic circle (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). Based on the new knowledge acquired during my research journey, and used in the new round of text interpretation, I removed some of the articles chosen in the initial search and added new articles, particularly if I saw that the author presented relevant information that I did not see the first time or even after reading it many times. Thereafter, I re-considered whether it should be included in the final article choice as my understanding of the text and its importance changed.

The work undertaken in this study, as well as its findings, including conceptualisation of participant engagement as a process involving empowerment, self-determined informed choice, and collaboration with supported employment practitioners (employment specialists), played an important role in preparing for subsequent fieldwork and empirical data collection. It triggered my interest in person-centred approach, which I later developed in this dissertation, specifically focusing on it in Article 2. It informed the 'agenda for further research' (Schryen et al., 2015), as well as further work on the reformulations of the research question (Dudovskiy, 2016; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013).

The groundwork in Article 1 also informed the interview guide (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013) used in the field. The guide aimed to explore the concepts of self-determination and the presence of a person-centred approach within the interventions. For example, the interview guide for the intervention participants included questions such as *How do you experience that your voice /your opinion is heard in the meetings? Have you had a possibility to change activities/meetings, your career goal according to your wishes?* I explored whether participants had the freedom to choose their desired profession (exercising self-determined choice) and whether they received the necessary support from employment specialists to

pursue that profession (tailoring, non-directive counselling). Additionally, I probed if there were instances where employment specialists disagreed with participants' career choices and insisted on alternative options.

4.3.2 Preparation for the fieldwork

Some authors point out that access to the field occurs on two levels: official and interpersonal, with the latter often being more challenging (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). It requires the researcher to possess a set of soft skills and establish a common language with future research participants, encouraging them to be willing to participate in the research. Lofland and Lofland (1971) suggest four components of successful fieldwork and easy field access: the researcher's connections, accounts, knowledge, and courtesy. Having a possibility to contact through internal communication channels and presenting myself as a NAV caseworker doing a PhD, I felt comfortable contacting NAV employees in order to explain my goals and need for assistance as a colleague. I also hoped that being one of their own would ensure that my e-mails were answered, and I would receive the necessary assistance.

To initiate the project, I presented my research proposal to the NAV County advisor, seeking her advice on selecting relevant NAV offices. Additionally, I learned about the experience-exchange workshops organised by the Work Research Institute (WRI) at Oslo Metropolitan University, specifically designed for employment specialists working with immigrant jobseekers. I saw it as an opportunity to conduct reconnaissance and establish connections with potential study participants. I believed that face-to-face introductions would facilitate communication and increase the likelihood of gate-opening, compared to initiating contact via email simply as a "PhD student", even with my prior NAV experience. Establishing contact with employment specialists went smoothly, with several of them inviting me to visit their locations even before I asked for access permission.

Having considered locations available and discussions with my supervisors, I chose the location that had, comparatively, a substantial number of experienced employment specialists as well as many immigrant jobseekers participating in supported employment. This allowed me to arrange for data collection at one location, which was an important factor considering the time limitations of my PhD programme. Thereafter, I contacted the NAV County and the head of the specific NAV office where I planned to conduct data collection. I confirmed that they were aware and positive of me conducting the research at the location as well as that they knew that the Labour and Welfare Directorate was aware of the project, and approval from the NSD was received.

4.3.3 Research participants

The research involved 18 immigrants, participating in Job Chance (n=9) and the Introduction Programme (n=9), and 4 employment specialists working in these interventions interchangeably.

The *employment specialists* comprised one male and three females. Before working as employment specialists, they had previously worked at NAV as caseworkers. One also had experience as a nurse, while another previously worked at a mental health institution. They also acquired additional qualifications, having undertaken courses in supported employment and motivational interviewing.

The recruited *immigrant research participants* included five males and 13 females who originated from Syria (n=5), Eritrea (n=2), Somalia (n=2), Kosovo (n=2), Iran (n=2), Romania (n=1), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (n=1), Bosnia (n=1), Kurdistan (n=1), and Nigeria (n=1). They were aged between 25 and 50 years, and 13 came to Norway as refugees or with their family members, while five came along with their partners (non-refugees) through a family reunification scheme (Table 3). Supported employment as part of the Introduction Programme was introduced towards the end of the first year or the beginning of the second year in the Programme. Consequently, many participants in the Introduction Programme had acquired a certain level of the Norwegian language, allowing them to communicate during the interviews. Participants in Job Chance were mostly women who had spent many years in Norway but struggled to obtain an employment.

The four employment specialists I met during the workshops at Oslo Metropolitan University. These specialists, who worked at the NAV office chosen for conducting the fieldwork, volunteered to be interviewed for my research project. The choice of the immigrant research participants was rooted in a traditional purposive sampling for a case study (Badu et al., 2019). I aimed to enrol participants capable of providing necessary information to answer my research question. This implied that immigrant jobseekers needed to have been part of the supported employment programme for some time, allowing them to reflect on how well they were "involved" in the intervention, their collaboration with employment specialists, and their possibilities for making self-determined choices. I also wanted to recruit those who could speak Norwegian, English, Russian or Ukrainian, to avoid the need for an interpreter (see more on this in Language Considerations).

Table 3 Overview of the immigrants participating in this research project

N	Gender	Time in Norway, years	Intervention	How came to Norway
1	F	18	Job Chance	Refugee*
2	F	4	Job Chance	Family reunion
3	F	15	Job Chance	Family reunion
4	F	11	Job Chance	Refugee
5	F	2	Job Chance	Family reunion
6	F	2	Job Chance	Family reunion
7	F	4.5	Job Chance	Family reunion
8	F	21	Job Chance	Refugee
9	F	20	Job Chance	Refugee
10	M	2	Intro	Refugee
11	F	2	Intro	Refugee
12	M	15	Intro	Refugee
13	M	3	Intro	Refugee
14	F	2	Intro	Refugee
15	F	3	Intro	Refugee
16	M	4	Intro	Refugee
17	F	2.5	Intro	Refugee
18	M	3	Intro	Refugee

* In this table, refugee stands for someone who obtained status "refugee" or arrived as a refugee family member

Since the confidentiality policies prevent the disclosure of the NAV users' contact list, and posting an advertisement on the bulletin board might not attract sufficient participants, the employment specialists suggested acting as intermediaries to reach potential immigrant jobseekers for my research study. I agreed with this suggestion. I acknowledged that using employment specialists as interlocutors could result in a biased choice of research participants based on employment specialists' personal choices and relationships with the participants. This method might result in a "better" picture of the situation than it actually was, by providing, for instance, success stories on good relationships and collaboration. However, this was the only possibility for me to access potential immigrant research participants. Subsequent data collection showed that the immigrant participants shared their negative experiences as well as addressed issues within the intervention. This led me to conclude that if any bias in choice of the "nice" participants was present, it did not influence the data too much.

The employment specialists compiled a list of available intervention participants and invited them to the interviews with me, helping with logistical aspects, such as time and place. Since the fieldwork location was in a small town and implied long commuting hours, as a rule, I planned three to four interviews or observations per day, sometimes conducting only two or three if any of the participants cancelled their scheduled interview.

4.3.4 Interviews

Planning my data collection methods, I believed that my research question could be answered most comprehensively by exploring both experiences of personalisation "receivers" – participants, and experiences of the personalisation "practitioners" – employment specialists through interviews. This allowed for different perspectives on the same subject, reducing possible shortcomings. To ensure comprehensive data collection for addressing the research question, I opted for semi-structured interviews with 'an experiential focus' (Willig, 2007). This approach resembled a natural conversation, but included key-questions outlined in the interview guides (*see Attachments*), which helped me to guide the conversation in a certain direction (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Interviews with employment specialists

The interviews with the employment specialists included one group session and four individual interviews. The group interview was conducted at a local diner and lasted an hour and a half. Subsequent individual interviews with employment specialists were conducted at one of the NAV meeting rooms, each lasting between 45 minutes and one hour.

Initially, my plan was to conduct individual interviews exclusively. However, on my first day in the field, the employment specialists suggested combining our lunch with the interview by going out together and talking. As a result, an unplanned group interview took place in addition to the originally planned four individual interviews with employment specialists. In hindsight, I found this group interview to be particularly valuable, as the employment specialists not only provided individual responses but also supplemented each other's answers, resulting in more comprehensive insights.

The interview guide for employment specialists comprised questions concerning their work experience and the challenges they faced while working with this group of jobseekers, including possibilities of tailoring the intervention to meet their support needs. During the interviews, the employment specialists were asked to share their experiences when offering

56

intervention participants the opportunity for self-determined choices, facilitating collaboration, and tailoring interventions to align with participants' self-determined goals. Thereafter, we proceeded to discuss their understanding of and expectations of participants being involved in the interventions, including the methods used to facilitate involvement. I explored the presence of holistic follow-up by asking about what other problems (not related to employments) participants complained about, and how these concerns were addressed. I also asked whether there were any typical challenges when work with immigrants compared to non-migrant population groups.

Based on my prior experience as a caseworker in NAV, I was aware that NAV employees often declined requests to participate in research projects due to time constraints and the perception that it may not directly contribute to their work tasks. In order to minimise disruption caused by my fieldwork, I took measures to ensure that my presence would not impose a significant burden. Therefore, interviews with immigrants were scheduled several days in advance, providing specific details regarding time and location. In contrast, interviews with employment specialists, while also attempted to be scheduled, were often conducted whenever they had availability. Sometimes, these interviews occurred without a pre-arranged agreement, when some employment specialists approached me, for example, after I was done with an observation of a meeting or another interview, informing me of their availability "now" due to schedule changes. Additionally, I assured them that the interviews would not exceed one hour, allowing them to promptly resume their work tasks.

Interviews with the intervention participants

All interviews with intervention participants were conducted individually in one of the NAV meeting rooms, each lasting between 45 minutes and one hour. The employment specialists met the participants when they arrived at the NAV office and introduced them to me. Upon meeting them, I introduced myself and invited the participant to the meeting room where the interview would be conducted. Before formally starting the interview, I told the participant about myself, including where I was from originally and the ongoing research project. I also answered any questions if they arose. Often, they asked questions after the interview was over, including about my family and my experiences in Norway.

Arguably, self-presentation can create or reduce the barrier between a researcher and the interview participants (Presser, 2004). Although the employment specialists knew that I worked in NAV before starting my PhD education, I asked them to not mention my NAV

57

background to the intervention participants. Despite being a PhD student, I was concerned that if they learned I had previous work experience from NAV, they might associate me with NAV and perceive me as a NAV caseworker. They might think that NAV was investigating them, creating a power imbalance during the interviews and hinder a more open conversation (Lyons & Chipperfield, 2000). Therefore, I aimed to ensure that they viewed me solely as a PhD student.

Although not planned in advance, the immigrant intervention participants in my research originally came from non-western countries. Therefore, I considered it important to mention at some point, the sooner the better, that I was not Norwegian but Ukrainian. This disclosure aimed to create an image of myself as a non-Norwegian born person and non-native speaker from an Eastern European country. Appearing as a non-western foreigner who had gone through a somewhat similar experience of settling in a western country with this participant group, I hoped to create a more relaxed mood during the interviews. While Lyons and Chipperfield (2000) argued that attempting to appear as an insider rather than a 'white western woman' (Lyons & Chipperfield, 2000, p. 12) could create a barrier instead of reducing it by projecting a veneer of friendliness, I observed a positive change in the flow of interviews after revealing my origin. My research participants smiled, and their faces became friendlier and more relaxed. They appeared more interested in talking to me and answering my questions.

After the greeting and the presentation of myself and the research project, I explained to the participants that their participation in the research was voluntary and that they had the option to withdraw at any time. I also inquired about whether they were comfortable being audio recorded or preferred note-taking during the interview. The process of obtaining consent involved explaining and adjusting the consent form accordingly (for instance, making a handwritten note on the form if a participant declined audio recording) before both parties signed it.

The interviews started with warm-up questions, wherein I asked the participants to tell me about themselves and how they ended up in Norway. I then explored how they experienced the intervention, with a focus on self-determination and involvement. For example, I asked if they had a goal they wanted to achieve in the programme and what that goal was, what were the challenges they faced, and what kind of support they received within the framework of the intervention, if any. Then, I sought to understand their opinions on the interventions. I

expected answers to these questions would provide me with data for interpretation of how well intervention participants were involved in the services received, how well their personal challenges were addressed, and if there was space for self-determination and empowerment.

During the interviews with intervention participants, either voice recordings or hand-written notes were used, based on the participant's preference. While recorded interviews generally yield more comprehensive data, note-taking was also useful. In some instances, note-taking is argued to be an important method of data collection, specifically in situations where the use of a voice recorder may be deemed inappropriate due to sensitivity or at the request of the interviewees (Rutakumwa et al., 2019). The notes taken during the interviews were included in the data analysis process, but they did not provide direct material for excerpts to be presented in the articles.

Language considerations

The interviews with intervention participants were largely conducted in Norwegian, but three intervention participants switched to English from time to time. On my suggestion to conduct the interviews completely in English, they responded that they needed to practise the Norwegian language and the interviews were a good opportunity for that. Accordingly, we continued in Norwegian.

Conducting research 'across languages' (Esin et al., 2014, p. 8) introduces challenges, particularly with the possibility of 'language discordance' (Buzungu & Rugkåsa, 2023), when neither the majority of the research participants nor the researcher spoke the Norwegian language as their mother tongue.

For my research, I selected immigrant jobseekers fluent enough in Norwegian to communicate effectively and respond to interview questions without needing an interpreter. As Buzungu and Rugkåsa (2023) suggest, language differences frequently slowed our conversations, as both participants and I occasionaly needed extra time to find appropriate words in Norwegian or adjust our language use. This additional effort to communicate in a non-native language could lead to quicker fatigue and occasionally hinder the precise expression of our thoughts compared to if we were speaking in our mother tongues. However, I believed that speaking directly with a research participant allowed me to 'connect' with them and fostered a relationship that would not have been possible through an interpreter.

Further, while some scholars point out that in certain cases an interpretation of cultural particularities may be appropriate (Hennings et al., 1996), there is the danger of an interpreter not possessing the necessary qualifications or knowledge of the topic being discussed, which may lead to interpretation errors (Farooq et al., 1997; Kapborg & Berterö, 2002). Moreover, an interpreter might assume a dominant role in the interview (Baker, 1981) or 'summarise or modify the response' (Kapborg & Berterö, 2002, p. 52) and, in doing so, deny the participants the opportunity to express themselves in their own words, including placing necessary emphasis on important events and their own evaluation of those events (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Interviewees often make decisions, sometimes subconsciously, to include certain details or omit others, as well as to structure the sequence of events in a particular way (Miller, 2010). However, if an interpreter does not adhere to the same logic while translating, this discrepancy can risk the accuracy of data analysis, as the connections between events in the translation may not reflect those in the original language. Therefore, although there are limitations in articulating and replying to questions, an interpretation of the choice of words and phrasing of an interviewee with limited language skills can provide more information than an interview conducted using the help of an interpreter (Miller, 2010).

On the other hand, the selection of participants who were fluent in either Norwegian or English might introduce a selection bias favouring those who were most successful in the supported employment intervention. However, for the purpose of my research, I did not consider this bias to significantly hinder access to the information I sought. I also expected that conducting one-on-one conversations without an interpreter allowed participants to freely express thoughts and experiences, creating a safe space where sensitive topics, such as conflicts with programme advisors or family problems, could be openly discussed without concerns of judgment or misinterpretation.

Finally, my intention was to interview participants who had participated in supported employment for a considerable period, offering insights into their experiences, particularly regarding their collaborative relationship with the employment specialist, which takes time to develop. Employment specialists indicated that participants who had been involved in the intervention for some time generally possessed sufficient proficiency in Norwegian to engage in a conversation. However, I remained open to the possibility of language difficulties during interviews and made the decision to enlist the assistance of an interpreter if needed.

4.3.5 Observations

I conducted 10 nonparticipant observations during meetings, each lasting between 15 minutes and half-an-hour, involving four employment specialists and 10 different intervention participants. While the research participants knew that they were being observed, I did not actively participate in the observed activity (Brottveit, 2018; Mills et al., 2010). Having obtained permission to attend the meetings from both the intervention participants and the employment specialists, I sat as far as possible from them and silently observed. The goal of conducting observations was to see the collaborative process between the employment specialists and intervention participants in the follow-up meetings, and to get an insight into the interaction between them (Frechette et al., 2020). My goals for observing included: to see if the intervention participant was participating in the dialogue with the employment specialist at all or remained silent; to note what topics were discussed; to determine if the intervention participant expressed his or her opinions or needs and if these were taken into consideration when planning further activities, to observe how the employment specialists responded to such requests; and if and how the intervention participants' self-defined problems and needs were addressed.

I was aware that even my silent presence might create the Hawthorne effect, that is, the observed subjects' behaviour is influenced by the researcher's presence. This might lead the subjects to behave differently from their usual manner, potentially raising questions about the study's validity (Frey, 2018; Oswald et al., 2014). The related "front stage effect" (Crotty, 2020) might have prompted the employment specialists to put their best foot forward or intervention participants might have highlighted the most problematic issues to prove that things were not going smoothly, or not feeling comfortable being observed, resulting in being quieter and more unresponsive than usual during the meetings.

I conducted a total of 10 observations with various individuals to mitigate potential biases and maintain the integrity of the observations (Patton, 2014). Additionally, I sought to establish familiarity with the immigrant participants by conducting interviews with them prior to the observations. This allowed them to become acquainted with me before I appeared at the meetings, reducing any sense of unfamiliarity. Throughout the observations, I made a conscious effort to minimise note-taking, opting to only write down a few keywords. Detailed notes were written after the meetings were concluded. This measure aimed to ensure that my presence and note-taking did not influence the participants' behaviour during the observations or their responses during the interviews (Lofland & Lofland, 1971). Finally, drawing from my

experience as a caseworker in NAV, where attending each other's meetings was a common practice for learning and providing feedback, I hoped that the employment specialists were accustomed to having a NAV colleague present. This experience with the presence of a colleague during meetings might have contributed to a sense of normalcy for the employment specialists in the study.

4.3.6 Reflections over doing an insider research

Being a NAV caseworker and doing my fieldwork at one of the NAV offices, including my pre-understanding of the research topic and the transition from a caseworker to a researcher role and maintaining awareness of my researcher identity within insider research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Wadel, 1991), presented considerations that I would like to address in this section.

Insider research, which involves conducting research within one's own organisation (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), has its advantages and disadvantages. One of the primary challenges is the researcher's proximity to the subject matter, potentially leading to 'role conflict and value conflict' (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 70), rooted in emotional involvement and empathy towards colleagues. These factors, in turn, can affect the collection and interpretation of data (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). The "pigeonholes" (Wadel, 1991) – when assumption of common insider knowledge, might lead to overlooking critical information during the interviews – could have created a possibility of important information being omitted (Asselin, 2003; Wadel et al., 2014). Employment specialists might have left out certain details, such as organisational routines or daily challenges, presuming that I, as a NAV employee, would already be familiar with these aspects. This assumption could manifest in vague remarks like "you know" or non-verbal cues, such as a suggestive smile. Conversely, I also might have omitted asking certain questions, assuming that I already "knew" the information from my caseworker experience, realising that I should have asked clarifying questions only when working on data analysis for my articles.

Another issue that I encountered as an insider was being perceived as a "spy", potentially causing interviewees to withhold certain information (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). Occasionally, employment specialists asked me the same question jokingly, half serious: "Why are you researching on *us*?" They later introduced me to their colleagues, saying "This is Mariya who is researching how well we are doing our job". Though it was said in jest, I realised that it might have reflected their thoughts about the "hidden" goals of my project and myself as a "spy" sent by the Labour and Welfare Directorate to their office. Therefore, I tried

to provide as careful an explanation of the research project as possible to ensure that they did not feel "under investigation". I explained why their location was chosen and emphasised that my goal was not to control them but to explore the intervention participants' experiences of the vocational intervention. The practical goal of my research was to improve the tailoring of interventions for this group.

At the same time, I experienced how being a NAV employee enabled my communication with the local NAV-team. My professional status seemingly assisted me to blend into the environment, particularly during lunch and coffee breaks, as we spoke the same NAV-language and professional jargon, for example, *han er avklart* (NAV considers the user to be healthy and ready for work or the user's case is prepared for applying for permanent disability benefits)*, han fikk P29* (the user was diagnosed with the medical code P29 (ICPC-2 codes), which caseworkers experience as rather vague as it may mean a wide variety of psychological problems and NAV as a rule needed a detailed clarification from the user's doctor explaining, for example, why the user is unable to work even part-time)*, registrert kontakt* (the caseworker has registered a contact with an employer in NAV digital systems)*.* Being an insider allowed me to discuss the NAV challenges, and share interesting stories and experiences that served as an ice-breaker. I was also familiar with the internal routines and the code of conduct. I also believe that being an insider decreased the "gatekeeper" function (Olsen, 2008) of the employment specialists and fostered a more relaxed "back-stage" (Crotty, 2020) communication, both generally and during interviews with employment specialists. Finally, knowledge of NAV's everyday life, culture and jargon appeared advantageous, not just for easier field access and improved interviewing (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). It also made it possible to see the data from an angle and deeper understanding from the perspective of an outsider, who does not have all this knowledge and experience (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007).

4.3.7 Data analysis in empirical studies

The data analysis in a phenomenological study begins even before the data collection starts. This process relies on a subjective interpretation of the questions asked, the responses given by the research participant, and the observations made by the researcher (Eisenhart, 1998; Jackson, 2013; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). The initial goals of the study, selection of the target group and identification of concepts to be explored are the moment the data analysis begins, based on a pre-understanding of the topic. During the data collection stage, interactions with the research participants through interviews or other

contacts in the field, the researcher starts both the subconscious and conscious interpretation of the surrounding reality (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Maxwell, 2012). In one of the first interviews, it emerged that some intervention participants experienced their relationship with the employment specialists as problematic. It was mentioned that their needs were often not addressed adequately. From my experience in NAV, I knew that employment specialists had lower caseloads and consequently more time for follow-up of the supported employment participants. Moreover, they could not impose any economic sanctions, unlike an ordinary caseworker, for example, if a participant missed scheduled meetings. Generally, I had pre-knowledge that relationships between employment specialists and their users were rather positive. Therefore, the unexpected negative experiences highlighted by some of the intervention participants from their interactions with employment specialists were something I did not expect. Thus, I adjusted my follow-up questions based on what I heard from the interviewees, making mental notes to myself that certain themes were important to develop in my future articles. For instance, the lack of collaborative relationships between the employment specialist and an intervention participant, which I addressed in Article 2.

The transcription of interviews entailed carefully reviewing the interview texts, reconsidering the ideas that emerged during the interviews, and engaging in iterative and recursive movements between data immersion, theory consultation, data analysis, and re-evaluation of data interpretation (Assarroudi et al., 2018) and abductive reasoning (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Järvensivu & Törnroos, 2010).

Though initially planning on transcribing the interviews verbatim, I soon realised that interviewing people who do not speak the language fluently implies many pauses when they are attempting to remember or find a right word while making different sounds, expressing frustration, or laughing. Therefore, while transcribing all the interviews verbatim is often argued to be important as it opens possibilities for more analysis options by providing 'nonverbal cues and emotional aspects' (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006, p. 38), in this dissertation project, I realised it would not serve the research purpose. Instead, it could even be misleading. With regard to the data analysis methods applied in the work on the Articles within this dissertation, the choice of transcription method does not affect the subsequent data coding process (Greenwood et al., 2017). Therefore, while I initially attempted to transcribe the interviews verbatim, interviews were mostly transcribed using the intelligent verbatim approach, by excluding the sounds and interjection (for instance, *ehhh…*, or sounds of laughing), making the texts more "readable" (McMullin, 2021).

Data analysis for Article 2

For Article 2, a directed content analysis was applied to analyse interviews conducted with research participants (both the intervention participants and employment specialists), as well as observations from follow-up meetings. I used a problem-driven (Krippendorff, 2018) directed content analysis method 'used to determine the presence and meaning of concepts, terms, or words in one or more pieces of recorded communication' (Mills et al., 2010). The analytical strategy included a deductive data analysis, where the predetermined codes were based on the previous knowledge or a theory, inductive coding where the codes were connected to the theory after the initial coding (Assarroudi et al., 2018; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and non-linear abductive analysis when I needed to validate the study inferences by addressing relevant theories (Krippendorff, 2018), such as Carl Roger's person-centred theory.

As an analysis method in interpretivist studies, content analysis is based on the presumption that recognising and discovering units in the text depends on the researcher's positionality and pre-understanding, training and competency in the field, as well as the context, purpose of the study and target audience (Holmes, 2020; Krippendorff, 2018; Rosenthal, 2018).

Already during the fieldwork phase, I noted certain disparities between the conceptualisation of supported employment as outlined in reviewed literature, including its person-centred principles, and its practice as I observed at the fieldwork site. Also, drawing upon my professional experience, I was aware of potential tensions that could arise in the relationship between NAV bureaucrats and users due to NAV's controlling nature. However, I discovered a noticeable deficiency in prioritising the self-determination of intervention participants and observed a lack of active or supportive listening exhibited by employment specialists. These observations were particularly surprising, considering the fundamental principles of supported employment. This iterative process led to the emergence of code categories that were not initially included in the deductive coding matrix, such as "Exclusion" and "Absence of a good relationship with the counsellors" (Table 4).

Article 2 commenced during the early stages of my PhD journey, where my prior work experience in NAV significantly influenced me as a researcher. This could have impacted data analysis, in the way that I *saw* and interpreted themes and codes through the lens I as a NAV caseworker considered important or recognised as something I had worked with. It created the previously addressed "pigeonholes" (Wadel et al., 2014), and could introduce bias

due to my insider perspective and proximity to the subject of study, by being "too close" to the researched subject (Holmes, 2020, p. 6), potentially narrowing the focus on practice-related codes. However, engaging with the theoretical framework on the person-centred approach enabled me to identify and incorporate codes acquired from the literature, encompassing holistic approaches, non-directive counselling, and self-determination. Furthermore, the inclusion of a co-author in Article 2, coming from a different background and bringing with her a different positionality to the data analysis and interpretation also allowed multiple perspective on the data and, to some extent, balanced the preponderance of an "internal" perspective from a NAV employee.

Codes	Excerpts
Responsibility	*You need to talk to this one and you need to talk to that one. You cannot just talk to them [employment specialists], you must go out, you need to look for work trial yourself. (Neema, jobseeker)*
(No) Self-determined choice	*If both the husband and the wife will study, how will you support yourself? You need somehow to support yourself! It is true that in Norway you can become what you want to, but you need to prioritise […] It is very challenging to dampen these demands or wishes of education. (Andy, employment specialist)*
Holistic approach	*Someone has economic problems and we should speak about job. But they are preoccupied of other things. Then you cannot speak about job. Then we should tidy up a bit. (May Britt, employment specialist)*
Focus on employment	*Before we focused on activating them by getting out of the house, understand that they could be independent, could live a life. Then - a job. But now, it is a job only […] Everything is focused on getting a job […] For those with weak language skills, there is a language café, a little bit of the Norwegian language as a side activity to applying for jobs. (Anna, employment specialist)*
(No) Holistic approach	*They bring up other irrelevant employment topics in front of you. However, my job as an employment specialist is to refer them to others, for example, a doctor, a NAV caseworker, a nurse, the housing office… There is no point to sit and talk for two hours about something you cannot resolve here … I think it is good that we are not responsible for these [other needs.] It would take time away from the employment specialist role. (Inger, employment specialist)*
Person-driven follow-up	- *(absent)*
Non-directive counselling	- *(absent)*
Good relationship with the counsellor	*She understands me. Very… very competent lady who helps… (Emina, jobseeker)*

Absence of a good relationship with the counsellor	*They don't attack, like, but when you say something – they don't like it. It is childish, but it hurts. (Thomas, jobseeker)*
Exclusion	*Though supported employment is an offer for everyone, we have so limited resources that we have to prioritise, although we should not. (Inger, employment specialist)*

Table 4 Examples of codes and interview excerpts for Article 2

Data analysis for Article 3

Inspired by the life course perspective and the idea that understanding individuals' life histories is integral to personalisation (Kampen, 2019), the aim of this study was to explore how the life course experiences of immigrants influenced their perception and experience of temporality. This, in combination, ultimately shaped their career agency, including their employment goals, plans and choice of actions to achieve the 'expected outcomes' (Hitlin & Kwon, 2016). Thematic data analysis (Polit et al., 2021) was utilised.

In-depth data analysis of the interviews with 18 immigrants encompassed their personal and professional trajectories in their home countries (including personal and professional circumstances), the challenges faced during their journey and settlement in Norway (such as bureaucratic hurdles, participation in the Introduction Programme), and the influence of family circumstances within the broader life course perspective.

The life course approach to analysis included several stages, addressed in Article 3 and was mainly built around the concepts of *agency* (Elder et al., 2003; Hitlin & Kwon, 2016), *disrupted life course* and *linked lives*. The main sources for coding temporality as experienced by research participants were theory-developing works by Cwerner (2001, 2004), Griffiths (2014) and Folke (2018). Thus, we used codes inspired by Griffiths (2014), who suggested a number of concepts related to the experience of time flow during migration and settlement (*sticky time*, *suspended time*, *frenzied time* or *ruptured time*), and by Folke, who discussed temporalities of migrant students (*temporal desynchronies, imagined careers, being 'out of line'*).

The final stage of data analysis included linking the life course themes with those inspired by the theory of temporality. Thereafter, these were linked to the themes of career agency, including choices, decisions and actions of the research participants. It became evident that the life course events, such as the inability to obtain employment and bureaucratic struggles, directly impacted the experience of temporality. This manifested as prolonged periods of waiting, a sense of time being suspended, and the perception of time being wasted. When

these life course events and experience of temporality were combined, they exerted an influence on career agency. This was observed through individuals making specific choices, such as opting for low-skilled jobs or choosing to travel to visit family members abroad instead of accepting a work trial placement, as a result of the interplay between their life course events and their temporal experiences. As a result, three distinct themes were constructed: (1) *career agency influenced by transnational family duties and temporal asynchronies*; (2) *career agency influenced by career history and temporal liminality*; and (3) *career agency influenced by traumatic events and temporal suspension,* presented in Article 3.

4.3.8   Validity and transferability of the findings

Qualitative studies often involve a limited number of subjects, which raises questions about their credibility and the possibility of generalising findings. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) note that some research perspectives reject the idea of validity in qualitative studies, referring to subjectivity in data analysis. Additionally, the same research participants might offer different responses to the same question when asked by different interviewers or at different times (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). However, researchers contend that various factors support the validation of qualitative studies and the generalisation of their findings (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

In this study, the participants were selected to reflect the dissertation target population group. Methods for data collection and analysis, chosen for their relevance to the research question, aimed at transparency and appropriateness, grounding the findings in the data to avoid biases and preconceived idea (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Data triangulation was used (Oppermann, 2000), utilising both interviews and observations as complementary data sources. This strategy enabled the comparison and contrasting of findings, enhancing the validation of results and providing a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Interviews were conducted with employment specialists and intervention participants, alongside meeting observations. Furthermore, this chapter addressed personal biases and assumptions, acknowledging their potential impact on the study (Davis, 2020) through reflection.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) argue that determining what is considered valid in qualitative research is the responsibility of the academic community, which includes networking among researchers and peer-review. To mitigate potential biases in my data analysis, stemming from my background as a caseworker or an immigrant, and to avoid being judgmental towards the NAV for their actions, I found that collaborating with co-authors who have diverse

professional backgrounds and are from different countries than Norway is beneficial. A pivotal stage in this dissertation research project involved subjecting the research findings, methodology, limitations, biases, and any potential conflicts of interest to peer review. To accomplish this, articles containing research findings were submitted to respective academic journals, thereby ensuring that the research underwent critical evaluation by independent experts in the field.

On the other hand, a phenomenological study is characterised by a limited sample size, enabling an in-depth analysis of individual experiences, unique and incomparable, and thus posing challenges for generalisation (Andriotis, 2009; van Manen, 1990). Additionally, in this research project, the primary focus is on exploring the practice of personalisation in each unique case. Given the central concept of personalisation, it is contradictory to the essence of the research to engage in group categorisation or labelling attempts.

While generalisation is challenging when focusing on the unique experiences of individuals, such as each immigrant with his or her individual life history and personal challenges upon arriving in the country of settlement, there is still the possibility of identifying shared experiences and uncovering certain patterns. These patterns often align with findings from other similar studies that highlight the challenges to be addressed in work with, for instance, high-skilled immigrants (e.g. Mozetič, 2022c) or female immigrants (e.g. Omar, 2022), allowing for a certain level of generalisation. Accordingly, this dissertation reinforces previous research and delves deeper into the practice of personalised interventions. It provides insights into the subjective experiences of the participants studied, with the potential relevance of the findings to other contexts and individuals receiving personalised services.

5   RESULTS

The research results are presented in three articles. In this chapter, I provide a brief outline of the articles, including the primary findings and academic contributions.

5.1   Article 1

Title: "Participant Engagement in Supported Employment: A Systematic Scoping Review"

Published in: *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*

The first article in my PhD dissertation was originally planned as a knowledge-building piece to serve as a foundation for further research. By delving into supported employment as a personalised employment-oriented intervention, the article offers knowledge on how participants with such personalised interventions can be involved in the decision-making process, emphasising empowerment and the ability to make self-determined choices in a collaborative, personalised follow-up process.

The Article sought to conduct a systematic literature review to compile existing knowledge on engagement of participants in supported employment interventions. The research question addressed in this study was: How is participant engagement in supported employment interventions presented, defined, and conceptualised in existing literature?

The process of systematic review, following the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews, went from locating 4,968 records in the initial database search and reducing the number to the final 16 studies that met the selection criteria and were included in the review.

Findings: We found three main themes that define participant engagement in supported employment: participants practicing self-determined choice, collaboration or working alliance between participants and practitioners, and empowerment of the participants. These findings allowed to define participant engagement in supported employment as 'an active, multifaceted process that involves the empowerment of participants, participants' exercise of self-determined informed choice, and their collaboration with supported employment practitioners (employment specialists) in the working alliance' (Article 1).

Academic contribution: This study represents the first systematic scoping review that examines participant engagement in the context of supported employment, emphasising its significance. By suggesting a definition of participant engagement in supported employment,

the study contributes to the existing knowledge base on supported employment as a method of employment-oriented follow-up. Furthermore, the definition of participant engagement established in this study also holds relevance for other social services that aim to involve users as well as vocational interventions striving to attain similar outcomes. It highlights the importance of self-determination, empowerment and fostering a working alliance.

5.2 Article 2

Title: How congruent is a person-centred practice with labour activation policy? A person-centred approach to vocational interventions for immigrant jobseekers in Norway

Published in: *European Journal of Social Work*

Article 2 explores the congruence between personalisation and activation policies, considering their implications on the actual practice of personalised interventions within NAV. It sheds light on how these congruences and discrepancies influence immigrants' experiences, providing insights into their perceptions of personalisation.

This article is based on interviews conducted with immigrants and employment specialists, as well as observations of the meetings between them as part of the follow-up process. It explores how person-centred interventions, such as supported employment, fit within the framework of what is arguably a coercive activation policy agenda. Our main arguments were that the implementation of supported employment implied adherence to the person-centred approach. These include building a trust-based relationship between the counsellor and participant; offering holistic, non-directive follow-up, and encouraging self-determination and independent choice.

The article asks three key questions: (1) How well do person-centred principles fit with the activation policy? (2) How do person-centred practices and activation measures interact, and what are the congruencies and tensions? (3) What are the effects and practical implications arising from these congruencies and tensions?

<u>Findings:</u> The central findings of this article revealed that the activation policy leads to the overarching focus of the interventions on employment, often overlooking participants' non-employment needs. Moreover, the article highlights the use of 'structured' choice as a tool to achieve better intervention outcomes, as well as presence of directive counselling in meetings between employment specialists and intervention participants. While certain features of the

71

person-centred approach, such as low caseloads and attempts to individualise the follow-up, are present, waged work is the keynote of counselling. This intense pursuit of employment hinders the actualisation of a person-centred approach.

The intervention, intended as jobseeker-driven, in fact, uses paternalistic approaches, directing participants towards "undesired" careers, to what the employment specialists consider a more appropriate choice. These interventions lack the meaning of person-centredness and resemble traditional 'provider-centred' directive counselling, rather than practicing a non-directive person-centred approach. In addition, the interventions had exclusionary features towards both potential and present participants. Thus, we argued that the political agenda of the activation policies appears to be inconsistent with the person-centred foundations.

Academic contribution: This article contributes to the literature by addressing the controversies between goals of policy and practice. This study adds to the knowledge of the theory of person-centredness, particularly its application in the context of employment-oriented interventions. We assert that to permit person-centredness to emerge in supported employment, the activation-guided agenda of vocational interventions needs to be reviewed, giving employment specialists the opportunity to provide holistic, non-directive counselling and empower the participants to take self-determined choices. Despite the study being conducted in Norway, the findings may be relevant for research and policy institutions in other welfare states interested in implementing the supported employment interventions.

5.3 Article 3

Title: Career Agency of Immigrants Participating in Employment Interventions in Norway

Resubmitted after comments from reviewers to: *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*

Article 3 delves deeper into the nuanced experiences of immigrants as they participate in personalised employment-oriented interventions within NAV. It uses a theoretical framework comprising the life-course perspective and the concept of temporality to analyse interviews conducted with 18 immigrants. The aim is to explore their experienced challenges and needs of employment-oriented intervention participants in Norway, examining how these challenges influence their career agency. This article is rooted in the idea of the disrupted life course,

which can significantly impact immigrants' temporal experiences and their perceptions of the future, thereby affecting their career agency.

Utilising a temporal perspective nuances the exploration of how immigrants' past experiences and their future expectations can relate to their present career agency. This approach considers how past experiences may evolve into decisions made in the present. The application of the life-course paradigm and the concept of temporality is intended to provide insights into how these elements may impact the career agency of immigrants involved in employment-oriented interventions.

Findings: The findings of this study elucidate the profound influence of disrupted life courses and experiences of temporality on the career agency of the participants, manifesting in different ways. Participants encountered the task of reconciliation of transnational family commitments with the need for engagement in employment-oriented interventions in Norway. They might overlook job opportunities due to family obligations, or opt for low-skilled professions, seeking an exit from temporal liminality. Among highly skilled participants, a decision was made to re-qualify for low-skilled professions, thereby expediting their transition from temporal liminality caused by unproductive work trials to attain economic stability. Enduring traumas in their home country, aggravated by long temporal suspension and uncertainty as a result of long bureaucratic procedures in Norway, prompted a preference for jobs that are less mentally taxing.

Academic contribution: The study emphasises the significance of the life-course perspective, combined with the temporality lens, in offering a nuanced understanding of the difficulties that immigrants encounter when entering the job market of their country of settlement. This approach enables a deeper understanding of their experiences, challenges, and consequent career agency. The insights gained from this study aim to inform the development of more personalised employment-oriented interventions targeting immigrant jobseekers.

6 DISCUSSION

The objective of this PhD dissertation research project was to contribute to advancing the personalisation of employment-oriented interventions for immigrants and to generate insights aimed at enhancing the employment outcomes of immigrant jobseekers.

The research questions that guided this study were:

1) How do immigrants experience personalisation of the employment-oriented interventions provided to them by NAV?

2) How do NAV's interventions, intended to be personalised, reflect the principles of personalisation?

The broader answers to the research questions can be summarised as follows:

Immigrants experience limited personalisation within employment-oriented interventions, as employment specialists often return to *standardised individualisation*[2] methods. In this research project, I define these methods as traditional, or standardised approaches that have previously shown positive outcomes for users within the target group. Furthermore, the findings reveal the presence of what I refer to as *pseudo-personalisation*, wherein the semblance of personalisation is maintained, but the fundamentals such as self-determination and empowerment of the user are often lacking. The practice of personalised interventions within NAV is connected to professional discretion and coping strategies. This association suggests that discretion might result in attempted personalisation, which ultimately reverts to standardised individualisation, while coping strategies appear to be leading to pseudo-personalisation.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I address these findings in detail and discuss their implications for social work practice and social policy. I will conclude this chapter by providing suggestions for further research in this area.

---

[2] While I came to this term as a result of putting standardisation and individualisation of follow-up in NAV together, this term can be found and was inspired by studies on personalisation in other contexts; see, for example, Spallek, J., & Krause, D. (2016). Process Types of Customisation and Personalisation in Design for Additive Manufacturing Applied to Vascular Models. *Procedia CIRP*, *50*, 281-286. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procir.2016.05.022

6.1 How do immigrants experience personalisation of the employment-oriented interventions provided to them by NAV?

As evident from Article 1 and Article 2, within the framework of personalised employment-oriented interventions, participants can experience personalisation in several interrelated ways:

- Self-determined career choice. Participants are empowered to pursue jobs that align with their own career preferences and aspirations.
- Holistic follow-up, aiming to address participants' unique circumstances and self-defined needs.
- Establishing a working alliance with the caseworkers, or employment specialists, non-directive follow-up and participant involvement, allowing participants to shape the follow-up according to their needs and self-determined goals.

The findings of Article 2 highlight limited occurrences of these experiences due to little congruency of personalisation with activation policies. Although it is contended that the mutually agreed-upon goal of obtaining a waged job is pivotal for establishing a collaborative relationship and working alliance between employment specialists and users (Bordin, 1994), there seems to be a disparity between the career aspirations of intervention participants and the jobs or work trial placements proposed by employment specialists, as elucidated in Article 2. Additionally, both Article 2 and Article 3 highlight that the self-determined goals and needs of these participants seem to be inadequately addressed, and might therefore create a barrier for establishing a trust-based relationship (Rahbæk Møller & Bonfils, 2023).

It was observed that participants' involvement in the follow-up process primarily revolved around compliance with the career goals set by employment specialists, and completing tasks assigned by them, which appeared as obligatory rather than a right. Participants felt compelled to adhere to these tasks and requirements set by employment specialists, for example, contacting employers to enquire about job opportunities, as pointed out in Article 2. This "sink or swim" approach might work for resourceful individuals but seems to be rather challenging for those with complex support needs, such as the immigrants who participated in this intervention. Such an approach appears to lean towards victim-blaming (Zacka, 2017) and might potentially shift the responsibility for the intervention's inefficiencies from the street-level bureaucrats to the intervention participants (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019; Vesterberg, 2015).

While Article 1 suggests that a user's non-compliance with suggestions from the employment specialist, as opposed to mere acquiescence, can be seen as an aspect of user involvement and therefore part of a personalised follow-up, challenges arose when intervention participants in this study began pursuing goals set by the employment specialists. For instance, as indicated in Article 2 and Article 3, one of the "choices" presented to the study participants was participation in work trials that they experienced as frustrating, as these did not align with their desired career goals. Initially optimistic about securing employment through these trials, immigrants were ultimately disappointed by the scarcity of suitable job offers and repeated recommendations for more work trials, thus ending up in a "work trial trap" (Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019b) that could potentially lead to mistrust towards NAV, questioning its ability to provide help (Friberg & Elgvin, 2016; Røysum, 2021).

Initially, career mapping could reflect the self-determined career goals of the intervention participants. However, they subsequently received encouragement from employment specialists to explore job and requalification opportunities traditionally associated with higher chances of quick placement. This might include work trials in areas such as healthcare or pre-school work. As a result, participants, particularly highly skilled immigrants, found themselves directed towards "undesired" career options, leading to a regression in their career trajectory (Article 2 and Article 3). This hardly reflects a self-determined choice made as a result of a productive working alliance.

Of course, previous research highlighted that immigrants seeking employment in a new country often face challenges, such as having their qualifications devalued, even with having mastered the language of the country of settlement (Huot, 2016; Huot et al., 2020; Mozetič, 2022a, 2022b; Ugreninov & Turner, 2021). Therefore, having experienced a number of unsuccessful attempts obtaining employment in the desired field, they make a pragmatic decision to quit pursuing high-skilled career goals and prioritise jobs that offer financial support for their families back home over professional growth and upward mobility (Joy et al., 2020). However, such a choice should not be viewed as a real career choice. As exemplified in Article 3, the low-skilled job options considered by Ahmed did not appear as a desired occupation for him, leading to him being frustrated as he begins to give up on finding a job that aligns with his true aspirations. What might initially seem like a self-determined career choice, such as applying for requalification to be able to work in the elderly care sector, was actually a career *pseudo-choice,* as it is not a choice of a career but a decision to give up career aspiration for the family's economic security, diverging from his personal career goals.

Further, participants experienced challenges in addressing personal needs outside the scope of the primary goal of the intervention, which focused on employment. While some participants reported instances of being able to discuss other problems with their employment specialists, many felt that these concerns were not adequately addressed or that employment specialists did not display enthusiasm when problematic work trial experiences were brought up. As observed in Article 2, some intervention participants perceived a lack of receptiveness and understanding from their employment specialists. This could create an experience of conflict (Minson & Chen, 2022), leading to distrust (Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019a) and hindering their willingness to openly discuss and seek resolution for their problems.

Finally, discomfort in discussing negative experiences in meetings with employment specialists was compounded by a lack of awareness regarding the option to request additional meetings. There was concern that discussing problematic issues might displease the employment specialist and complicate the relationship, as addressed in Article 2. Transnational family needs and caretaking responsibilities, such as those addressed in Article 3, attract more attention during the last decade (Acedera & Yeoh, 2019; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). Particularly female migrants as traditional family caretakers and kinkeeper appear to be mostly influenced by the growing globalisation and transnational living (Moen, 2016; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). However, as noted in Article 2, transnational family needs were not perceived as essential needs to be addressed within the follow-up, but as a hindrance to the employment process. Consequently, while it may be argued that individuals participated in a personalised intervention, the follow-up within this intervention did not truly cater to their unique needs and thus, was not personalised, leading to frustration for the participant.

These experiences lead to the conclusion that the realisation of user involvement as a right was not evident, leaving the users disempowered and impeding the establishment of a trust-based relationship and, consequently, a working alliance with the employment specialists. The collaboration between the immigrants and the employment specialists appeared rather one-sided and compliance-oriented, with the follow-up process largely guided by the employment specialists. Non-compliance with the suggested easier-to-get employment options while holding to attempts to find a high-skilled job, appears not as a collaboration and involvement (Article 1), but rather as non-cooperative behaviour, resulting in an experience of "they don't like it"-reaction (Article 2). Such reaction questions presence of empathy in counselling and

possibility of building trust-based relationships, establishing a working alliance and genuine personalisation.

6.2 How do NAV's interventions, intended to be personalised, reflect the principles of personalisation?

6.2.1 Discretion: personalisation attempted, but reverted to standardised individualisation

In the context of personalisation, it may seem reasonable to expect that professional discretion aims to ensure user involvement, the development of a working alliance, and tailor interventions corresponding to each person's self-determined support needs and goals. However, the data reveals that employment specialists' professional discretion was guided by the goal of fast employment rather than holistic follow-up and empowerment. While genuinely aiming to help users obtain a job and become self-sufficient, participants' self-determined career goals could be viewed by the employment specialist as unrealistic or unreasonably time-consuming. The participants' wish to keep trying to obtain the desired occupation after previous unsuccessful attempts was therefore overridden by the employment specialists' discretion. This was not a matter of personalisation but of individualisation, based on the experience of which occupations have higher chances of employment for immigrants. Discretion was exercised in this way by 'structured choice' (Article 2) and leaning towards standardised employment-oriented interventions, such as traditional work trial placements in elderly care (Article 3).

Furthermore, holistic follow-up was not widely used. It is important to acknowledge that some employment specialists acknowledged the importance of addressing intervention participants' non-employment support needs to facilitate their focus on employment, setting aside time to discuss "other" problems or assist the participants in other ways, such as discussing economy or going with the participant to the meetings with child protection services as a supporting part (Article 2). However, others pointed out that their work task was to focus on the participants obtaining a job, while other actors needed to be involved to address other needs and problems. This approach is similar to the traditional NAV standard user follow-up and assumed a coordinating gatekeeper role (Skjefstad et al., 2018), rather than adopting a person-centred approach. In certain cases, the frameworks of the intervention resulted in a lack of tools to meet all the support needs of intervention participants, as addressed in Article 2. For instance, Job Chance employment specialists offered a three-

month language course to participants struggling with language, as the programme's goal was swift employment.

Although there may be indications of user involvement and opportunities for self-determination and collaboration at first glance (Article 2 and Article 3), these interactions often appear to be paternalistic. Employment specialists tend to assign tasks and responsibilities to intervention participants, for instance, contacting employers, thereby establishing a compliance-based collaboration. Time-consuming personalisation efforts seem non-productive and are often overridden by professional discretion and suggestions of presumably more realistic and faster employment solutions (Articles 2 and 3). These choices are frequently justified by factors such as limited local labour market opportunities or the non-transferability of qualifications from the home country, coupled with the sense of urgency among immigrants to secure employment to support their families. As a result, employment specialists tend to choose standardised solutions that have proven effective for the broader immigrant jobseeker group. However, this approach tends to generalise interventions, treating an "immigrant" as a group member rather than addressing each individual as unique, including their personal career aspirations and motivations. In resorting to these strategies, employment specialists risk undermining the principles of personalisation and reverting to the criticised concept of *McDonaldisation* (Skjefstad et al., 2018).

Thus, the findings suggest that professional discretion resulted in a standardised individualisation practice and categorisation, presumably yielding predictable and relatively swift outcomes, rather than personalisation, where timing of the positive outcomes is less certain. As exemplified in Article 3, first, it appeared that the intervention participant Ahmed was empowered to exercise self-determination and make his own career choice. However, eventually, he was directed towards choosing between standardised options, such as becoming a bus driver or working as a care-provider at a nursing home, options with a higher likelihood of success. While this career guidance was tailored to support *an immigrant [like] Ahmed* to find *a job,* the follow-up lacked personalisation for *the man named Ahmed,* who hoped to continue his career in *agriculture* and would be empowered and supported to achieve this goal.

6.2.2 Coping: pseudo-personalisation

In contrast to the previously discussed perspective, where employment specialists exercised discretion to optimise strategies targeting the integration of NAV users into the labour market, *pseudo-personalisation* centres on coping mechanisms adopted by street-level bureaucrats.

These mechanisms predominantly serve the NAV bureaucrats in mastering the overarching activation-policy driven goals of NAV, which emphasise the swift transition of users into waged employment. Their coping strategies appear to underlie *pseudo-personalisation,* which I define as the use of seemingly personalised techniques, such as user involvement, creating the impression of a personalised interaction but, which, in fact, is not. Employment specialists used different strategies to manage their workload and prioritise achieving positive employment outcomes. Often, this occurred at the expense of implementing personalisation techniques, such as enabling participants to pursue self-determined goals, which were perceived as being time-consuming and impractical given the limited time available. As noted in Article 2, the pressure to 'deliver the numbers' and meet performance targets, left little room for time-consuming personalisation efforts that could take significantly longer time to perform and might not yield fast results.

In Article 2, it is evident that while employment specialists recognise the significance of a comprehensive follow-up, they lack the capacity to address the complex needs of the participants in their entirety. As a result, they prioritise rapid employment and guide participants towards other services for assistance. This approach ensures a form of 'symbolic participation' (Arnstein, 1969) for the participants, as they are consulted on a mutually agreed-upon goal of employment and informed about opportunities in the Norwegian labour market. However, it is challenging to label this approach as genuine personalisation, given that participants' efforts to address other needs often seem to be dismissed or result in "they don't like it" experience (Article 2), with only a few exceptions.

This approach appears to be rooted in the 'culture of compliance' (Benish et al., 2018) in social work practice and lacks empowerment and true tailoring to the individual's specific needs or interests. Similar to the earlier discussed discretion, pseudo-personalisation also fosters user involvement as an obligation to comply with demands. Here, it serves as a coping strategy, enabling the employment specialist to manage their caseload more effectively, rather than promoting a genuinely collaborative process. This may lead to diminished trust, as the programme does not address their needs, while the lack of experienced empowerment may result in acquiescence instead of active involvement (Article 1).

The employment specialists seemed to struggle with adopting personalisation in their follow-up procedures, including efforts to allocate time for holistic follow-up, addressing non-employment support needs and participants' employment preferences, as well as assisting them in securing desired employment or exploring work trials at suitable workplaces. Despite

studies underlining the importance of allowing time and flexibility for employment specialists as a key to building a successful relationship with the user, particularly in supported employment (Bakkeli, 2022; Rahbæk Møller & Bonfils, 2023), the employment specialists in this research indicated that they did not have the capacity to address other topics beyond employment (Article 2). When employment specialists refer immigrants to other services, it might be interpreted as an unwillingness to offer help, potentially jeopardising building trust-based relationships. Consequently, immigrants may become hesitant to express their needs and problems, being aware that they could be redirected, which further erodes trust and allows problems to escalate (Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2019).

6.2.3 NAV's standardised labour market niche

In line with prior research, it is plausible to propose that when employment specialists faced difficulties in attaining favourable employment outcomes by matching intervention participants with placements aligned with their interests, they relied on conventional work trial placements, as suggested in Articles 2 and 3. These placements, such as those of a cleaner or a nursing assistant, were not determined by the participants' preferences but rather by the prospects of expedient placement (resulting in positive reporting outcomes), even if the intervention participant expressed no interest in such placements.

The cultivation of secondary labour-market niches, compiling jobs such as construction or cleaning, has largely been attributed to employers seeking a labour force that is tolerant and willing to accept low wages (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Eckstein & Peri, 2018; Scott & Rye, 2021). However, what can be seen as an "intermediate" niche seems to be emerging, characterised by jobs primarily in the care sector, such as preschool care and elderly care. Despite seemingly better work conditions than the secondary-labour market jobs, these are often deemed as "undesired", particularly by highly skilled immigrants (Mozetič, 2022c). The emergence of this niche appears to be rooted in the discretion and coping strategies by NAV bureaucrats.

On the one hand, immigrants agreeing to work in this niche gain an opportunity to quickly accumulate new capital and achieve self-sufficiency through full-time jobs, permanent contracts, and potential salary growth. On the other hand, work placement in this niche aligns with known paths and produces predictable outcomes, offering more certain results for the street-level bureaucrat. It serves as a pathway to employment and is often deemed a "survival job" (Huot, 2016) for immigrants, as well as for the street-level bureaucrat coping with the workload and aiming for certain quantitative results.

The problem lies in the fact that this niche is becoming a beacon where NAV is guiding immigrants towards swift capital recovery due to the high demand for labour in these sectors. While initially, during the follow-up process, immigrants might have the chance to pursue a self-determined employment goal, the niche itself is used as a default solution if the process becomes protracted, resulting in individualised follow-up efforts geared towards this specific pathway while disregarding efforts for personalisation.

For highly skilled migrants, the inability to choose their desired career path and instead having to "bargain" (Erel, 2010), attempting to avoid a devaluation of their cultural capital can be demotivating. An immigrant who possesses a history of high-skilled employment exhibits a persistent determination to maintain their pre-migration professional status. This pursuit requires an extended duration of time and support from employment specialists in their endeavour to secure a position that aligns with their educational background and previous experience. However, despite suitable jobs existing within the local labour market, the desired employment outcomes were not attained, as elucidated in Article 3. This can be attributed to various factors, including the non-transferability of education and experience, as well as a lack of preparedness for the new technologies prevalent in the relevant local industries. Although additional support could have potentially been beneficial, hindering the acceptance of demoralising low-skilled 'survival jobs' (Huot, 2016) and the devaluation of earlier professional credentials and status (Leopold & Shavit, 2013), it was not provided. Instead, the immigrant in question was directed towards more pragmatic job opportunities, particularly if they sought to receive continued follow-up and benefits.

In contrast, a refugee who presents visible health issues stemming from mental traumas (as discussed in Article 3) appears to be receiving necessary support in pursuit of a less mentally demanding occupation. However, it remains unclear whether this assistance is primarily driven by the convenience of the employment specialist in identifying positions that do not necessitate high levels of skill and mental activity, or if it stems from genuine empathy, a vital component of the person-centred approach (Rogers, 1967). The level of understanding and assistance that would have been provided to the participant had they expressed a desire for an occupation requiring high skills remains uncertain.

6.3   Implications and suggestions for social work practice and policy in NAV

Despite the emphasis in social work literature on a personalised approach and empowerment for every individual user (Ellingsen & Skjefstad, 2015; Skjefstad, 2012), these principles

seem to take a back seat in practice, with researchers questioning the role of social work within NAV (Skjefstad, 2013). The current trend in social work towards 'poverty-aware social work' (Krumer-Nevo, 2015, 2017) where well-being is directly dependent on the economic situation of the user (Krumer-Nevo, 2017), shifts the focus of social work towards economic self-sufficiency as its key goal. Within the framework of conditional welfare and activation goals, where service effectiveness of the delivered services is often measured 'in terms of labour market entry' (van Berkel & Valkenburg, 2007, p. 12), a focus on welfare conditionality raises concerns about the possible displacement of social work foundations and its role to 'address life challenges and enhance wellbeing' for individuals (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014; Leisering, 2003).

The standardised individualisation and pseudo-personalisation utilised by the NAV bureaucrats contradict NAV's rhetoric, which emphasises tailored interventions and user involvement (Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet, 2015; NAV, 2019a, 2021b). Street-level bureaucrats in NAV still find themselves caught in the same predicament highlighted by Lipsky regarding the challenges of street-level bureaucracy. They face inherent tensions between meeting the demands of the Norwegian society for pragmatic utilisation of the welfare budget and delivering high-quality results in the form of increased employment outcomes (Levin, 2015). On the other hand, they are bound by NAV's organisational guidelines and routines that must be adhered to, including the pragmatic use of available human and economic resources and swift transitions of users into self-sufficiency.

As this research project highlights, personalisation of the employment-oriented interventions in NAV appears to act as a barrier to achieving activation goals. For example, engaging in non-directive counselling, building trust-based relationships, and allowing jobseekers to pursue their desired career paths could divert resources and time away from the objective of securing employment quickly. Therefore, adherence to the personalisation fundamentals, such as user involvement, empowerment and self-determination in this context might seem unproductive, making the street-level bureaucrats return to the standardised individualisation follow-up tools. As a result, jobseekers might receive standardised interventions, even if personalisation has been attempted in the beginning. This power dynamic of standardised individualised follow-up limits the intervention participants' influence over the follow-up process and their employment goals. Limited satisfaction with the obtained employment as a result of such follow-up could potentially lead to unemployment spells in future (Huot, 2016; Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

However, this research does not claim that personalisation is insurmountable within the framework of NAV. The adoption of supported employment signifies a shift in employment strategies, underscoring a heightened awareness of diverse target groups and the recognition of their individual needs. It reflects an understanding of not just the economic aspects of unemployment but also the social and personal factors contributing to it. The current process of applying personalised interventions is part of the activation evolution, making the interventions more user oriented, moving from identifying individual support needs to individualisation, and later, to personalisation, though the latter is still in its early stages. Recognising the individual needs of job seekers and tailoring interventions to meet these needs allows NAV to offer more person-centred employment-oriented interventions, enhancing the likelihood of successful labour market integration and achieving sustainable employment outcomes.

6.3.1 Ethical dilemma

The employment specialists in this study face an ethical dilemma between the inclusive principles of social work and supported employment, in particular, and the pressure to achieve employment outcomes by excluding non-ready jobseekers who might require a longer time and more resources to secure employment (Article 2). The decision to exclude these individuals from the intervention by denying them a place raises ethical questions, particularly concerning the principles of broader social work practice.

Within the framework of social work values, work inclusion aims to 'strengthen, repair or change the relationship between an individual and the society' (Glemmestad et al., 2019, p. 62). However, the use of standardised individualisation rather than personalisation in social work practice in NAV raises another dilemma: Is it ethical to tailor an intervention to an individual solely as a member of a population group, such as "immigrants"? This issue becomes particularly relevant when considering that social work involves advocating for the rights and interests of individuals, especially those who might be vulnerable or marginalised (Healy, 2017; Parsell et al., 2016).

Utilising individualisation based solely on group membership rather than a genuine understanding and application of personalisation can be disempowering, particularly for already marginalised and stigmatised groups in society, such as immigrants from non-Western countries (Diedrich et al., 2011; Gateley, 2014; Vorauer & Petsnik, 2023). As argued by Zhao (2011), this collective disempowerment can lead individuals to feel or even confirm that their voices and experiences are undervalued and disregarded.

When examining the approach used by employment specialists in tailoring interventions for immigrants, it becomes difficult to disagree with the claims by some researchers (e.g. Diedrich et al., 2011; Gateley, 2014) who argue against putting immigrants, particularly refugees, in a separate group as discriminatory". It appears to be "sorting them out" from the 'ordinary' unemployed and is arguably rooted in a "national-centric" understanding of gender, language, and professionalism (Diedrich et al., 2011, p. 287). Additionally, categorising an immigrant solely as a "refugee" and treating them within that population group might result in a one-size-fits-all approach, depersonalisation and overlooking their 'educational and occupational selves' (Mozetič, 2022b, p. 9).

However, as argued in Article 3, in certain life course cases, particularly those marked by traumatic events impacting mental health, such an approach becomes necessary for a better understanding. Acknowledging life-course events, particularly in refugees with significant traumatic experiences, can explain certain constraints and difficulties uncommon among other NAV users. These challenges include a search for predictability and avoidance of possible mental triggers, and consequently, a display of compliance (Atkinson et al., 1996; Levenson, 2017), which might make the user seem more cooperative (Kilsby et al., 2002). However, such compliance raises ethical concerns regarding the misuse of power and underscores the need for trauma-informed social work, grounded in a person-centred approach that emphasizes trust, self-determined choice, collaboration, and empowerment (Levenson, 2017).

6.3.2 Suggestions for practice

As this research highlights, one notable challenge to the personalisation of employment-oriented interventions for immigrants arises from the insufficient holistic addressing of their complex support needs and challenges during the follow-up process. These needs and challenges, outlined in Article 2 and Article 3, might be overlooked, yet they appear to have a profound impact on immigrants' career agency. Such needs include, for example, managing transnational family connections, coping with trauma, and grappling with the loss of past career achievements. It is important to clarify, however, that addressing these needs by NAV bureaucrats does not necessarily imply solving the problems per se. Rather, as advocated in person-centred practice, it involves being a discussion partner for the participant (Hazler, 2007). It is the participant who best understands the complexity of the need and can make better informed decisions about how it should be addressed.

A holistic follow-up is also important in practice because without receiving assistance in addressing challenges other than obtaining employment, for example, such as pointed out in

Article 2 and Article 3, participants tend to become focused and channel their energy and motivation towards resolving those problems they deem of priority at the time. Dismissing other needs experienced by participants may also hinder the establishment of a trust-based relationship, as participants might not feel understood or experience empathy from the caseworker (Article 2). The lack of effective communication and trust-based relationships between employment specialists and intervention participants, along with other factors such as language barriers, discomfort in discussing negative issues, and a lack of awareness regarding additional meetings, can lead to misunderstandings and impede the job search process. This might arguably also be the reason why studies like Berg et al. (2021) observe a minimal distinction between personalised supported employment and more traditional interventions. Allowing space for a discussion of other issues also appears to facilitate user involvement and a better work relationship between the street-level bureaucrat and the user, as suggested in Article 2.

Article 3 suggests that a street-level bureaucrat may understand the users and their agency better by being aware of their life-course events. However, this perspective might seem contradictory to the social worker's focus on 'skills for not knowing' (De Jong & Berg, 2012), where the social worker is encouraged to only inquire about case-relevant information, and the value of exploratory conversations is questioned. Striking the right balance between gathering necessary information and respecting privacy might initially seem challenging. Nevertheless, the importance of understanding the person's life course—what has happened to them—rather than why they did not choose a different path (which might come across as critical) needs to be acknowledged and separated.

In conclusion, achieving true personalisation in employment-oriented interventions requires not only a change of thinking but also a shift in the organisational culture. This includes embracing person-centred leadership (Stirk & Sanderson, 2012) and fostering a trust-based organisational culture (Bakkeli, 2022), which can facilitate caseworkers' and employment specialists' awareness of the person-centred approach within interventions, enabling them to meet the unique needs of participants. While challenges such as limited resources and the pressures of performance management may slow down the process, it is crucial for NAV bureaucrats to strive towards a person-centred approach to effectively support its users.

6.3.3 Suggestions for policy

As Article 2 suggests, the activation agenda appears to be overriding the person-centred principles in the supported employment, which may render aspects of a person-centred

approach less apparent. While focusing on fast transition into employment may contribute to favourable employment statistics for NAV and provide an income source for NAV users, there is no guarantee of long-term sustainability of such employment outcomes. The intrinsic job motivation and employment satisfaction should not be overlooked as these factors influence employment longevity, reducing the risk of sick leave and improving performance (Buntaran et al., 2019; Roelen et al., 2008; Toropova et al., 2021). As suggested by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Gagné & Deci, 2005), and supported by previous studies, employees who are driven by intrinsic motivation are more likely to remain committed to their job and improve their performance, while individuals who are solely motivated extrinsically may face a higher risk of job loss, prolonged sick leaves, and a passive approach to the job search process after a job loss, potentially leading to prolonged spells of unemployment (Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010; Toropova et al., 2021; Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

One may argue that adopting more standard approaches, such as sending jobseekers to work placements with higher possibility of employment, allows street-level bureaucrats to meet society's demands for lower welfare costs and fill positions in the undesired jobs in the 'standardised labour market niche'. These jobs may not be popular within the local population but still need to be filled. However, such a strategy does not prioritise the individual, and goes against the principles of social work practice, where every person matters, and it is the well-being of a single person that should be addressed. The work-line and standardisation approach to employment-oriented follow-up in NAV not only creates a conflict between individual needs and the needs of the society (Brodtkorb & Rugkåsa, 2015), but it also potentially jeopardises the creation of services that are 'efficient, fair, responsive and respectful of the citizens' (Larsen & Caswell, 2022, p. 60).

The augmentation of life quality for an individual is a central objective of social policy (Leisering, 2003). Consequently, emphasising personalisation and a person-centred approach emerges as the pivotal driver for realigning social work and policy within the ambit of NAV. The employment-oriented follow-up within the framework of social policy in NAV would benefit from a focus on the long-term sustainability of obtained employment as a successful outcome of personalised interventions. Respecting the need to have sufficient time for users with complex support needs is crucial to ensure the transformation of individuals from being dependent on social services to becoming fully functional members of society in the long run.

It is also important to reiterate the significance of empowerment and the working alliance in social policy within NAV. This research suggests that although the concepts are well-known, their practical application in follow-up processes might not be as prominent. This highlights an opportunity for more tangible and effective involvement of NAV users in decision-making processes, shifting from a predominantly rhetorical approach to one that is more actively implemented in practice. Highlighting the importance of collaborative relationships between social workers and service users and encouraging open communication and joint decision-making can lead to more effective and person-centred interventions. It may be useful for policies and guidelines to support NAV caseworkers in exploring beyond traditional approaches. Encouraging innovative thinking aims to effectively address the distinct needs of intervention participants.

Table 5 provides a concise summary of suggestions for social work practice and policy in NAV.

Table 5 Suggestions for social work practice and policy in NAV

Practice
• Awareness of the person-centred approach and its implications, including holistic follow-up and self-defined needs
• Practice of user involvement as a right; focus on empowerment, self-determined choice and working alliance
• Acknowledgement of the uniqueness of every person, and avoiding categorisations such as "immigrant" or "refugee". See the person, not the category.
• Support for achieving intrinsically motivated occupations
• Awareness of the risk of transitioning from personalisation to standardised individualisation
• Attention to life courses as the key to understanding the user's career agency
• Person-centred NAV organisation: person-centred leadership
Policy
• Recognition of individual strengths, needs, and preferences while promoting personalised interventions
• Underscoring the importance of empowering users and fostering their self-determination
• Facilitating user involvement in decision-making processes and fostering collaborative relationships between users and service providers
• Optimisation of case load for person-centred approach, allowing thorough attention to each user's unique circumstances
• Enhanced flexibility for caseworkers through tools and resources, enabling them to meet the distinct needs of each participant
• Emphasis on sustainable, quality employment, with a focus on long-term job stability for users. Considering factors such as job satisfaction, suitable working conditions, and alignment with users' career aspirations

6.4 Suggestion for further research: Gender aspect in personalisation

Immigrant women are disproportionately represented in unemployment statistics, with refugee women facing challenges in the labour market, particularly with lower employment rates compared to other immigrants, including refugees (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019; European Commision, 2016; Spehar, 2021). Research suggests that females face strong dependence on language proficiency for job attainment, especially when compared to males (Grönlund & Nordlund, 2022; Lönnroos & Gustafsson, 2018; Ugreninov & Turner, 2021). In addition, gender-related barriers to integration, such as culturally appropriate gender roles as mothers and homemakers (Campion, 2018), and the responsibility of caring for children with special needs, primarily fall on females (Früh, 2016). As touched upon in Article 2 and Article 3, females often find themselves torn between the obligation to maintain contact with their families abroad, care for their parents, and the necessity of securing a stable income in Norway. This decision-making process creates a complex predicament, particularly for women who traditionally play a kinkeeping role in the family. They must weigh the benefits of maintaining their familial ties with the potential negative consequences of neglecting their career prospects. Consequently, they experience anxiety and uncertainty as they strive to balance their responsibilities and make choices that impact both their families and their professional lives.

The decision to prioritise familial responsibilities over career prospects can significantly impact the social and economic mobility of women. Employment-oriented interventions appear to overlook the needs of the female populations, lacking gender-sensitive nuances or designs. Therefore, it is important to develop policies and practices that specifically support the integration of female immigrant workers and address the unique challenges they face.

Scandinavian gender equality policies, often celebrated globally, may not necessarily translate into policies that are friendly towards immigrant women. Shifting the focus to personalisation and tailored support that address the unique needs of female immigrants, particularly refugees, I suggest further research to explore how existing social policies and support systems in Norway align with the specific needs of immigrant women, especially those arriving from conflict-affected areas. This is particularly relevant for refugees from war-torn countries like Ukraine, where unaccompanied females with children, including those requiring special support, comprise the major portion of the group.

7 CONTRIBUTION AND CONCLUSION

This PhD research project has contributed to the research on employment of immigrants in Norway and generated insights that can advance personalisation and enhance employment outcomes of immigrant jobseekers in Norway.

The dissertation has provided a conceptual framework for "personalisation", distinguishing it from individualisation while emphasising empowerment, self-determination, user involvement, and person-centred follow-up. The study underscores the importance of user involvement as a fundamental component of personalisation and person-centred practice, particularly in the context of supported employment (Article 1). Moreover, it delves into the congruence and tensions between person-centred interventions and activation policies (Article 2), thereby enhancing the understanding of the challenges in implementing personalisation within NAV. By combining a life-course perspective with the concept of temporality, the study examined challenges and potential areas for enhancing personalised interventions for immigrants participating in employment-oriented interventions within NAV (Article 3).

The findings suggest that caseworkers involved in personalised interventions are aware of personalisation principles, such as self-determination, holistic follow-up, and empowerment, and some have attempted to incorporate these principles into their follow-up work. The practice of personalised interventions within NAV is closely connected to professional discretion and coping strategies While discretion is used in ways that are considered to potentially benefit users, employment specialists often revert to standardised individualisation methods which previously showed positive outcomes for users within the target group. Coping strategies have enabled the management of caseloads and meeting of NAV's performance goals; however, they often involve pseudo-personalisation, which maintains the appearance of personalisation while lacking in fundamental aspects like self-determination and user empowerment. Nevertheless, the awareness of personalisation principles and the attempts to apply them indicate a shift in services provided. The progression of activation measures, with an increasing emphasis on personalisation, suggests a gradual integration of the concept into the NAV system, particularly through person-centred interventions like supported employment and a recognition of its importance within NAV.

The dissertation offers the following insights for social work practice and policy regarding the personalisation of employment-oriented interventions for immigrant jobseekers. It highlights the potential benefits of a deeper understanding of users' life-course events and suggests the

value of considering a more comprehensive follow-up. This approach may include an awareness of managing transnational family connections, addressing past traumas, and acknowledging the impact of lost career achievements, potentially allowing intervention participants to redirect their energy and motivation towards employment. Additionally, the dissertation points to the importance of developing trust-based relationships and facilitating user involvement, which could influence motivation and improve work relationships.

Further, the dissertation suggests that within policy-making, the current focus on the activation agenda might overshadow person-centred principles, potentially making aspects of such an approach less noticeable. It indicates that standardised approaches could pose a risk of compromising the development of services that are efficient, fair, responsive, and respectful towards citizens. This could lead to issues regarding employment sustainability and periods of unemployment. The research implies the significance of re-evaluating and integrating the concept of a working alliance within social policy, particularly in the context of NAV, to enhance service efficacy and ensure sustainable outcomes.

While qualitative studies on social work practice in NAV are increasing, only a few prioritise the lived experiences of individuals for whom interventions are designed. In this PhD dissertation, the exploration of immigrants' experiences was rooted in a phenomenological perspective, drawing specifically from the Heideggerian phenomenological ontological and epistemological standpoint. This approach emphasised the connection and dependence of individuals and their agency within the context in which they exist. By adopting this perspective, the project highlighted the role of contextual understanding in interpreting immigrants' experiences within NAV. This research project explored the phenomenon of personalisation by delving not only into the experiences of the individuals for whom the interventions are arguably designed and tailored to, but it also considered the perspectives of the street-level practitioners. This approach facilitated an understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships within these experiences. The use of formal theory, encompassing concepts of personalisation, street-level practice, and immigration, served as a guiding lens for the research while also acknowledging its role in setting boundaries and perspectives for data interpretation within the field of social work and social policy.

Personalisation aims not just for job attainment but also for sustainable employment, hence contributing to social inclusion, quality of life improvement, and the prevention of social inequality and poverty, including child poverty. Given recent research questioning the role

and place of social work within NAV, focusing on personalisation seems crucial for enhancing the representation and impact of social work within NAV services.

REFERENCES

Abalos, E. E., Rivera, R. Y., Locsin, R. C., & Schoenhofer, S. O. (2016). Husserlian phenomenology and Colaizzi's method of data analysis: Exemplar in qualitative nursing inquiry using nursing as caring theory. *International Journal of Human Caring*, *20*(1), 19-23.

Abkhezr, P., & McMahon, M. (2017). Narrative Career Counselling for People with Refugee Backgrounds. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, *39*(2), 99-111. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-017-9285-z

Acedera, K. A., & Yeoh, B. S. (2019). 'Making time': Long-distance marriages and the temporalities of the transnational family. *Current Sociology*, *67*(2), 250-272. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392118792927

Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *21*(2), 166-191. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016

Ali, N. M., Jangga, R., Ismail, M., Kamal, S. N.-I. M., & Ali, M. N. (2015). Influence of Leadership Styles in Creating Quality Work Culture. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, *31*, 161-169. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)01143-0

Alve, G., Madsen, V. H., Slettebø, Å., Hellem, E., Bruusgaard, K. A., & Langhammer, B. (2013). Individual plan in rehabilitation processes: a tool for flexible collaboration? *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, *15*(2), 156-169. https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2012.676568

Andriotis, K. (2009). Sacred site experience: A phenomenological study. *Annals of tourism Research*, *36*(1), 64-84.

Appleton, V. E., & Dykeman, C. (2007). Family Theory. In D. Capuzzi & D. R. Gross (Eds.), *Counseling and psychotherapy theories and interventions* (4 ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet. (2015). Nav i en ny tid–for arbeid og aktivitet. In. Oslo: Arbeids og sosialdepartementet

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, *35*(4), 216-224.

Assarroudi, A., Heshmati Nabavi, F., Armat, M. R., Ebadi, A., & Vaismoradi, M. (2018). Directed qualitative content analysis: the description and elaboration of its underpinning methods and data analysis process. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *23*(1), 42-55.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7932246/pdf/10.1177_174498711774
1667.pdf

Asselin, M. E. (2003). Insider Research: Issues to Consider When Doing Qualitative Research in Your Own Setting. *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development*, *19*(2). https://journals.lww.com/jnsdonline/fulltext/2003/03000/insider_research__issues_to_consider_when_doing.8.aspx

Atkinson, R. L., Atkinson, R. C., Smith, E. E., Bem, D. J., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (1996). *Hilgard's introduction to psychology, 12th ed*. Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Bachkirova, T., Rose, A., & Noon, R. (2020). Phenomenological approaches'. *Doing Coaching research. London: Sage*, 74-92.

Badu, E., O'Brien, A. P., & Mitchell, R. (2019). An integrative review on methodological considerations in mental health research – design, sampling, data collection procedure and quality assurance. *Archives of Public Health*, *77*(1), 37. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13690-019-0363-z

Bakkeli, V. (2022). Evidence-based activation work and service individualisation: client and frontline worker experiences with a standardised intervention. *European Journal of Social Work*, 1-13.

Bakkeli, V., & Breit, E. (2022). From "what works" to "making it work": A practice perspective on evidence-based standardization in frontline service organizations. *Social Policy & Administration*, *56*(1), 87-102. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12757

Bakker, L., Dagevos, J., & Engbersen, G. (2017). Explaining the refugee gap: a longitudinal study on labour market participation of refugees in the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *43*(11), 1775-1791. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1251835

Ballard-Kang, J. L. (2017). Using culturally appropriate, trauma-informed support to promote bicultural self-efficacy among resettled refugees: A conceptual model. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2017.1409676

Banerjee, R., Verma, A., & Zhang, T. (2019). Brain gain or brain waste? Horizontal, vertical, and full job-education mismatch and wage progression among skilled immigrant men in Canada. *International Migration Review*, *53*(3), 646-670.

Benish, A., Halevy, D., & Spiro, S. (2018). Regulating social welfare services: Between compliance and learning. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, *27*(3), 226-235.

Benner, P. (1994). The tradition and skill of interpretive phenomenology in studying health, illness, and caring practices. *Interpretive phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness*, 99-127.

Berg, B. (2015). Velferd og migrasjon - sosialt arbeid i et flerkulturelt samfunn. In I. T. Ellingsen, I. Levin, B. Berg, & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Sosialt arbeid: en grunnbok*.

Berg, B., & Ask, T. A. (2011). Minoritetsperspektiver i sosialt arbeid–en introduksjon. In B. Berg & T. A. Ask (Eds.), *Minoritetsperspektiver i sosialt arbeid* (pp. 13-21).

Berg, H., Hauge, K. E., Markussen, S., & Zhang, T. (2021). Supported Employment eller "vanlig" oppfølging? Resultater fra et stort randomisert forsøk i NAV. *Frischrapport*, *2*, 2021.

Berglund, T., Håkansson, K., & Isidorsson, T. (2022). Occupational change on the dualised Swedish labour market. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, *43*(2), 918-942.

Birkelund, G. E. (2014). Diskriminering i arbeidslivet : resultater fra randomiserte felteksperiment i Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen og Trondheim. *Sosiologisk tidsskrift*(Årg. 22, nr. 4), 352-382 : ill.

Bjerck, M., Eide, T., Røhnebæk, M., & Andersen, T. (2018). Motivasjon og hindre for inkludering av flyktninger: et dypdykk i arbeidsgiverperspektivet. Et dypdykk i arbeidsgiverperspektivet. *ØF-rapport*, *2*, 2018.

Boell, S. K., & Cecez-Kecmanovic, D. (2010). Literature Reviews and the Hermeneutic Circle. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, *41*(2), 129-144. https://doi.org/10.1080/00048623.2010.10721450

Bond, G. R., Drake, R. E., & Becker, D. R. (2008). An update on randomized controlled trials of evidence-based supported employment. *Psychiatric rehabilitation journal*, *31*(4), 280.

Bordin, E. (1979). The generalizability of the psychoanalytic concept of the working alliance. *Psychotherapy (Chicago, Ill.)*, *16*(3), 252-260. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0085885

Bordin, E. (1994). Theory and research on the therapeutic working alliance: New directions. *The working alliance: Theory, research, and practice*, *173*, 13-37.

Botbol, M. (2013). A practical guide to delivering personalisation. Person-centered practice in health and social care. *International Journal of Integrated Care*, *13*.

Bourdieu, P. (2018). The forms of capital. In *The sociology of economic life* (pp. 78-92). Routledge.

Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In Defense of Being "Native": The Case for Insider Academic Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, *10*(1), 59-74. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428106289253

Breimo, J. P. (2016). Planning individually? Spotting international welfare trends in the field of rehabilitation in Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, *18*(1), 65-76.

Breimo, J. P., Normann, T., Sandvin, J. T., & Thommesen, H. (2015). Individuell plan. Samspill og unoter. *Gyldendal Faglitteratur*.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3 ed.). Sage.

Brochmann, G., & Hagelund, A. (2012a). Norway: The Land of the Golden Mean. In *Welfare state, nation and immigration: immigration policy and the Scandinavian welfare state 1945–2010* (pp. 1-24).

Brochmann, G., & Hagelund, A. (2012b). Welfare State, Nation and Immigration. In G. Brochmann, A. Hagelund, K. Borevi, H. V. Jønsson, & K. Petersen (Eds.), *Immigration policy and the Scandinavian welfare state 1945–2010* (pp. 1-24). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137015167_1

Brodkin, E. Z. (2011). Policy Work: Street-Level Organizations Under New Managerialism. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *21*(suppl_2), i253-i277. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muq093

Brodtkorb, E., & Rugkåsa, M. (2015). Utfordringer for sosialt arbeid i dag. I IT Ellingsen, I. *Levin, B. Berg & LC Kleppe (Red.), Sosialt arbeid: en grunnbok*, 299-308.

Brottveit, G. (2018). *Vitenskapsteori og kvalitative forskningsmetoder: om å arbeide forskningsrelatert*. Gyldendal akademisk.

Bucken-Knapp, G., Fakih, Z., & Spehar, A. (2019). Talking about integration: The voices of Syrian refugees taking part in introduction programmes for integration into Swedish society. *International Migration*, *57*(2), 221-234.

Bugental, J. F. (1964). The third force in psychology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *4*(1), 19-26.

Buntaran, F. A. A., Andika, D., & Alfiyana, V. Y. (2019). Impact of Job Satisfaction on Job Performance. *Review of Behavioral Aspect in Organizations and Society*, *1*(2), 121-128. https://doi.org/10.32770/rbaos.vol1121-128

Buzungu, H. F., & Rugkåsa, M. (2023). Lost in culture: Language discordance and culturalization in social work with migrants. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2023.2216707

Campion, E. D. (2018). The career adaptive refugee: Exploring the structural and personal barriers to refugee resettlement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *105*, 6-16. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.10.008

Carrington, K. (2005). IS THERE A NEED FOR CONTROL? *Public Administration Quarterly*, *29*(1/2), 140-161. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41288254

Carvajal, A., Haraldsdottir, E., Kroll, T., McCormack, B., Errasti-Ibarrondo, B., & Larkin, P. (2019). Barriers and facilitators perceived by registered nurses to providing person-centred care at the end of life. A scoping review [Article]. *International Practice Development Journal*, *9*(2), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.19043/ipdj.92.008

Caswell, D., Kupka, P., Larsen, F., & Van Berkel, R. (2017). The frontline delivery of welfare-to-work in context. In *Frontline Delivery of Welfare-to-Work Policies in Europe* (pp. 1-11). Routledge.

Chami, G., Brown, C., & Roy, N. (2021). The securitization of Post-9/11 reception patterns of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants: deconstructing the Venezuelan Exodus (A case study). *Migration and Development*, *10*(2), 238-259. https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2020.1809280

Chernilo, D. (2011). The critique of methodological nationalism: Theory and history. *Thesis eleven*, *106*(1), 98-117.

Cheung, S. Y., & Phillimore, J. (2014). Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK. *Sociology*, *48*(3), 518-536. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038513491467

Christensen, K., & Pilling, D. (2014). Policies of Personalisation in Norway and England: On the Impact of Political Context. *Journal of Social Policy*, *43*(3), 479-496. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0047279414000257

Chung, R. C.-Y., Bemak, F., & Grabosky, T. K. (2011). Multicultural-social justice leadership strategies: Counseling and advocacy with immigrants. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling & Psychology*, *3*(1), 86-102.

Colic-Peisker, V., & Tilbury, F. (2006). Employment Niches for Recent Refugees: Segmented Labour Market in Twenty-first Century Australia. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *19*(2), 203-229. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fej016

Crosnoe, R., & Benner, A. D. (2016). Educational Pathways. In *Handbook of the life course: Volume II* (pp. 179-200).

Crossley, N. (2014). Social class. In *Pierre Bourdieu* (pp. 85-97). Routledge.

Crotty, M. (2020). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Routledge.

Cwerner, S. B. (2001). The Times of Migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *27*(1), 7-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830125283

Dahlen, K. J., & Dahl, K. (2015). Flerkulturelle sykepleiere. *Tidsskriftet sykepleien*(Nr. 4), 52-54 : port. https://sykepleien.no/forskning/2015/03/sykepleiemigrasjon

Davis, D. (2020). Presenting research reflexivity in your PhD thesis. *Nurse Research*, *28*(3), 37-43. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2020.e1644

De Jong, P., & Berg, I. K. (2012). *Interviewing for solutions*. Cengage Learning.

de Vroome, T., & van Tubergen, F. (2010). The Employment Experience of Refugees in the Netherlands. *International Migration Review*, *44*(2), 376-403. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2010.00810.x

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Self-determination theory. *Handbook of theories of social psychology*, *1*(20), 416-436.

DeWaard, J. (2016). Disaster and life course processes. *Handbook of the life course: Volume II*, 321-338.

Diedrich, A., Eriksson-Zetterquist, U., & Styhre, A. (2011). Sorting people out: The uses of one-dimensional classificatory schemes in a multi-dimensional world. *Culture and Organization*, *17*(4), 271-292. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2011.590305

Djuve, A. B., Hagelund, A., Kavli, H., Stjernø, S., & Øverbye, E. (2012). Innvandrede kvinner i kvalifisering. Arbeidslinja når helsa skranter, utdanningen er lav og barna mange. *I Arbeidslinja, arbeidsmotivasjonen og velferdsstaten, red. Steinar Stjernø og Einar Øverby. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget*.

Djuve, A. B., & Kavli, H. C. (2015). Facilitating user involvement in activation programmes: When carers and clerks meet pawns and queens. *Journal of Social Policy*, *44*(2), 235-254.

Djuve, A. B., & Kavli, H. C. (2019a). Refugee integration policy the Norwegian way–why good ideas fail and bad ideas prevail. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *25*(1), 25-42.

Djuve, A. B., & Kavli, H. C. (2019b). Refugee integration policy the Norwegian way – why good ideas fail and bad ideas prevail. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *25*(1), 25-42. https://doi.org/10.1177/1024258918807135

Dubois, A., & Gadde, L.-E. (2002). Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, *55*(7), 553-560.

Dudovskiy, J. (2016). The ultimate guide to writing a dissertation in business studies: A step-by-step assistance. *Pittsburgh, USA*, 51.

Duell, N., Singh, S., & Tergeist, P. (2009). Activation Policies in Norway. https://doi.org/doi:https://doi.org/10.1787/226388712174

Duffy, S. (2010). The Citizenship Theory of social justice: exploring the meaning of personalisation for social workers. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, *24*(3), 253-267. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2010.500118

Dumont, J.-C. (2016). *Integrating Humanitarian Migrants in OECD Countries: Lessons and Policy Recommendations* Fourteenth coordination meeting on international migration, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/14/documents/presentations/Jean_Christophe_Dumont_14CM.pdf

Dunk-West, P. (2018). *How to be a social worker: A critical guide for students*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Eckstein, S., & Peri, G. (2018). Immigrant niches and immigrant networks in the US labor market. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *4*(1), 1-17.

Eisenhart, M. (1998). On the subject of interpretive reviews. *Review of Educational Research*, *68*(4), 391-399.

Elder, G. H., Johnson, M. K., & Crosnoe, R. (2003). *The emergence and development of life course theory*. Springer.

Ellingsen, I. T., & Skjefstad, N. (2015). Annerkjennelse, myndiggjøring og brukermedvirkning. *I Sosialt arbeid: En grunnbok, red. Ingunn T. Ellingsen, Irene Levin, Berit Berg, Lise Cecilie Kleppe. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget*.

Ellingsen, P., Eriksson, R., & Tangnæs, E. (2021). Digital samhandling i den norske Arbeidsog velferdsforvaltningen. Veiledernes arbeidssituasjon i en teknologisk samtid. *Fontene Forskning*, *14*(2), 17-29.

Erel, U. (2010). Migrating Cultural Capital: Bourdieu in Migration Studies. *Sociology*, *44*(4), 642-660. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510369363

Esin, C., Fathi, M., & Squire, C. (2014). Narrative analysis: The constructionist approach. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*, 203-216.

Eugster, B. (2018). Immigrants and poverty, and conditionality of immigrants' social rights. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *28*(5), 452-470.

European Commision. (2016). *How are refugees faring on the labour market in Europe? : A first evaluation based on the 2014 EU Labour Force Survey ad hoc module*. Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/350756

Eurostat. (2018). *Activation policies* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Activation_policies

EUSE. (2010a). *European Union of Supported Employment Toolkit*. E. U. o. S. Employment. http://euse.org/content/supported-employment-toolkit/EUSE-Toolkit-2010.pdf

EUSE. (2010b). *European Union of Supported Employment Verktøykasse*. E. U. o. S. Employment. https://www.arbeidoginkludering.no/contentassets/a505ad5e5b8b4173a759e8e2f9ed9f43/eusetoolkit_korrektur3.pdf

Evans, T. (2010). Professionals, Managers and Discretion: Critiquing Street-Level Bureaucracy. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *41*(2), 368-386. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcq074

Farooq, S., Fear, C., & Oyebode, F. (1997). An investigation of the adequacy of psychiatric interviews conducted through an interpreter. *Psychiatric Bulletin*, *21*(4), 209-213.

Fernandes, A. G. (2015). (Dis)Empowering New Immigrants and Refugees Through Their Participation in Introduction Programs in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, *13*(3), 245-264. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2015.1045054

Fjelland, R., & Gjengedal, E. (1994). A theoretical foundation for nursing as a science. *Interpretive phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness*, 3-25.

Folke, J. N. (2018). Moving on or moving back? The temporalities of migrant students' lived versus imagined school careers. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *44*(9), 1506-1522. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1329008

Fossland, T., & Aure, M. (2011). Når høyere utdanning ikke er nok : integrasjon av høyt utdannede innvandrere på arbeidsmarkedet. *Sosiologisk tidsskrift* (Årg. 19, nr. 2), 131-152.

Frechette, J., Bitzas, V., Aubry, M., Kilpatrick, K., & Lavoie-Tremblay, M. (2020). Capturing lived experience: Methodological considerations for interpretive phenomenological inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1609406920907254.

Frederick, D., & VanderWeele, T. (2019). Supported employment: Meta-analysis and review of randomized controlled trials of individual placement and support. *PloS One*, *14*(2), e0212208.

Frey, B. B. (2018). Observer Effect. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluatio*n. Thousand Oaks, California.

Friberg, J. (2012). Culture at work: Polish migrants in the ethnic division of labour on Norwegian construction sites. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *35*(11), 1914-1933.

Friberg, J. H., & Elgvin, O. (2016). Når velferdsstaten bryter tilliten ned: Somaliske innvandrere i møte med NAV. *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning*, *57*(3), 257-284. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1504-291X-2016-03-02

Friesen, M. R. (2011). Immigrants' integration and career development in the professional engineering workplace in the context of social and cultural capital. *Engineering Studies*, *3*(2), 79-100.

Früh, E. A. (2016). Innvandrerfamilier med barn med spesielle behov – mødres tilknytning til arbeidslivet. *Søkelys på arbeidslivet [elektronisk ressurs]*(Årg. 33, nr. 3), 269-290.

Frøyland, K., & Neumann, C. B. (2012). *Ungdom i Ny sjanse*. https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/20048a7a164549d6bd12e7427c8b0223/afi-rapport_ungdom_i_ny_sjanse.pdf

Frøyland, K., Schafft, A., & Spjelkavik, Ø. (2018). Tackling increasing marginalization. *Work and Wellbeing in the Nordic Countries: Critical Perspectives on the World's Best Working Lives*.

Fullin, G., & Reyneri, E. (2011). Low unemployment and bad jobs for new immigrants in Italy. *International Migration*, *49*(1), 118-147.

Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *26*(4), 331-362.

Galiè, A., & Farnworth, C. R. (2019). Power through: A new concept in the empowerment discourse. *Global Food Security*, *21*, 13-17. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2019.07.001

Gateley, D. (2014). Becoming actors of their lives: A relational autonomy approach to employment and education choices of refugee young people in London, UK. *Social Work & Society*, *12*(2).

Gericke, D., Burmeister, A., Löwe, J., Deller, J., & Pundt, L. (2018). How do refugees use their social capital for successful labor market integration? An exploratory analysis in

Germany. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *105*, 46-61.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.12.002

Ghorashi, H., & Sabelis, I. (2013). Juggling difference and sameness: Rethinking strategies
for diversity in organizations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, *29*(1), 78-86.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2012.11.002

Gjersøe, H. M. (2016). Regulating Inflow or Outflow: A Comparison of the Work Capability
Assessments in the UK and Norway. *Journal of Social Policy*, *45*(1), 141-158.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279415000471

Glemmestad, H., Kleppe, L. C., & Frøland, K. (2019). En sosialfaglig tilnærming til
arbeidsinkludering. In H. Glemmestad & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Arbeidsinkludering i
sosialt arbeid* (pp. 53-70). Fagbokforlaget.

Godin, K., Stapleton, J., Kirkpatrick, S. I., Hanning, R. M., & Leatherdale, S. T. (2015).
Applying systematic review search methods to the grey literature: a case study
examining guidelines for school-based breakfast programs in Canada. *Systematic
Reviews*, *4*(1), 138. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-015-0125-0

Greenwood, M., Kendrick, T., Davies, H., & Gill, F. J. (2017). Hearing voices: Comparing
two methods for analysis of focus group data. *Applied Nursing Research*, *35*, 90-93.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2017.02.024

Griffin, C. (1999). Rural Routes: Promising Supported Employment Practices in America's
Frontier. *The Impact of Supported Employment for People with Significant
Disabilities. Richmond: RRTC on Workplace Supports*.

Griffiths, M. (2014). Out of Time: The Temporal Uncertainties of Refused Asylum Seekers
and Immigration Detainees. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *40*(12), 1991-
2009. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2014.907737

Grönlund, A., & Nordlund, M. (2022). A Maternal Wall for Refugees? Gender and Labor
Market Establishment in Sweden 1. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, *12*(2), 3-
26.

Gubrium, E., Harsløf, I., & Lødemel, I. (2014). Norwegian activation reform on a wave of
wider welfare state changes. In I. lødemel & A. Moreira (Eds.), *Activation or
workfare?* (pp. 19-46). Oxford University Press.

Gubrium, E., & Leirvik, M. S. (2021). Taking Time Seriously: Biographical Circumstance
and Immigrant Labor Integration Experience. *Journal of International Migration and
Integration*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-021-00830-4

Hagaseth, I. T. (2019). Arbeid og utenforskap. In H. Glemmestad & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Arbeidsinkludering i sosialt arbeid* (pp. 27-52). Fagbokforlaget.

Halcomb, E. J., & Davidson, P. M. (2006). Is verbatim transcription of interview data always necessary? *Applied Nursing Research*, *19*(1), 38-42. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2005.06.001

Hansen, H. C. (2019). Institutional paradoxes in Norwegian labour activation. In *Institutional ethnography in the Nordic region* (pp. 151-162). Routledge.

Hansen, H. C., & Gubrium, E. (2022). Moving forward, waiting or standing still? Service users' experiences from a Norwegian labour activation programme. *European Journal of Social Work*, *25*(6), 1007-1018. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2022.2077316

Hazler, R. J. (2007). Person-Centered Theory. In D. Capuzzi & D. R. Gross (Eds.), *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Theories and Interventions* (4. ed.). Pearson Education Inc.

Healy, K. (2017). Becoming a trustworthy profession: Doing better than doing good. *Australian Social Work*, *70*(sup1), 7-16.

Heinz, W. R. (2003). *From work trajectories to negotiated careers: The contingent work life course*. Springer.

Hennings, J., Williams, J., & Haque, B. N. (1996). Exploring the health needs of Bangladeshi women: a case study in using qualitative research methods. *Health Education Journal*, *55*(1), 11-23.

Hernes, T. (2014). Arbeidsinkludering - noen historiske spenninger og aktuelle utfordringer. In Ø. Spjelkavik & K. Frøyland (Eds.), *Inkluderingskompetanse : ordinært arbeid som mål og middel* (pp. 306-325). Gyldendal akademisk.

Hiles, D., Ermk, I., & Chrz, V. (2017). Narrative Inquiry. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526405555

Hill, H. C. (2003). Understanding Implementation: Street-Level Bureaucrats' Resources for Reform. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *13*(3), 265-282. https://doi.org/10.1093/jpart/mug024

Hitlin, S., & Kwon, H. W. (2016). Agency across the Life Course. In *Handbook of the life course: Volume II* (pp. 431-449).

Hoffmann, H., Jäckel, D., Glauser, S., Mueser, K. T., & Kupper, Z. (2014). Long-term effectiveness of supported employment: 5-year follow-up of a randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *171*(11), 1183-1190.

Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality--A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research--A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *8*(4), 1-10.

Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. F. (2003). *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*. Sage.

Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The active interview*. Sage Publications.

Holum, L. C. (2012a). "Individual plan" in a user-oriented and empowering perspective: A qualitative study of "individual plans" in Norwegian mental health services. *Nordic Psychology*, *64*(1), 44-57. https://doi.org/10.1080/19012276.2012.693725

Holum, L. C. (2012b). "It is a good idea, but…" A qualitative study of implementation of 'Individual Plan' in Norwegian mental health care. *International Journal of Integrated Care*, *12*, e15-e15. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22977428

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3429142/

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, *15*(9), 1277-1288. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1049732305276687

Huot, S. (2016). 'Doing' capital: examining the relationship between immigrants' occupational engagement and symbolic capital. *Migration Studies*, *5*(1), 29-48. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnw023

Huot, S., Cao, A., Kim, J., Shajari, M., & Zimonjic, T. (2020). The power of language: Exploring the relationship between linguistic capital and occupation for immigrants to Canada. *Journal of Occupational Science*, *27*(1), 95-106.

Høgestøl, A., & Kristoffersen, E. M. (2022). *Individrapportering Jobbsjansen 2021*. https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/8151584c2c6e4bb6b4489dad1c0deff0/individrapportering-2021-jobbsjansen.pdf

Høgestøl, A., Skutlaberg, L. S., & Bråstein, M. R. (2019). *Jobbsjansen 2017 og 2018*. https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/4c7ab29b63ad4452a01be0acfb55b595/jobbsjansen-2017-og-2018---analyse-av-individrapporteringer.pdf

Håvold, O. K. (2018). Opportunity talk, work talk and identity talk: Motivating strategies used by the Norwegian labour and welfare offices. *Nordic Social Work Research*, *8*(2), 158-170.

Haavorsen, P., & Hernes, T. (2010). Inkluderingsstrategier og arbeidsrettede tiltak. In T. Hernes, I. Heum, & P. Haavorsen (Eds.), *Arbeidsinkludering*. Gylendal.

IMDi. *Ungdom i Ny sjanse*. https://www.imdi.no/arkiv/arkiverte-publikasjoner/ungdom-i-ny-
sjanse/

IMDi. (2020). *Tilskudd til Jobbsjansen*. Retrieved from
https://www.imdi.no/globalassets/dokumenter/tilskudd/rundskriv-2020/tilskudd-til-
jobbsjansen-20202.pdf

IMDi. (2021). *Arbeids- og utdanningsrettede kvalifiseringsløp*.
https://introduksjonsprogrammet.imdi.no/temaer/arbeids--og-utdanningsrettet-
kvalifiseringslop/#arbeidsog-utdanningsrettet-innhold-i-introduksjonsprogrammet

IMDi. (2022a, 31.01.2022). *Immigration and demographics*. Retrieved 18.07.2022 from
https://www.imdi.no/en/facts-about-immigrants-and-integration/immigration-and-
demographics/

IMDi. (2022b). *Information about the Introduction Programme and language instruction:
For persons with temporary collective protection*.
https://www.imdi.no/globalassets/dokumenter/informasjon-om-introduksjonsprogram-
og-sprakopplaring-for-personer-med-kollektiv-beskyttelse/informasjon-om-
introduksjonsprogram-2022---engelsk.pdf

IMDi. (2022c, 31.01.2022). *Work and finances*. Retrieved 18.07.2022 from
https://www.imdi.no/en/facts-about-immigrants-and-integration/work-and-finances/

IMDi. (2023). *Jobbsjansen*. https://www.imdi.no/tilskudd/jobbsjansen/

International Federation of Social Workers. (2014). *Global Definition of Social Work*.
https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/

IOM. (2019). *Glossary on Migration*. Switzerland.
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf

Jackson, E. (2013). Choosing a methodology: Philosophical underpinning. *Practitioner
Research in Higher Education*, *7*(1), 49-62.

Jasso, G. (2003). *Migration, human development, and the life course*. Springer.

Jenssen, A. G. (2012a). Brukermedvirkning - hva er så det? In A. G. Jenssen & I. M. Tronvoll
(Eds.), *Brukermedvirkning: likeverd og anerkjennelse* (pp. 42-53).

Jenssen, A. G. (2012b). Brukermedvirkning i sosialtjenesten : en studie av sosialarbeidernes
perspektiv. In A. G. Jenssen & I. M. Tronvoll (Eds.), *Brukermedvirkning: likeverd og
anerkjennelse*. Universitetsforlaget.

Jesus, T. S., Papadimitriou, C., Bright, F. A., Kayes, N. M., Pinho, C. S., & Cott, C. A.
(2022). Person-Centered Rehabilitation Model: Framing the Concept and Practice of
Person-Centered Adult Physical Rehabilitation Based on a Scoping Review and

Thematic Analysis of the Literature. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, *103*(1), 106-120. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2021.05.005

Joy, S., Game, A. M., & Toshniwal, I. G. (2020). Applying Bourdieu's capital-field-habitus framework to migrant careers: taking stock and adding a transnational perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *31*(20), 2541-2564. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1454490

Judge, T. A., & Bono, J. E. (2001). Relationship of core self-evaluations traits—self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability—with job satisfaction and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*(1), 80.

Julkunen, I., & Heikkilä, M. (2007). User involvement in personal social services. In R. van Berkel & B. Valkenburg (Eds.), *Making it personal* (1 ed., pp. 87-104). Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt9qgz1t.10

Järvensivu, T., & Törnroos, J.-Å. (2010). Case study research with moderate constructionism: Conceptualization and practical illustration. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *39*(1), 100-108.

Kamali, M., & Jönsson, J. (2018). *Neoliberalism, Nordic welfare states and social work*. London: Routledge.

Kampen, T., & Tonkens, E. (2019). A personalised approach in activation. Workfare volunteers' experiences with activation practitioners. *European Journal of Social Work*, *22*(6), 1038-1049. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2018.1461069

Kapborg, I., & Berterö, C. (2002). Using an interpreter in qualitative interviews: does it threaten validity? *Nursing Inquiry*, *9*(1), 52-56.

Kilsby, M., Bennert, K., & Beyer, S. (2002). Measuring and reducing acquiescence in vocational profiling procedures for first time job-seekers with mental retardation [Article]. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *17*(4), 287. https://login.ezproxy.hioa.no/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9035712&site=ehost-live

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(5), 26-41.

Kjellevold, A. (2016). Individuell plan i helse- og omsorgstjenesten – behov for endringer og ansvarliggjøring? *Tidsskrift for erstatningsrett, forsikringsrett og velferdsrett*, *11*(4), 267-300. https://doi.org/10.18261/ISSN2464-3386-2014-04-02

Kleppe, L. C., & Glemmestad, H. (2019). Arbeidsinkludering i sosialt arbeid. In H. Glemmestad; & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Arbeidsinkludering i sosialt arbeid* (pp. 15-26). Fagbokforlaget.

Knutsson, H., Mattisson, O., Näsi, S., Nyland, K., & Skærbæk, P. (2017). New Public Management in a Scandinavian context. In I. Lapsley & H. Knutsson (Eds.), *Modernizing the Public Sector: Scandinavian Perspectives* (pp. 34-50). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315560328-8

Kokkinn, J. A. (2005). *Profesjonelt sosialt arbeid*. Universitetsforl.

Kondrat, D. (2014). Person-centred approach. In B. Teater (Ed.), *An Introduction to applying social work theories and Methods* (2 ed.). Open University Press.

Konle-Seidl, R., & Bolits, G. (2016). *Labour market integration of refugees: Strategies and good Practices: Study*. European Parliament.

Kratochvíl, P., & Sychra, Z. (2019). The end of democracy in the EU? The Eurozone crisis and the EU's democratic deficit. *Journal of European Integration*, *41*(2), 169-185. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2019.1569001

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage Publications.

Krumer-Nevo, M. (2015). Poverty-Aware Social Work: A Paradigm for Social Work Practice with People in Poverty. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *46*(6), 1793-1808. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcv118

Krumer-Nevo, M. (2017). Poverty and the political: Wresting the political out of and into social work theory, research and practice. *European Journal of Social Work*, *20*(6), 811-822.

Kuptsch, C., & Sparreboom, T. (2018). Labour Market Integration of Immigrants. What Works. Research Brief N°11.

Landolt, S., & Thieme, S. (2018). Highly skilled migrants entering the labour market: Experiences and strategies in the contested field of overqualification and skills mismatch. *Geoforum*, *90*, 36-44.

Langeland, S., & Galaasen, A. M. (2014). Oppfølgingsarbeidet I Nav Under Lupen: Strekker Ressursene Til? *Arbeid og velferd*, *1*.

Larsen, F., & Caswell, D. (2022). Co-Creation in an era of Welfare Conditionality – Lessons from Denmark. *Journal of Social Policy*, *51*(1), 58-76. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279420000665

Larson, J. E., Sheehan, L., Ryan, C., Lemp, S., & Drandorff, L. (2014). Practitioner perspectives on Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for individuals with serious mental illness. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(3), 225-235. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140715

Leadbeater, C. (2004). *Personalisation through participation: A new script for public services*. Demos.

Leisering, L. (2003). *Government and the life course*. Springer.

Leonard, V. W. (1994). A heideggerian phenomenological perspective on the concept of person. In P. Benner (Ed.), *Interpretive phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness* (pp. 43-64). SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452204727.n3

Leopold, L., & Shavit, Y. (2013). Cultural capital does not travel well: Immigrants, natives and achievement in Israeli schools. *European Sociological Review*, *29*(3), 450-463.

Lerfaldet, H., Sætrang, S. G., Åsheim, K., & Marki, H. S. (2021). *Kvalifiseringsløp for voksne innvandrere*.

Lerfaldet, H., Wold, L. K., & Høgestøl, A. (2017). *Flere i arbeid med Jobbsjansen: En kunnskapsoppsummering av Jobbsjansen i perioden 2005-2016*. ideas2evidence. https://ideas2evidence.com/sites/default/files/Flere%20i%20arbeid%20med%20Jobbsjansen.%20En%20kunnskapsoppsummering%20av%20Jobbsjansen%20i%20perioden%202005-2016_0.pdf

Leung, P. (2009). A Culturally Sensitive Interview Guide for Social Work Faculty Searches. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *18*(1-2), 89-109. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313200902874987

Levenson, J. (2017). Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice. *Social Work*, *62*(2), 105-113. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swx001

Levin, I. (2015). Sosialt arbeid som spenningsfelt. I IT Ellingsen, I. *IT, Levin, I., Berg, B., Kleppe, LC (red.) Sosialt arbeid–en grunnbok: Universitetsforlaget*.

Levy, C. (2005). The European Union after 9/11: The Demise of a Liberal Democratic Asylum Regime? *Government and Opposition*, *40*(1), 26-59. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2005.00142.x

Littman-Ovadia, H., & Steger, M. (2010). Character strengths and well-being among volunteers and employees: Toward an integrative model. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *5*(6), 419-430. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2010.516765

Lloyd, C. (2010). Evidence-Based Supported Employment. *Vocational Rehabilitation and Mental Health*, 19-32.

Løegreid, P., & Rykkja, L. H. (2014). One-stop-shops for social welfare: the NAV office in Norway. In *Organizing for Coordination in the Public Sector: Practices and Lessons from 12 European Countries* (pp. 78-90). Springer.

Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1971). Analyzing social settings.

Lusis, T., & Bauder, H. (2010). Immigrants in the labour market: Transnationalism and segmentation. *Geography Compass*, *4*(1), 28-44.

Lymbery, M. (2014). Understanding personalisation: Implications for social work. *Journal of Social Work*, *14*(3), 295-312. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017313477326

Lyons, L. T., & Chipperfield, J. (2000). (De) constructing the interview: A critique of the participatory method.

Lødemel, I. (2001). National objectives and local implementation of workfare in Norway. In I. Lødemel & H. Trickey (Eds.), *'An offer you can't refuse'* (1 ed., pp. 133-158). Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t895rh.3

Lødemel, I. (2009). *'An offer you can't refuse': workfare in international perspective*. The Policy Press.

Lødemel, I., & Dahl, E. (2000). Public Works Programs in Korea-A Comparison to Active Labour Market Policies and Workfare in Europe and the US. Report prepared for the KLI and the World Bank Conference,

Lødemel, I., & Trickey, H. (2001). A New Contract for Social Assistance. In I. Lødemel & H. Trickey (Eds.), *'An offer you can't refuse'* (1 ed., pp. 39). Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t895rh.3

Lönnroos, L. T., & Gustafsson, A.-K. (2018). *Nyanlända kvinnors etablering: En komparativ studie av nyanlända kvinnors etablering på arbetsmarknaden i Norden och de etableringspolitiska insatserna*. Nordic Council of Ministers.

Macmillan, R., & Eliason, S. R. (2003). Characterizing the life course as role configurations and pathways: A latent structure approach. In *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 529-554). Springer.

Malterud, K. (2001). Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines. *The Lancet*, *358*(9280), 483-488. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(01)05627-6

Maximova-Mentzoni, T. (2019a). Arbeidsinkludering av invandrere med omfattende bistandsbehov. In H. Glemmestad & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Arbeidsinkludering i sosialt arbeid* (pp. 150-171). Fagbokforlaget.

Maximova-Mentzoni, T. (2019b). Kvalifiseringstiltak for innvandrere og muligheter for Supported Employment. *Søkelys på Arbeidslivet*, *36*(01-02), 36-54.

Maximova-Mentzoni, T. (2019c). Labour market measures for migrants and opportunities for Supported employment. *Søkelys på Arbeidslivet*, *36*(1-2), 36-54. https://doi.org/doi:10.18261/issn.1504-7989-2019-01-02-03

Maximova-Mentzoni, T., Spjelkavik, Ø., Frøyland, K., Schafft, A., & Egeland, C. (2019). Supported Employment i kvalifiseringstiltak for innvandrere: To år med metodeutprøving og metodeutvikling i åtte forsøksprosjekter. In: Arbeidsforskningsinstituttet, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University.

Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Sage Publications.

McAllum, K., Fox, S., Simpson, M., & Unson, C. (2019). A comparative tale of two methods: how thematic and narrative analyses author the data story differently. *Communication Research and Practice*, *5*(4), 358-375. https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2019.1677068

McCormack, B., & McCance, T. (2010). *Person-centred nursing : theory and practice*. Wiley-Blackwell.

McCormack, B., & McCance, T. (2016). *Person-Centred Practice in Nursing and Health Care: Theory and Practice* (2,1,Second edition. ed.). Newark: Wiley.

McMullin, C. (2021). Transcription and Qualitative Methods: Implications for Third Sector Research. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00400-3

Mecheril, P., & Velho, A. (2014). Migration, Overview. In *Encyclopedia of critical psychology*. Springer.

Meld. St. 1 (2012–2013). *Nasjonalbudsjettet 2013*. Retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld-st-1-20122013/id703470/?q=jobbsjansen&ch=1#match_0

Meld. St. 6 (2012-2013). *En helhetlig integreringspolitikk*. Retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld-st-6-20122013/id705945/?q=jobbsjansen&ch=3#match_0

Meld. St. 16 (2015–2016). *Fra utenforskap til ny sjanse — Samordnet innsats for voksnes læring*. Retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-16-20152016/id2476199/?q=jobbsjansen&ch=2#match_0

Meld. St. 32 (2020–2021). *Ingen utenfor – En helhetlig politikk for å inkludere flere i arbeids- og samfunnsliv.* Retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-32-20202021/id2856870/

Meld. St. 33 (2015–2016). *NAV i en ny tid – for arbeid og aktivitet.* Retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-33-20152016/id2501017/

Menchetti, B. M., & Garcia, L. A. (2003). Personal and employment outcomes of person-centered career planning. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 145-156.

Midtbøen, A. (2019). Beskytter assimilering mot diskriminering? : opplevd diskriminering blant innvandrere og etterkommere av innvandrere i det norske arbeidslivet. *Norsk sosiologisk tidsskrift [elektronisk ressurs]*(Årg. 3, nr. 5), 353-371.

Mikkelsgård, K. A., Granerud, A., & Høye, S. (2014). People with mental illness returning to work: A qualitative evaluation of a Norwegian project. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *21*(3), 172-180. https://doi.org/10.3109/11038128.2014.882981

Miller, E. R. (2010). Indeterminacy and Interview Research: Co-constructing Ambiguity and Clarity in Interviews with an Adult Immigrant Learner of English†. *Applied Linguistics*, *32*(1), 43-59. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amq039

Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Sage Publications.

Minson, J. A., & Chen, F. S. (2022). Receptiveness to Opposing Views: Conceptualization and Integrative Review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *26*(2), 93-111. https://doi.org/10.1177/10888683211061037

Mitchell, G. J., & Cody, W. K. (1993). The Role of Theory in Qualitative Research. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, *6*(4), 170-178. https://doi.org/10.1177/089431849300600405

Modini, M., Tan, L., Brinchmann, B., Wang, M.-J., Killackey, E., Glozier, N., Mykletun, A., & Harvey, S. B. (2016). Supported employment for people with severe mental illness: systematic review and meta-analysis of the international evidence. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, *209*(1), 14-22.

Moen, P. (2016). Work over the gendered life course. *Handbook of the life course: Volume II*, 249-275.

Moinolmolki, N., Ridzi, F., Cronin, V., & Adan, H. (2020). Parenting in transition: refugee populations' challenges in navigating parenting upon resettlement. *Journal of Ethnic*

& *Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 1-18.
https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2020.1730291

Moreira, A., & Lødemel, I. (2014). Introduction. In I. Lødemel & A. Moreira (Eds.),
Activation or workfare? : governance and the neo-liberal convergence. Oxford
University Press.

Moser, S. (2008). Personality: a new positionality? *Area*, *40*(3), 383-392.

Moury, C., & Afonso, A. (2019). Beyond Conditionality: Policy Reversals in Southern
Europe in the Aftermath of the Eurozone Crisis. *South European Society and Politics*,
24(2), 155-176. https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2019.1641945

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*
https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658

Mozetič, K. (2022a). A help or hindrance? Highly educated refugees' perceptions of the role
of civic integration programmes in accessing the labour market in Oslo, Malmö and
Munich. *Comparative Migration Studies*, *10*(1), 8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-
022-00279-z

Mozetič, K. (2022b). In their own time: Refugee healthcare professionals' attempts at
temporal re-appropriation. *Time & Society*, 0961463X221083788.

Mozetič, K. (2022c). *What works for them: Highly educated refugees' perceptions of labour
market participation in Oslo, Malmö and Munich* University of Oslo]. Oslo.
https://mau.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1789361/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Murphy, D., Duggan, M., & Joseph, S. (2013). Relationship-based social work and its
compatibility with the person-centred approach: Principled versus instrumental
perspectives. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *43*(4), 703-719.

Natland, S., & Hansen, H. C. (2014). Kompetanseutvikling hos veiledere i
kvalifiseringsprogrammet.

Lov om arbeids- og velferdsforvaltningen (arbeids- og velferdsforvaltningsloven) [NAV-
loven], (2005). https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2006-06-16-
20/KAPITTEL_3#%C2%A715

NAV. (2019a). *Mål- og disponeringsbrev 2019 til NAV fylke*. Retrieved from
https://www.nav.no› md-brev-2019-fylkene

NAV. (2019b, 24.06.2022). *Utdanning og profesjoner i NAV*. Retrieved from
https://www.nav.no/no/nav-og-samfunn/om-nav/sok-jobb-i-nav/nav-som-
arbeidsgiver/utdanning-og-profesjoner-i-nav_kap

NAV. (2021a). *Hvem har rett til dagpenger?* Retrieved 05.10.2021 from
https://www.nav.no/arbeid/no/arbeidsledig#hvem-har-rett-til-dagpenger

NAV. (2021b). *Nasjonale mål og hovedprioriteringer for de sosiale tjenestene i arbeids- og
velferdsforvaltningen i 2021*. Retrieved from https://www.nav.no › Kommunebrevet
2021

NAV. (2021c). *Utdypende om AAP-endringene fra 1. januar 2018*. Retrieved 05.10.2021
from https://www.nav.no/no/person/arbeid/sykmeldt-arbeidsavklaringspenger-og-
yrkesskade/endringer-i-reglene-for-arbeidsavklaringspenger-aap-fra-1.januar-
2018/utdypende-om-aap-endringene-fra-1.januar-2018

Neimann Rasmussen, L., & Montgomery, P. (2018). The prevalence of and factors associated
with inclusion of non-English language studies in Campbell systematic reviews: a
survey and meta-epidemiological study. *Systematic Reviews*, *7*(1), 129.
https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-018-0786-6

Norlyk, A., & Harder, I. (2010). What makes a phenomenological study phenomenological?
An analysis of peer-reviewed empirical nursing studies. *Qualitative Health Research*,
20(3), 420-431.

Nøkleby, H., & Hernes, T. (2017). Effekter av supported employment. *Arbeid og velferd*, *2*.

O'Brien, M. (2011). Social justice: Alive and well (partly) in social work practice?
International Social Work, *54*(2), 174-190.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872810382682

Olsen, B., & Bye, K. S. (2022). *Flyktninger i og utenfor arbeidsmarkedet 2020*.
https://www.ssb.no/arbeid-og-lonn/sysselsetting/artikler/flyktninger-i-og-utenfor-
arbeidsmarkedet-2020/_/attachment/inline/06bd6738-5560-4120-8e9f-
02269df3a2d6:653e2fd2e7f2bf2ab7fc8b669ddab26bac25ea02/RAPP2022-12.pdf

Olsen, E., Paulsberg, A., & Toreld, E. M. (2019). "Ett sted går grensen? Selvbestemmelse og
medvirkning i psykososialt praksis". In A. L. Svalastog, N. J. Kristoffersen, & H. S.
Lile (Eds.), *Psykososialt arbeid: Kunnskap, verider og samfunn*. Gyldendal.

Olsen, R. (2008). Self-selection bias. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of survey research
methods*: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Omar, L. (2022). Foreclosed futures and entangled timelines: conceptualization of the
'future'among Syrian newcomer mothers in Canada. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration
Studies*, 1-19.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2007). Sampling designs in qualitative research: Making
the sampling process more public. *Qualitative Report*, *12*(2), 238-254.

Oppermann, M. (2000). Triangulation—a methodological discussion. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *2*(2), 141-145.

Oswald, D., Sherratt, F., & Smith, S. (2014). Handling the Hawthorne effect: The challenges surrounding a participant observer. *Review of Social Studies*, *1*(1), 53-73.

Oterholm, I. (2015). Skjønnsutøvelse i velferdsorganisasjoner. I Ellingsen. *IT, Levin, I., Berg, B. & Kleppe LC (red.) Sosialt arbeid–en grunnbok: Universitetsforlaget.*

Parsell, C., Eggins, E., & Marston, G. (2016). Human Agency and Social Work Research: A Systematic Search and Synthesis of Social Work Literature. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *47*(1), 238-255. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcv145

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage Publications.

Pham, M. T., Rajić, A., Greig, J. D., Sargeant, J. M., Papadopoulos, A., & McEwen, S. A. (2014). A scoping review of scoping reviews: advancing the approach and enhancing the consistency. *Research Synthesis Methods*, *5*(4), 371-385. https://doi.org/10.1002/jrsm.1123

Plager, K. (1994). A methodology for family health and health promotion study in nursing. *Benner P. Interpretative Phenomenology Caring and Ethics in Health and Illness. California, Sage Publications*.

Polit, D. F., Beck, C. T., & Polit, D. F. (2021). *Nursing research : generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (Eleventh edition.; International edition. ed.). Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Poremski, D., Whitley, R., & Latimer, E. (2016). Building trust with people receiving supported employment and housing first services. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, *39*(1), 20.

Potocky, M. (2016). Motivational Interviewing: A Promising Practice for Refugee Resettlement. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *25*(3), 247-252. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2015.1028121

Presser, L. (2004). Violent offenders, moral selves: Constructing identities and accounts in the research interview. *Social Problems*, *51*(1), 82-101.

PRISMA. (2015). Transparent Reporting of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses. Extensions. Retrieved Accessed 15 Sept 2020, from http://www.prisma-statement.org/Extensions/ScopingReviews/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1

Proba Samfunnsanalyse. (2020). *Hvorfor faller flyktninger ut av arbeidslivet?* https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/a9cc8d30b1f142f3b850ab117f54c5bc/hvorfor-faller-flyktninger-ut-av-arbeidslivet.pdf

Pulignano, V., Meardi, G., & Doerflinger, N. (2015). Trade unions and labour market dualisation: a comparison of policies and attitudes towards agency and migrant workers in Germany and Belgium. *Work, Employment and Society*, *29*(5), 808-825.

Qvortrup, J., & Spjelkavik, Ø. (2013). Hva er god Arbeid med bistand. *Forhold som kan være av betydning for om deltakerne kommer i arbeid. Oslo: Arbeidsforskningsinstituttet.*

Rahbæk Møller, J., & Bonfils, I. S. (2023). Resonating relationships: an interview study with participants in an individual placement and support programme in Denmark. *European Journal of Social Work*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2023.2183168

Reich, M., Gordon, D. M., & Edwards, R. C. (1973). A theory of labor market segmentation. *The American Economic Review*, *63*(2), 359-365.

Reyneri, E. (2004). Immigrants in a segmented and often undeclared labour market. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, *9*(1), 71-93.

Rice, D. (2013). Street-Level Bureaucrats and the Welfare State:Toward a Micro-Institutionalist Theory of Policy Implementation. *Administration & Society*, *45*(9), 1038-1062. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399712451895

Rihter, L. (2024). Contemporary social work concepts in activation programmes: How can we support commitment? In G. Berc, A. Heimgartner, K. Lauermann, H. Reicher, & E. Stuhlpfarrer (Eds.), *Kritik und Engagement in der Sozialen Arbeit*. Verlag Barbara Budrich.

Ritchie, J., & Spencer, L. (2002). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In *Analyzing qualitative data* (pp. 173-194). Routledge.

Rodwell, C. M. (1996). An analysis of the concept of empowerment. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *23*(2), 305-313.

Roelen, C. A. M., Koopmans, P. C., Notenbomer, A., & Groothoff, J. W. (2008). Job satisfaction and sickness absence: a questionnaire survey. *Occupational Medicine*, *58*(8), 567-571. https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqn113

Rogers, C. (1967). *On Becoming a Person*. Constable & Robinson. (1967)

Rogers, C. R. (1963). The concept of the fully functioning person. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, *1*(1), 17-26. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0088567

Rosenthal, G. (2018). *Interpretive social research: An introduction*. Universitätsverlag Göttingen.

Rutakumwa, R., Mugisha, J. O., Bernays, S., Kabunga, E., Tumwekwase, G., Mbonye, M., & Seeley, J. (2019). Conducting in-depth interviews with and without voice recorders: a comparative analysis. *Qualitative Research*, *20*(5), 565-581. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794119884806

Røe, M. (2011). "Mange vil vi aldri greie å hjelpe": Sosialt arbeid med langtidsklienter med flyktningbakgrunn. In B. Berg & T. A. Ask (Eds.), *Minoritetsperspektiver i sosialt arbeid* Universitetsforlaget.

Römer, F. (2017). Generous to all or 'insiders only'? The relationship between welfare state generosity and immigrant welfare rights. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *27*(2), 173-196.

Røysum, A. (2021). Resourceful female immigrants' experiences of the Norwegian activation field. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2021.2011384

Sadeghi, T., & Fekjær, S. B. (2019). Frontline workers' competency in activation work. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, *28*(1), 77-88.

Sagatun, S., & Smith, E. (2012). Aktivt medvirkende og medansvarlige brukere i sosialtjenesten og NAV? I A. Jessen & I. Tronvoll (Red.). *Brukermedvirkning. Likeverd og anerkjennelse*, 168-179.

Sainsbury, D. (2019). Policy constructions, immigrants' social rights and gender: The case of Swedish childcare policies. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *29*(2), 213-227.

Schiller, N. G., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *645*(1), 1-24.

Schryen, G., Wagner, G., & Benlian, A. (2015). Theory of knowledge for literature reviews: an epistemological model, taxonomy and empirical analysis of IS literature.

Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2013). *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes*. Routledge.

Scott, S., & Rye, J. F. (2021). Praised, prized, yet penalised: A critical examination of low-wage hiring queues in the global strawberry industry. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *88*, 473-481. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.04.014

Settersten Jr, R. A. (2003). Age structuring and the rhythm of the life course. In *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 81-98). Springer.

Skjefstad, N. (2012). Brukermedvirkning sett i et anerkjennelsesteoretisk perspektiv. *I Brukermedvirkning. Likeverd og anerkjennelse, red. Anne-Grete Jenssen og Inger-Marie Tronvoll. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget*.

Skjefstad, N. (2013). Er det rom for sosialt arbeid i NAV. *Fontene Forskning*, *1*(13), 76-88.

Skjefstad, N., Kiik, R., & Sandoval, H. (2018). The role of social workers under neoliberal ideology at the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV). In *Neoliberalism, Nordic welfare states and social work* (pp. 137-147). Routledge.

Smith, D. W. (2018). Phenomenology. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Vol. Summer 2018 Edition).

Solar, A. (2015). A Supported Employment linkage intervention for people with schizophrenia who want to work: a survey of patients' views. *Australasian Psychiatry: Bulletin Of Royal Australian And New Zealand College Of Psychiatrists*, *23*(2), 163-165. https://doi.org/10.1177/1039856214568217

Solheim, L. (2019). Jakta på den rette kompetansen–eit blindspor. I Glemmestad. *H. & Kleppe, LC (red.) Arbeidsinkludering i sosialt arbeid Fagbokforlaget, Oslo*.

Southerton, D. (2011). Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture. In. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412994248

Spallek, J., & Krause, D. (2016). Process Types of Customisation and Personalisation in Design for Additive Manufacturing Applied to Vascular Models. *Procedia CIRP*, *50*, 281-286. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procir.2016.05.022

Spehar, A. (2021). Navigating institutions for integration: Perceived institutional barriers of access to the labour market among refugee women in Sweden. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *34*(4), 3907-3925.

Spicker, P. (2012). Personalisation Falls Short. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *43*(7), 1259-1275. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcs063

Spjelkavik, Ø. (2012). Supported Employment in Norway and in the other Nordic countries. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *37*(3), 163-172.

Spjelkavik, Ø. (2014). Ordinært arbeid som metode og mål. In Ø. Spjelkavik & K. Frøyland (Eds.), *Inkluderingskompetanse : ordinært arbeid som mål og middel* (pp. 33-49). Gyldendal akademisk.

Spjelkavik, Ø. (2016). Arbeidsrettet brukeroppfølging.

Spjelkavik, Ø. (2019). Kan sosialarbeidere bidra i arbeidsinkkludering? In H. Glemmestad & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Arbeidsinkludering i Sosialt Arbeid* (pp. 277-289). Fagbokforlaget.

Spjelkavik, Ø., & Frøyland, K. (2014). Inkluderingskompetanse - et integrert perspektiv. In Ø. Spjelkavik & K. Frøyland (Eds.), *Inkluderingskompetanse : ordinært arbeid som mål og middel* (pp. 18-49). Gyldendal akademisk.

SSB. (2020a). *Sysselsetting blant innvandrere, registerbasert* https://www.ssb.no/arbeid-og-lonn/statistikker/innvregsys/aar

SSB. (2020b). *To av tre introduksjonsdeltakere i arbeid eller utdanning etter fem år* https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/to-av-tre-introduksjonsdeltakere-i-arbeid-eller-utdanning-etter-fem-ar

SSB. (2021). *Over halvparten av sosialhjelpsutbetalingene går til innvandrere*. https://www.ssb.no/sosiale-forhold-og-kriminalitet/artikler-og-publikasjoner/over-halvparten-av-sosialhjelpsutbetalingene-gar-til-innvandrere

SSB. (2022). *Sysselsetting blant innvandrere, registerbasert*

Statsforvalteren. (n.d.). *Supported Employment: veileder for NAV-kontor* https://www.statsforvalteren.no/contentassets/1845c9b59c0449a9808b1ed080cd163c/se-veileder--januar-2017.pdf

Stein, B., & Fedreheim, G. E. (2022). Problematization of integration in Norwegian policymaking – integration through employment or volunteerism? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *45*(16), 614-636. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2118544

Stirk, S., & Sanderson, H. (2012). *Creating person-centred organisations: Strategies and tools for managing change in health, social care and the voluntary sector*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Stockemer, D., Niemann, A., Unger, D., & Speyer, J. (2020). The "refugee crisis," immigration attitudes, and euroscepticism. *International Migration Review*, *54*(3), 883-912.

Sultana, R. G. (2022). The labour market integration of migrants and refugees: career guidance and the newly arrived. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 1-20.

Sveinsdottir, V., Bull, H. C., Evensen, S., Reme, S. E., Knutzen, T., & Lystad, J. U. (2020). A Short History of Individual Placement and Support in Norway [Article]. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, *43*(1), 9-17. https://doi.org/10.1037/prj0000366

Syse, A. (2019). Årsartikkel om lovendringer, lovforslag og stønader. *Tidsskrift for familierett, arverett og barnevernrettslige spørsmål*, *17*(1), 8-52. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.0809-9553-2019-01-02

Terum, L. I., & Jessen, J. T. (2015). Den tvetydige aktiveringen: en studie av veiledere ved lokale NAV-kontor.

Terum, L. I., & Sadeghi, T. (2021). Hva gjør individuell tilpasning av aktivitetskrav utfordrende? *Søkelys på Arbeidslivet*, *38*(1), 41-58. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1504-7989-2021-01-03

Terum, L. I., Tufte, P. A., & Jessen, J. T. (2012). Arbeidslinja og sosialarbeiderne. In S. Stjernø & E. Øverbye (Eds.), *Arbeidslinja: Arbeidsmotivasjonen og velferdsstaten*. Universitetsforlaget.

The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. (2016). *Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and Theology*. Norway Retrieved from https://www.forskningsetikk.no/ressurser/publikasjoner/guidelines-social-sciences-humanities-law-and-theology/

Toropova, A., Myrberg, E., & Johansson, S. (2021). Teacher job satisfaction: the importance of school working conditions and teacher characteristics. *Educational Review*, *73*(1), 71-97. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1705247

Tronstad, K. R. (2019). *Flyktninger i introduksjonsprogrammet-Hvilke erfaringer har de med å delta?* (8283092669). OsloMet.

Ugreninov, E., & Turner, L. M. (2021). Next to Nothing: The Impact of the Norwegian Introduction Programme on Female Immigrants' Labour Market Inclusion. *Journal of Social Policy*, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1017/S004727942100043X

Upegui-Hernandez, D. (2014). Transnational Migration Theory. In T. Teo (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of critical psychology* (pp. 2004-2015). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_676

van Berkel, R. (2020). Making welfare conditional: A street-level perspective. *Social Policy & Administration*, *54*(2), 191-204. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12564

van Berkel, R., & Borghi, V. (2008). Introduction: The governance of activation. *Social Policy and Society*, *7*(3), 331-340.

van Berkel, R., de Graaf, W., & Sirovátka, T. (2011). The governance of active welfare states. In *The governance of active welfare states in Europe* (pp. 1-21). Springer.

van Berkel, R., Larsen, F., & Caswell, D. (2018). Introduction: Frontline delivery of welfare-to-work in different European contexts. *International Social Security Review*, *71*(4), 3-11. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/issr.12186

van Berkel, R., & Valkenburg, B. (2007). The individualisation of activation services in context. *Making it personal: Individualising activation services in the EU*, 127-147.

Van den Belt, H. (2003). How to Engage with Experimental Practices? Moderate versus Radical Constructivism. *Journal for General Philosophy of Science / Zeitschrift Für Allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie*, *34*(2), 201-219. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25171256

Van den Broeck, A., Vansteenkiste, M., De Witte, H., & Lens, W. (2008). Explaining the relationships between job characteristics, burnout, and engagement: The role of basic psychological need satisfaction. *Work & Stress*, *22*(3), 277-294. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370802393672

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience : Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. State University of New York Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hiof-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3408268

Vesterberg, V. (2015). Learning to be Swedish: governing migrants in labour-market projects. *Studies in Continuing Education*, *37*(3), 302-316. https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2015.1043987

Volckmar-Eeg, M. G., & Vassenden, A. (2022). Et flipperspill i velferdsstaten: Innlåsing av innvandrere med «språkutfordringer» i NAV. *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning*, *63*(4), 260-277. https://doi.org/10.18261/tfs.63.4.2

Vorauer, J. D., & Petsnik, C. (2023). The disempowering implications for members of marginalized groups of imposing a focus on personal experiences in discussions of intergroup issues. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *125*(1), 117-140. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000416

Wadel, C. (1991). *Feltarbeid i egen kultur: en innføring i kvalitativt orientert samfunnsforskning*. Seek.

Wadel, C., Wadel, C. C., & Fuglestad, O. L. (2014). *Feltarbeid i egen kultur* (Rev. utg. av Carl Cato Wadel og Otto Laurits Fuglestad. ed.). Cappelen Damm akademisk.

Waghorn, G., & Hielscher, E. (2015). The availability of evidence-based practices in supported employment for Australians with severe and persistent mental illness. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, *62*(2), 141-144.

Wehman, P., Targett, P. S., Freeman, D., & Leino, J. (1996). Customer initiated supported employment. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *7*(3), 205-215.

Willig, C. (2007). Reflections on the Use of a Phenomenological Method. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *4*(3), 209-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780880701473425

Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation–state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks*, *2*(4), 301-334.

Yakushko, O. (2006). Career concerns of immigrant women: Issues and implications for career counseling. *Handbook of Career Counseling for Women*, 387-426.

Yatchmenoff, D. K. (2005). Measuring Client Engagement From the Client's Perspective in Nonvoluntary Child Protective Services. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *15*(2), 84-96. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731504271605

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). Sage.

Zacher, H., & Froidevaux, A. (2021). Life stage, lifespan, and life course perspectives on vocational behavior and development: A theoretical framework, review, and research agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *126*, 103476. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103476

Zacka, B. (2017). *When the state meets the street: Public service and moral agency*. Harvard University Press.

Zentgraf, K. M., & Chinchilla, N. S. (2012). Transnational Family Separation: A Framework for Analysis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *38*(2), 345-366. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2011.646431

Zhao, Z. (2011). Empowerment in a socialist egalitarian agenda: minority women in China's higher education system. *Gender and Education*, *23*(4), 431-445. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2010.506869

Øverbye, E., & Stjernø, S. (2012). Arbeidsmotivasjon, arbeidslinje og velferdsstat. *Stjernø (Red.). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget*.

Øversveen, E., & Forseth, U. (2018). Fremmed i NAV. *Norsk Sosiologisk Tidsskrift*, *2*(4), 5-24. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.2535-2512-2018-04-01

Aarons, G. A., Hurlburt, M., & Horwitz, S. M. (2011). Advancing a Conceptual Model of Evidence-Based Practice Implementation in Public Service Sectors. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, *38*(1), 4-23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-010-0327-7

Aasmundsen, H., & Sagvaag, H. (2012). "Som å snakke til en vegg": Personer med rusproblemer og deres erfaringer med brukermedvirkning. In A. G. Jenssen & I. M. Tronvoll (Eds.), *Brukermedvirkning: likeverd og anerkjennelse*. Universitetsforlaget.

Appendices

Interview guide: participants

Introduction and formalities:

- I introduce myself, stating my name, where I study, my project, and the goal of my project.
- I read and explain the confidentiality and anonymisation agreement, the purpose of signing the informed consent form, and confirm the use of a voice recorder.
- I ask if the participants have any questions before we start and inform them that the interview will take approximately one hour.

I.   Icebreakers/Circumstances surrounding the migration

1. Tell about yourself. Where are you coming from? How old are you?
2. What did you do back home before you came to Norway?
3. Were you studying/working? What did you study, where did you work?
4. Why did you come to Norway?
5. Are you alone in Norway? Do you have any of your family left back home, or outside of Norway?

II.   Explore if the participant is actively engaged in the intervention

6. What do you know about the intervention you are participating in?
7. Were you informed/do you know what the goal of the intervention is?
8. What is your goal?
9. What are your expectations from the intervention?
10. How often do you and the job coach meet? Do you think it is enough? If not, do you do anything to change the situation?
11. How do you experience that your voice /your opinion is heard in the meetings?
12. Have you had a possibility to change activities/meetings, your career goal according to your wishes?
13. Do you like participating in the intervention? Why?
14. What do you like the most in the intervention?

III.   Explore the challenges

15. What would you do to improve the intervention?

16. What do you mean is challenging in the collaborative process between you and the employment specialist?

17. Is there anything that you don't like/something that does not work well in the intervention or the collaborative process?

18. What is it?

19. Why don't you like it?

20. Why does it not work?

21. What would you do for it to work?

22. Would you recommend this intervention to other people? Why?

23. What should be improved in the intervention?

<u>Rounding up:</u> Thank you for your time. Please contact me if there is something you want to correct or add.

<u>Interview guide: employment specialists</u>

Introduction and formalities

- I introduce myself, mentioning my name and my previous experience with NAV.
- I talk about my studies at OsloMet and my project.
- We go through and sign the informed consent form, and I confirm the usage of the voice recorder.
- I inform that the interview will take approximately one hour.

I.   Start of the conversation

1.   How long have you been working as an employment specialist?

2.   What was your job before this?

3.   What motivated you to apply for this position?

II.   Explore how employment specialists understand and practice participant collaboration/engagement

4.   How does participant collaboration and engagement function in this intervention?

5.   How do you interpret 'engagement' and 'collaboration'?

6.   What techniques do you employ to engage participants and motivate them to actively participate in the intervention and express their opinions?

7.   How are participants enrolled? What are the criteria for enrolment in the intervention?

8.   How can you tell that a participant is involved and interested in their own case? Is it easily observable?

9.   Could you share some examples or stories when you noticed clear participant engagement in their case? Did they eventually secure their desired job?

10.   What do you do if a participant appears unmotivated to participate in the intervention? How do you identify this, and what actions do you take?

11.   Do you find it more challenging to engage and work with people from other countries? What specific challenges do you encounter?

12.   Have you worked as an employment specialist with both Norwegians and foreigners? What differences have you noticed?

13.   Do participants' personal problems affect their engagement in the intervention? How do you address these issues? Could you provide a few examples?

14. How do you collaborate with participants in creating a plan or activity plan? For instance, who proposes activities or career goals?

15. How do you manage unrealistic career aspirations?

16. How does a change in career goals affect participants' motivation?

Round up: Thank you for your time. Please contact me if you wish to amend or add anything.

Appendix 3

Observation goals

-        If the job-coach used any activating technique (e.g. Motivating Interview, active listening);

-        If the jobseekers were responsive to these techniques;

-        Who was talking the most;

-        What were they talking about;

-        If it looked like the jobseeker was interested in participating in the program;

-        If the jobseeker expressed own opinion;

-        If the jobseeker's opinion was taken into consideration and how;

-        If the jobseeker looked content with the meeting and the way the meeting developed;

-        How and if the follow-up process was tailored to the jobseeker's wishes, opinions, cultural background, education, language difficulties or similar;

-        Emotions expressed by the meeting participants.

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet (jobbsøker)

Arbeidstittel: Involvering og motivering av arbeidssøkere i Supported Employment

Bakgrunn og formål

Mitt navn er Mariya Khoronzhevych og jeg tar jeg doktorgradsutdanning ved OsloMet (tidligere Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus).

Mitt mål er å snakke med folk fra ulike land som søker jobb via deltakelse i spesielle program for arbeidssøkere. Jeg er interessert i dine erfaringer fra programmet, hva motiverer deg å delta/fortsette i programmet og hvordan programmet fungerer for deg.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Jeg vil gjerne snakke med deg om dine erfaringer (intervjuere deg).
Jeg vil gjerne bruke en stemmeopptaker under intervjuene, men hvis du ikke vil det, kan jeg skrive notater underveis.

Jeg vil også gjerne observere dine møter med din veileder.
Det er du som bestemmer om jeg får lov til det.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det er bare jeg og mine veiledere på OsloMet og NAV som skal ha tilgang til opplysningene.
Lydopptak, notater og andre opplysninger skal oppbevares på mitt kontor på OsloMet i et låsbart rom. Datamaskinen som brukes for å jobbe med opplysningene er beskyttet med brukernavn og passord. Koblingsnøkkel lagres adskilt fra øvrige data.
Det skal ikke fremkomme ditt navn, kommune eller andre opplysninger som gjør det mulig å identifisere deg på noen måte.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. All informasjon du deler med oss vil bli holdt konfidensielt. Når vi skriver rapporten vår fra forskningen, vil vi ikke oppgi navn eller noen personlige opplysninger om deg eller hvor du bor.

Når jeg er ferdig med studiet, vil anonymiserte opplysningene (uten navn eller personlig informasjon) gå inn i en database (arkiv) i samarbeid med NSD (Norsk senter for forskningsdata) for å sikre at viktig informasjon ikke går tapt og for å fremme videre forskning på feltet.
Jeg vil også ta kontakt med deg og fortelle deg hva de viktigste funnene er og hva vi skal gjøre med dem.

Du vil få anledning til å stille spørsmål eller klargjøre informasjon både før intervjuet begynner og når som helst under intervjuet. Du kan trekke deg fra forskningen når som helst uten å måtte gi noen forklaring for at du trekker deg.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, vennligst ta kontakt med meg:

Mariya Khoronzhevych

marikh@oslomet.no

tel: 45 23 26 33

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

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

Navn (blokkbokstaver):_____

Mail: _____

Telefonnummer: _____

Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju	(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)
Jeg samtykker til at møte mellom meg og min veileder kan observeres	(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Hvis du ønsker det, vil jeg ta kontakt med deg og fortelle deg hva de viktigste funnene er og hva vi skal gjøre med dem. Du kan også få en kopi av intervjutranskript, hvis du ønsker det.

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet (medarbeider)

Arbeidstittel: Involvering og motivering av arbeidssøkere i Supported Employment

Bakgrunn og formål

Mitt navn er Mariya Khoronzhevych og jeg har jobbet i NAV i 4 år som veileder på oppfølging (spesielt tilpasset innsats). Nå tar jeg doktorgradsutdanning ved OsloMet (tidligere Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus) som er finansiert av Norges Forskningsråd og NAV (Offentlig sektor PhD).

Målet med forskningen er å avdekke hvordan Supported Employment metode fungerer i arbeid med arbeidssøkere med innvandrerbakgrunn. Fokus er på brukermedvirkning («client engagement») da den vurderes som grunnleggende for at hele Supported Employment fungerer som den skal og at arbeidssøkere ikke bare får en jobb, men også beholder den på langt sikt.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

For å samle de nødvendige opplysningene, vil jeg gjerne snakke med deltakere med innvandrerbakgrunn og jobbspesialister i Supported Employment.

Jeg vil gjerne høre om dine erfaringer fra programmet.

Jeg vil gjerne bruke en lydopptaker under intervjuene, men hvis du ikke vil det, kan jeg skrive notater underveis.

Jeg vil også gjerne observere møter mellom jobbspesialister og arbeidssøkere.

Det er du og arbeidssøker som bestemmer om jeg får lov til det.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det er bare jeg og mine veiledere på OsloMet og NAV som skal ha tilgang til opplysningene.
Lydopptak, notater og andre opplysninger skal oppbevares på mitt kontor på OsloMet i et låsbart rom. Datamaskinen som brukes for å jobbe med opplysningene er beskyttet med brukernavn og passord. Koblingsnøkkel lagres adskilt fra øvrige data.
Det skal ikke fremkomme ditt navn, kommune eller andre opplysninger som gjør det mulig å identifisere deg på noen måte.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. All informasjon du deler med oss vil bli holdt konfidensielt. Når vi skriver rapporten vår fra forskningen, vil vi ikke oppgi navn eller noen personlige opplysninger om deg eller hvor du bor.

Når jeg er ferdig med studiet, vil anonymiserte opplysningene (uten navn eller personlig informasjon) gå inn i en database (arkiv) i samarbeid med NSD (Norsk senter for forskningsdata) for å sikre at viktig informasjon ikke går tapt og for å fremme videre forskning på feltet.
Jeg vil også ta kontakt med deg og fortelle deg hva de viktigste funnene er og hva vi skal gjøre med dem. Du kan også få en kopi av intervjutranskript, hvis du ønsker det.

Du vil få anledning til å stille spørsmål eller klargjøre informasjon både før intervjuet begynner og når som helst under intervjuet. Du kan trekke deg fra forskningen når som helst uten å måtte gi noen forklaring for at du trekker deg.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, vennligst ta kontakt med meg:

Mariya Khoronzhevych

marikh@oslomet.no

tel: 45 23 26 33

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

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

Navn (blokkbokstaver):_____

Mail: _____

Telefonnummer: _____

Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju	
	(Signatur, dato)
Jeg samtykker til at møte mellom meg og min arbeidssøker kan observeres	
	(Signatur, dato)

Mariya Khoronzhevych
Pilestredet 35
0130 OSLO

Tilrådning fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning § 7-27

Personvernombudet for forskning viser til meldeskjema mottatt 17.11.2017 for prosjektet:

57269	*Specifics of client engagement in the Supported Employment process applied to the job seekers with immigrant background in NAV*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Mariya Khoronzhevych*

Vurdering
Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon finner vi at prosjektet er unntatt konsesjonsplikt og at personopplysningene som blir samlet inn i dette prosjektet er regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. På den neste siden er vår vurdering av prosjektopplegget slik det er meldt til oss. Du kan nå gå i gang med å behandle personopplysninger.

Vilkår for vår anbefaling
Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:
• opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon
• vår prosjektvurdering, se side 2
• eventuell korrespondanse med oss

Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet
Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke endringer du må melde, samt endringsskjema.

Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet
Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i Meldingsarkivet.

Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt
Ved prosjektslutt 30.09.2018 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Vennlig hilsen

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

                              Øivind Armando Reinertsen

Kontaktperson: Øivind Armando Reinertsen tlf: 55 58 33 48 / Oivind.Reinertsen@nsd.no
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Formålet med prosjektet er å avdekke hvordan Supported Employment metode fungerer i arbeid med arbeidssøkere med innvandrerbakgrunn.

Du har opplyst i meldeskjema at utvalget vil motta skriftlig og muntlig informasjon om prosjektet, og samtykker skriftlig til å delta. Vår vurdering er at informasjonsskrivet til utvalget er godt utformet.

Det fremgår av meldeskjema at du vil behandle sensitive opplysninger om etnisk bakgrunn.

Personvernombudet forutsetter at frivillighet, taushetsplikt og konfidensialitet blir ivaretatt under rekruttering av utvalget. Det innebærer at du ikke kan få tilgang til kontaktopplysninger til de som blir forespurt før de selv har samtykket til å delta i prosjektet, eller samtykket til at du kan ta kontakt. Det er videre svært viktig å sikre frivillig deltakelse i dette prosjektet. Det kan oppleves vanskeligere å si nei til å delta når man blir forespurt av noen som arbeider i en tjeneste som man er avhengig av. Det må være helt tydelig at det er helt frivillig å delta, at deltakelse ikke er relatert til støttetiltak man mottar og at det ikke vil få noen konsekvenser for dem dersom de ikke ønsker å delta i prosjektet.

Personvernombudet forutsetter at du behandler alle data i tråd med Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus sine retningslinjer for datahåndtering og informasjonssikkerhet.

Prosjektslutt er oppgitt til 30.09.2018. Det fremgår av meldeskjema/informasjonsskriv at du vil anonymisere datamaterialet ved prosjektslutt.
Anonymisering innebærer vanligvis å:
- slette direkte identifiserbare opplysninger som navn, fødselsnummer, koblingsnøkkel
- slette eller omskrive/gruppere indirekte identifiserbare opplysninger som bosted/arbeidssted, alder, kjønn
- slette lydopptak.

For en utdypende beskrivelse av anonymisering av personopplysninger, se Datatilsynets veileder:
https://www.datatilsynet.no/globalassets/global/regelverk-skjema/veiledere/anonymisering-veileder-041115.pdf

Article 1.

Khoronzhevych, M., Maximova-Mentzoni, T., Gubrium, E. and Muller, A. E. (2022). *Participant engagement in supported employment: a systematic scoping review*. Published in: *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-021-09987-2

Participant Engagement in Supported Employment: A Systematic Scoping Review

Mariya Khoronzhevych[1] · **Tatiana Maximova-Mentzoni**[2] · **Erika Gubrium**[1] · **Ashley Elizabeth Muller**[3]

Abstract

Purpose This study aimed to synthesise the available knowledge on how participant engagement in supported employment (SE) interventions is presented, defined, and conceptualised. We also aimed to develop a working definition of participant engagement in SE based on the results of our study. *Methods* This systematic scoping review was conducted following the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews. The following databases were systematically searched: EBSCO, SCOPUS, Social Care Online, and JSTOR. We included peer-reviewed publications in English based on empirical studies. *Results* Sixteen articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis. Thematic framework analysis resulted in three themes conveying the concept of participant engagement: self-determined choice, empowerment, and collaboration/working alliance. We suggest that participant engagement in SE is an active multifaceted process that involves the empowerment of participants, participants' exercise of self-determined informed choice, and their collaboration with SE practitioners in a working alliance. *Conclusions* Participant empowerment, self-determined choice, and collaboration are important aspects of participant engagement in SE. The study results will appeal to SE practitioners and make significant contributions to the broader field of other vocational services supporting people in (re-)entering the competitive labour market.

Keywords Supported employment · Engagement · Vocational rehabilitation · Person-centred · Empowerment

Introduction

Previous research has shown that individualised rehabilitation intervention leads to better outcomes for service participants than do more broadly targeted rehabilitation measures [1, 2]. Individualisation of intervention heavily depends on participants' engagement in the service and adjusting the intervention according to customised needs and wishes [3, 4]. Williams et al. highlight that engagement in rehabilitation is 'a crucial patient characteristic in successful rehabilitation outcomes' [4 p.1], while King et al. point out that it is 'essential to mobilizing motivation and achieving desired change' [5 p.2]. Low engagement is associated with low

motivation, poorer therapeutic results, and longer rehabilitation time [4]. Engagement is important throughout all the multifaceted rehabilitation activities, including those performed at home between rehabilitation sessions [4, 5], those activities that are 'personally valued' [6], including social interactions and daily occupations [7], and in the pursuit of vocational goals [8].

In the context of vocational rehabilitation, engagement can take the form of participant collaboration, taking initiative, frequency of meetings with the counsellor adjusted to participants' needs [9], intrinsic motivation, participants' self-efficacy [10, 11], and the development of a 'therapeutic' relationship between the counsellor and the participant [12, 13]. Creating a working alliance with a participant appears to be critical for participant engagement, as it increases motivation and outcome expectancy [9, 10]. The participant may feel confident in providing feedback, and the provider consequently better able to provide the service accordingly, allowing for further service individualisation [14]. Given the significance of participant engagement in determining the success of rehabilitation interventions, researchers attempt

✉ Mariya Khoronzhevych
marikh@oslomet.no

1   Department of Social Work, Child Welfare and Social Policy, Oslo Metropolitan University, Pb. 4, St. Olavs plass, 0130 Oslo, Norway

2   The Work Research Institute, Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

3   Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo, Norway

to define and operationalise the concept of 'engagement' for measurement and implementation in practice [3, 15].

Supported employment (SE) is a type of vocational rehabilitation intervention that employs individualised support to improve employment outcomes in the ordinary labour market for people with various forms of disability. It originated in the United States in the late 1970s as a vocational rehabilitation intervention targeted at people with intellectual disabilities, people with mental disorders, and others labelled as having 'the most significant disabilities', to help them to obtain employment in a competitive labour market [16 p. 1055]. Randomised controlled trials confirmed that more than 60% of SE participants end up in long-term employment, compared to approximately 20–30% of other job seekers who have various forms of disabilities [17, 18]. SE has been described as 'the most effective approach to labour inclusion' [19 p. 74].

SE may be represented by SE models that target different population groups or/and use different follow-up techniques. The most researched and practiced SE models are the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and Customized Employment (CE) models. IPS targets people with mental disorders. The goal is to provide participants with vocational placements in the competitive labour market as soon as possible after their start in the intervention [19, 20]. CE targets the same population as IPS but focuses on 'exploratory time […] to uncover the job seeker's unique needs, abilities, and interests.' and the employer is expected to 'voluntarily negotiat[e] specific job duties or employee expectations' [21 p. 142].

During the last two decades, SE has been actively adopted by vocational rehabilitation agencies worldwide [22, 23]. Its target group has expanded to include veterans with traumatic brain injury [24, 25], people with chronic pain conditions, and, lately, people without mental or physical health issues but struggling to obtain a job in the competitive labour market, such as young adults who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) and migrants, including refugees [26, 27].

The key to SE success appears to lie in its adopting of the person-centred approach that involves holistic non-directive counselling and implies that the participant is empowered to tailor the intervention according to his/her own needs and preferences by exercising self-determined informed choice, and including the participant in 'service planning; respecting the person's authenticity, self-determination, and choice … and facilitating engagement in the service' [28 p. 4]; concurrently, the SE practitioner, often referred to as 'employment specialist' or 'job coach', provides non-directive counselling, facilitates collaborative engagement of the participant in the intervention, employing motivating and empowering techniques, for instance motivational interview (MI) [18, 28–30]. The participant

is encouraged to make independent decisions while the counsellor plays mainly a supporting role in the person's path to finding the authentic, right way to achieve his/her goals [31, 32]. Therefore, participant engagement seems to be the key to a proper person-centred intervention.

Within the SE literature, participant engagement is mostly mentioned in passing or as a recommendation in toolkits for practitioners (see for example, the European Union of Supported Employment Toolkit, European Union of Supported Employment [33]). In the EUSE toolkit, it is the first stage out of five stages of SE and implies the participant's initial informed choice to participate in the SE and already on the recruitment stage exercises of empowerment and self-determination based on the information provided by the intervention providers. EUSE underlines that engagement is important over time during participation in the intervention, and the person-centred approach ensures that the engagement proceeds throughout all stages of the intervention.

Despite the importance of participant engagement in SE, there is no study that systematically focuses on participant engagement in SE. Neither is there a general definition of what participant engagement in SE is, with studies approaching this concept in different ways and from varying angles. Considering the importance of participant engagement in vocational rehabilitation interventions, the conceptualization of participant engagement in SE is a research gap that needs to be filled. The purpose of this study was to synthesise current research on participant engagement in SE; specifically, by answering the following research question: *How does the literature on SE present, define, and conceptualise participant engagement in SE interventions?* We aim to contribute to a broadly synthesised conceptualisation and definition of participant engagement in SE, which will facilitate its better understanding and implementation in SE and promote positive SE intervention outcomes.

Methods

This systematic scoping review followed the steps recommended by Arksey and O'Malley [34] and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses guidelines, scoping review extension [35], completed in Appendix 1. A scoping review is a type of systematic review that systematically searches and identifies studies according to clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, but rather than answering a specific research question regarding effect or experience, provides an overview of large research fields or fields that are not yet well-defined. In this case, the overall field of SE is a large and well-documented field; however, little is known about participant engagement in SE interventions.

Search Strategy

For our systematic literature search, we developed a search strategy for the concept of 'participant engagement' for use in an SE context that was based on a 2017 review by Bonfils et al. on the implementation of the individual placement and support approach [36]. Considering that there is no generally accepted definition for the term and considering possible synonyms, based on the previous concept research in vocational rehabilitation (see Introduction), the search strategy included terms related to SE interventions, such as *supported employment*, *customised employment*, *individual placement and support*, and terms related to or synonymous with participant engagement in vocational intervention contexts, such as *engagement*, *empowerment*, *involvement*, *collaboration*, *working alliance*, and so on. We used truncation as appropriate. Appendix 2 contains the search strategy used in EBSCO.

The following databases were searched: EBSCO (Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Ultimate, ERIC, SocINDEX, CINAHL, PsycINFO, MEDLINE), SCOPUS, Social Care Online, and JSTOR. The search was completed on 9 October 2020. The search was not restricted by a date frame. The PRISMA flow diagram (Fig. 1) represents the processes of searching, screening, and retrieving articles.

## Selection Criteria and Data Extraction

We included peer-reviewed studies in English that provided empirical data and focused on SE targeting any populations, including groups with all types of disabilities and other support needs. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were included. Publications were excluded if the authors did not identify the studied intervention as SE, if SE was one of many studied interventions without a clear delineation of the interventions (mixed interventions), or if they were literature or legislation reviews. We also excluded articles that simply mentioned participant engagement but did not include any definition or explanation that was extractable.

In the first round of screening and selection, the titles and abstracts of 1755 publications were assessed by the first author (MK), as per the inclusion criteria. In total, 118 articles were assessed in full-text. The PRISMA flow diagram provides a full overview of study flow. Sixteen articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the review.

Analysis

Data analysis was conducted by the first author (MK) with QSR International's NVivo v12 software. Data analysis was inspired by the thematic framework data analysis [37], which uses 'a systematic process of sifting, charting and sorting

Fig. 1 PRISMA flow diagram
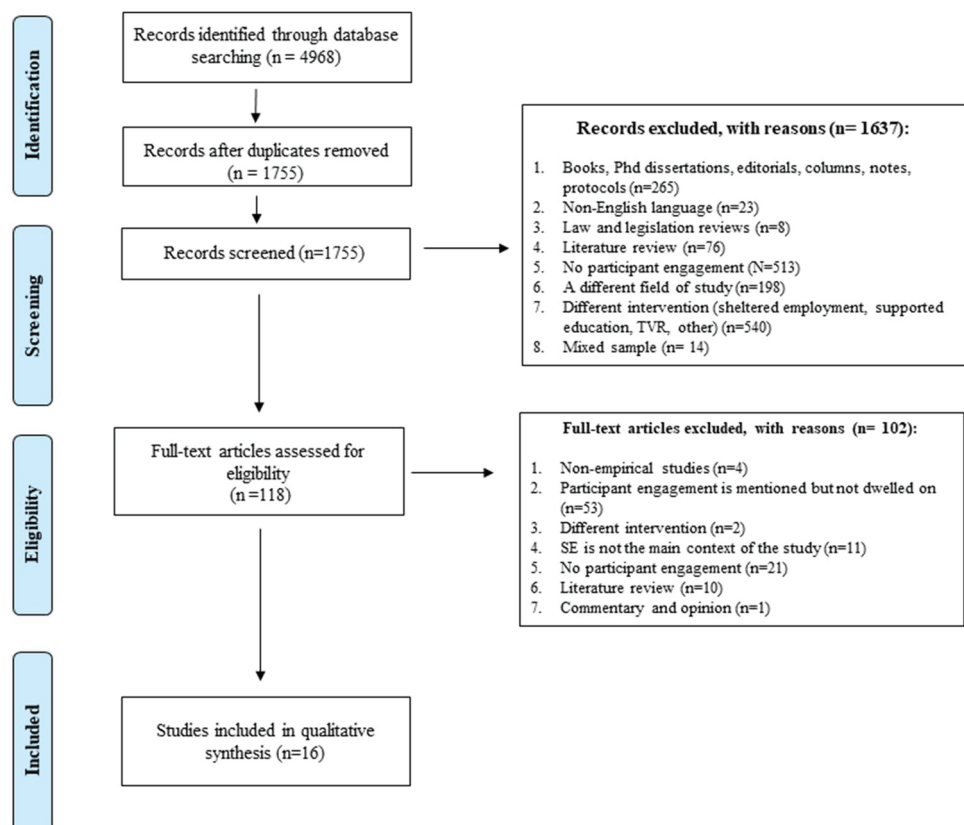
material according to key issues and themes' [37, p. 6]. The analysis and emergence of themes are based on previous research and involves the flexibility of the analyst and ability to 'determine meaning, salience and connections' [37, p. 6] of the analysed material and to identify newly emerging themes. The included articles were read several times, first, to familiarise ourselves with the content. Therewith, the themes, issues, and concepts relevant to the researched topic were highlighted, and the first thematic framework started to emerge. After all articles had undergone this process, in the next stage of analysis, repeating themes, concepts, or issues were placed into categories that were based partially on previous research on the topic of participant engagement in vocational rehabilitation (e.g. *self-determination, presence of options, motivation*) and which partially were new (e.g. *visualisation techniques, choice to defer, choice to retire*). The analysis and findings were presented to the review team and discussed to provide the most comprehensive interpretation to answer the research question. Finally, smaller categories were united into four main categories, which form the structure of the findings section.

Results

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the 16 included studies, such as country, study location, aim, and design. The intervention overview, including target group and participants' characteristics, is shown in Table 2.

Description of the Included Studies

Most studies in the review were conducted in the USA (n = 8), followed by the UK (n = 3), Sweden (n = 3), and Australia (n = 2). The types of the included studies and their sample sizes varied. The most frequent methodological approach of the included studies was qualitative (n = 8), with the number of study participants ranging from three [38] to 76 [39]. In the quantitative studies (n = 5), the number of participants varied between 45 [40] and 120 [41, 42]. Three publications were descriptive and described the development of SE measures without specifying the data collection methods [43–45]. The SE interventions included CE (n = 2), IPS (n = 5), IES (1), and CES (n = 2), while six were not specified.

The intervention target groups were people with mental health disorders and/or learning disabilities that were either congenital or acquired owing to injuries or substance abuse. The authors described their participants as individuals with severe mental illnesses [41, 42], physical and mental disabilities [46], mental health issues [40, 47], affective disorders [48], mental retardation [49, 50], learning disabilities [51], methadone-maintained patients [43, 44], people with

intellectual disability [39], severe mental disabilities [52], and intellectual and developmental disabilities [45]. Only a few studies provided a specific diagnosis: autism and/or intellectual disability [38] and chronic schizophrenia [53]. One study [46] included participants with both mental and physical disabilities.

As for participants' demographic characteristics, only seven studies stated both participants' sex and age or mean age group [38, 39, 41, 46, 53–55]. Bejerholm and Björkman [41] and Johanson et al. [48] provided the most comprehensive demographic characteristics, including ethnicity, age, sex, and family status. However, none of the studies provided an analysis of the collected data through the prism of demographic characteristics, even the studies that explored interventions among participants of a specific age [39, 46] or age and sex [45].

Most of the data presented in the studies focused on SE from the participants' standpoint. Few articles included the standpoint of SE practitioners [39, 48, 50, 52], and only one article included other stakeholders [39].

Conceptualisations of Participant Engagement

Three main themes emerged from the literature when conceptualising participant engagement in an intervention: expression of self-determined choice, collaboration/creating working alliance, and empowerment. The studies used only one of the themes or referred to several, and in this case, the three themes were often interrelated and complementary (Table 3).

Self-determined Choice

Expressing self-determination to participate in SE interventions and the exercise of self-determined choice selecting activities within the intervention was a main theme used to convey participant engagement by making a choice in the reviewed literature. Particularly, the availability of choices for SE participants seems to be a precondition to participant engagement, as participants engage through considering options and a self-determined choice that will influence further intervention direction and may lead to better intervention outcomes [45–47].

Kostick et al. [52] underline that the acknowledgement of participants' employment choices and preferences and allowing them to direct the intervention accordingly is in accordance with the person-centred approach in SE, and determines if the participant succeeds or fails in his/her job. Limited availability and accessibility of jobs could result in reduced engagement [52]. Meanwhile, Kilsby and Beyer [50] argue that the choice should be consistent; that is, a participant should be encouraged not to change his/her choice, but to follow it through the intervention.

Table 1 Study descriptions

Study	Country	Location	Study aim	Study methods/measures
Areberg and Bejerholm [42]	**Sweden**	Not specified	effectiveness of IPS in terms of occupational engagement, work-motivation, empowerment, and quality of life among people with SMI	Randomised controlled trial, interviews
Bejerholm and Björkman [41]	Sweden	Five outpatient centres in Malmoe	Describe and investigate empowerment and its relationship with level of engagement	Quantitative, cross-sectional study. A 28-item Empowerment Scale, Making Decisions; Manchester Short Assessment of Quality of Life; Profile of Occupational Engagement Scale; Rejection Experience Scale; Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale
Blankertz et al. [43]	USA	Two methadone treatment programs in New York City	Describe customised employment support, its principles, essential elements, and stages of service delivery	Description of the development of the intervention
Blankertz et al. [44]	USA	Two methadone treatment programs in New York City	Evaluate customised employment support in a randomised clinical trial	Description of the development of the intervention
Brady, Rosenberg, and Frain [46]	USA	Educational, rehabilitation, and employment settings across six geographic locations in Florida and Missouri	Present the role of the Job Observation and Behaviour Scale: Opportunity for Self-Determination scale in obtaining student and employee input into their own work performance and support needs	Quantitative, standardisation analyses of the Job Observation and Behaviour Scale: Opportunity for Self-Determination scale
Haslett et al. [40],	USA	Two sites in Chicago	Compare a computer tablet-based engagement intervention and a printed brochure for empowering participants to self-refer and engage in individual placement and support	Quantitative, randomised controlled trial
Johanson, Markström, and Bejerholm [48]	Sweden	Four mental healthcare services in the county of Skåne	to illustrate the IES model and process	Multiple-case design, Interviews, study of documentation and memos
Kilsby, Bennert, and Beyer [49]	UK	Two South Wales supported employment agencies	Focus on the problems of acquiescence in supported employment	Qualitative, discourse analysis of job review interviews
Kilsby and Beyer [50]	UK	Two South Wales supported employment agencies	Test two interventions aimed to increase self-determined vocational choices	Qualitative, direct observations and analysis of job review interviews
Kilsby and Beyer [58]	UK	Thirteen employment sites	Compare the interaction and engagement outcomes for supported employment and adult training centre participants	Qualitative, direct observation
Kostick, Whitley, and Bush [52]	USA	One community mental health hospital and two outpatient centres in Connecticut	Examine participant-centredness from the perspective of supported employment practitioners	Qualitative, semi-structured open-ended interviews
Larson et al. [47]	USA	Twenty-five mental health centres across the country	Investigate individual placement and support from a practitioner's perspective	Quantitative, open-ended survey
McDermott and Edwards [39]	Australia	Thirty-one organisations across the country	Investigate what influences people's decision to retire	Qualitative, in-depth qualitative interviews

Table 1 (continued)

Study	Country	Location	Study aim	Study methods/measures
Nittrouer, Shogren, and Pickens [38]	USA	A Midwest college town	Examine the impact of interventions derived from collaboration with person-centred teams and functional assessment of workplace problems	Qualitative, single-participant multiple baseline study observations
Solar [53]	Australia	Perth, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	Explore considering patient views in developing a linkage intervention	Qualitative, individual interviews
Wehmeyer et al. [45]	USA	Kansas	Examine the Girls at Work project with a focus on self-determination in vocational counselling	Intervention development description, Overview of an intervention model

Expression of choice could be exercised at any stage, including pre-enrolment and exiting the intervention. While most studies underlined the importance of choice in employment-oriented activities during the intervention, Solar [53] emphasised the importance of SE intervention participants having the opportunity to make an initial choice to participate. Several studies brought into focus the importance of the choice to defer [43, 44] or retire [39] from an SE program. Retirement appeared as a sort of participant engagement, as this right to express self-determined choice is reportedly a difficult decision that participants often avoid initiating owing to its permanent nature and economic/social consequences. However, informing participants of the availability of this choice and helping them plan their life according to self-determined choice allows participants to 'become self-determining beings' [39 p. 431] and stay engaged in the intervention through decision-making until the very end.

Collaboration/Working Alliance

Several studies discussed the formation of a collaborative relationship between participants and SE practitioners, wherein both created a working alliance. Thus, Blankertz et al. [44] employed social psychological theory to argue that the creation of a working or therapeutic alliance based on a respectful and trusting collaborative relationship between the practitioner and the participant led to increased self-efficacy intervention benefits. They underlined the importance of participants trusting that the practitioner was genuine in his/her desire to help. They noted that such a genuine and trust-based relationship would help resolve participants' previous experience of being rejected by society, which in their sample was related to their substance misuse.

Kilsby, Bennert, and Beyer [49] provided a different perspective on collaborative relationships in their study. They discussed interactions between participants and practitioners in terms of avoidance of acquiescence and enhanced self-determination. They underlined that acquiescence—participants' passive confirmation of the options suggested and decided on by the SE practitioner—may appear as self-determined choice or collaboration, but is not, as the questions asked by practitioners in meetings with participants were mainly yes/no questions "requiring only minimal confirmation, and thus inviting acquiescent responses" [49] p. 296]. Therefore SE practitioners need to ensure that it is avoided by using open-ended questions in such meetings. The researchers focused on the way in which practitioners communicate with participants to ensure two-way collaboration and that the participants could express their self-determined choice despite their disabilities.

Brady, Rosenberg, and Frain [46] highlighted the importance of participant involvement in the decision-making process, noting that this offered the opportunity for

Table 2 Descriptions of supported employment type and study participants

Study	Supported employment intervention type	Target group for intervention, in author(s) own words	Study participants: NN, role (intervention participants or practitioners)	Sex	Age (years)
Areberg and Bejerholm [42]	IPS	Participants with severe mental illnesses (exclusively)	120 participants in IPS, 2 in TVR	Not specified	20–65
Bejerholm and Björkman [41]	Not specified	People with mental illnesses (exclusively)	120 SE participants	Men (n=67), women (n=53)	Range=21–58
Blankertz et al. [43]	CES	Methadone-maintained patients	NA	NA	NA
Blankertz et al. [44]	CES	Methadone-maintained patients	NA	NA	NA
Brady, Rosenberg, and Frain [46]	Not specified	Individuals with physical and mental disabilities	105 SE participants	Women (n=47), men (n=53)	Adult employees (n=78), range=22–67; high school students (n=27), range=17–21
Haslett et al. [40]	IPS	People with severe mental illnesses	45 IPS participants	NA	NA
Johanson, Markström, Bejerholm [48]	IES	People with affective disorders on long-term sleekness leave	5 participants, two employment specialists	Participants: 3 female, 2 male	25–52
Kilsby, Bennett, and Beyer [49]	Not specified	People with mental retardation	35 SE participants	NA	NA
Kilsby and Beyer [50]	Not specified	Job seekers with mental retardation	40 job seekers (5 dropped out or were not included in the final analysis) and 14 employment specialists	NA	Range=19–52
Kilsby and Beyer [54]	Not specified	Individuals with learning disabilities	51 participants: 13 in SE and 38 in an ATC	SE: nine men and four women ATC: Twenty women and eighteen men	SE, range=28–63 ATC: NA
Kostick, Whitley, and Bush [52]	IPS	People with severe mental illnesses	22 employment specialists	10 men	Mean age=39.9
Larson et al. [47]	IPS	People with serious mental illnesses	67 SE practitioners	77% women	Mean age=41.8
McDermott and Edwards [39]	Not specified	Older people with intellectual disabilities	Employees with a disability, n=43; carers of employees, n=2; supported employment providers, n=12; supported employment providers (written submission), n=14; other industry stakeholders, n=5 (N=76)	Employees: 60% men	Employees, range=50–74; women <65
Nittrouer, Shogren, Pickens [38]	CE	People with autism and/or intellectual disabilities	3 customised employment participants	1 woman, 2 men	Range=22–29
Solar [53]	IPS	Patients with schizophrenia	20 IPS participants	12 women, 8 men	Range=28–65
Wehmeyer et al. [45]	CE	Young women with intellectual and developmental disabilities	18 customised employment participants	All women	NA

NA not applicable, *SE* supported employment, *CES* customised employment support, *IPS* individual placement and support, *ATC* adult training centre, *IES* individual Enabling and Support, *TVR* traditional vocational rehabilitation

Table 3 The three themes and connections between them

Theme	Sub-theme	Connected sub-themes
Expression of self-determined choice	Appropriate at different timepoints	Empowers participants from the very beginning of the intervention throughout the entire intervention Examples: [40, 52]
	Requirement of intervention success	Empowers the participant and fosters collaboration Example: [42]
	Consistency vs adjustability of choice	Achieved through collaboration Examples: [46, 49]
	Choice to stop participation	Empowered to make an uneasy but self-determined choice Examples: [39, 43, 44]
Collaboration/ creating a working alliance	Provider communication	Facilitates understanding of the choices by the participant Examples: [46, 49]
	In decision-making	Availability of choices Examples: [45–47]
	Requirement for intervention success	A platform for participants to express their needs and choices and therefore, leads to better personalisation of intervention Examples: [46, 49]
	Role of service provider	Empowering to initiate collaborative process, providing choices Examples: [40, 44]
Empowerment	Role of service provider	Enabling self-determined choice Examples: [40, 47]
	Requirement for intervention success	Allows self-determined choice and collaboration, facilitates personalisation Examples: [42, 47]

self-determination and self-assessment techniques, while Larson et al. [47] underlined the importance of collaboration in problem solving and deemed it a success factor in SE interventions. They believed that collaboration is the foundation of a participant–practitioner relationship.

Finally, Nittrouer et al. [38] addressed collaboration in broader frames. They noted the importance of the participant's collaboration with person-centred teams, which include vocational and treatment services, family members, and other supporting agencies.

Empowerment

While conceptualisations of participant engagement through making *self-determined choices* and *collaborating* are more focused on how engagement manifests through a participant's actions, *empowerment* brings into focus the role of the service provider. Empowerment in the included studies appears as a process of engaging of the participant by the service provider, providing possibilities and facilitating independent actions and as a result, the participant being empowered to make self-determined choices [41, 42, 47]. Moreover, a study by Areberg and Bejerholm [42] pointed out that IPS participant empowerment and engagement are closely linked terms, while empowerment, choice, and working alliance are interrelated. IPS participants showed higher empowerment than those participating in traditional vocational rehabilitation (TVR); the authors suggested that this

may have been due to the participant being empowered by making an informed choice and the attention to the participants' preferences and collaboration with them on mapping out and following their choices. Moreover, they suggested that empowerment was related to the participants' motivation and self-efficacy due to the constant focus of the intervention on the participants' goals.

Haslett et al. [40] described empowerment as providing participants with accessible information on interventions and providing the means for participants to contact intervention providers using an online platform so that they could receive support when needed. They point out that empowering people through providing them with accessible information leads to their later self-determined choice to enrol in the intervention. Larson et al. [47] argued that empowerment implies participant-driven interventions: the practitioners' focus on the participants' independent choice increased their self-esteem. Focusing on the participant's choices and strength and collaboration with the participant empowers the participant, facilitating his/her engagement ('active participation').

Bejerholm and Björkman [41] claimed that community integration and engagement in 'daily activities and community life' by the IPS participants were key aspects of empowerment, as these helped the participants to overcome the experience of stigma. The researchers underlined that SE was empowering as it increased individuals' likelihood of obtaining employment, and therefore, being engaged in a

meaningful activity and being integrated into the community. Such inclusion, in turn, improved participant engagement, both in the intervention and in community life.

Thus, empowerment seems to be an engaging process dependent on and initiated by the SE provider to engage the participant through providing him/her with information, choice, and creating a collaborative relationship with him/her. Moreover, empowerment seems to link collaboration/working alliance and self-determined choice together, as without a participant being empowered, the service will be provider-driven and the relationship between the provider and the participant can hardly be named a 'working alliance', wherein a participant can guide the service according to his/her own needs, choices, or preferences by making and incorporating self-determined choices.

Discussion

This systematic scoping review is the first study to synthesise the available knowledge on participant engagement in SE interventions and answer the following research question: How does the literature on SE present, define, and conceptualise participant engagement in SE interventions?

Having analysed 16 articles, we found three themes used by the researchers to present participant engagement: exercise of self-determined choice, collaboration and the creation of a working alliance between the SE participant and employment specialists, and participant empowerment. The concepts of self-determined choice, empowerment, and collaboration are not synonymous but approach participant engagement from different angles, and they were often presented as inter-complementary and mutually reinforcing. This finding accords with previous research in rehabilitation counselling claiming that participant engagement in vocational rehabilitation is a construct combining motivation, empowerment, and a working alliance [9]. Without empowerment participants will not be able to exercise self-determined informed choice and actively participate in the intervention, such as career counselling [56]. In addition, Kosciulek and Wheaton [57] concluded that the empowering of intervention participants is a two-way process and involves the creation of a working alliance, participants' informed choice, and their self-determination. According to our findings, participant engagement in SE is present if participants are empowered by the service providers and exercise self-determined choice, and there is a collaborative process, or working alliance, between the participants and SE practitioners.

The literature on participant engagement in vocational rehabilitation has suggested that there are two ways in which engagement takes place: a participant may be in a 'state' of being engaged or in a 'process' of becoming engaged [3]. In our opinion, a more dynamic definition of engagement as a *process* challenges the notion of conceptualising participant engagement as an '*end-state*', as this does not bring into focus the practitioners' role in empowering the participants and the importance of participants being engaged through choice and collaboration throughout the entire time that a person participates in a SE intervention. The literature we have reviewed supports the idea that engagement is more reasonable to see as a 'process', often generated, supported, and followed up on by a SE practitioner by empowering, creating, and maintaining the working alliance and providing the participant with choices, while the participant is being empowered, collaborates in the working alliance, and makes self-determined choices throughout the whole time that he/she is undergoing the intervention. We suggest, therefore, the following definition of participant engagement in SE: *Participant engagement in SE is an active, multifaceted process that involves the empowerment of participants, participants' exercise of self-determined informed choice, and their collaboration with SE practitioners (employment specialists) in the working alliance.*

This systematic scoping review also revealed that the exact wording, *engagement*, though emerging in toolkits for SE practitioners, such as EUSE Toolkit, is a term that is seldom used in the literature on SE consciously and consistently. Much of the literature employed different concepts and terms describing participant engagement in their interventions. This may lead to neglecting important parts of the process, as well as omitting factors that are important in ensuring that the SE intervention is aligned with person-centred fundamentals.

Meanwhile, the reviewed literature discussed participants' engagement in work-oriented activities, treatment activities, daily life, and the community, pointing to a holistic person-centred approach that aims to improve the general functioning of an individual, his/her 'improved coping with life' [33 p. 69], as well as the formation of a 'fully functioning person' [33] where all the spheres of human life are equally important, including not only self-actualisation through meaningful activity, but also social belonging [33, 58]. Thus, the SE interventions were presented as interdisciplinary, targeting, as appropriate, the medical, employment, social, and other possible needs of the participants.

Limitations

The systematic scoping review included peer-reviewed empirical studies of all study designs and captured a range of methodological approaches. We were therefore able to analyse conceptualisations of participant engagement that were described by intervention/trial investigators and by participants themselves. However, we did not search the grey literature, and doing so may have captured additional

local or regional conceptualisations of participant engagement. Including only English-language studies also meant that findings from non-English speaking countries, without traditions of English-language publishing, were more likely to be excluded. Therefore, our analysis results may be less generalisable to countries that do not produce English-language academic works.

Suggestions for Further Research

In all of the reviewed studies, only one, Blankertz et al. [44], employed a theoretical framework for their reasoning of participant engagement, in their study conveyed as the collaborating of SE practitioners and participants in a working alliance, with their reasoning originating in the relationship-building ideas of social psychology. The presence of a theoretical background in other studies would allow for more nuanced interpretations and for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping participant engagement. We suggest that more studies employ a theoretical approach in research on participant engagement in SE. A theoretical framework would improve research validity by elucidating the participant engagement processes described in the reviewed studies. Particularly, we suggest the employment of the fundamentals of person-centred theory, including non-directive counselling and the development of a trust-based relationship, as such a reasoning of importance or exploration of participant engagement in SE would underline the person-centredness of SE and the processes behind participant engagement within a context of person-centred intervention. This would help stakeholders develop a comprehensive strategy for participant engagement implementation, utilisation, and development.

Conclusion

This systematic scoping review has synthesised the available knowledge on participant engagement in SE interventions. Participant engagement in SE is a multidimensional concept that includes the empowerment of the intervention participants, their exercise of self-determined choice, and collaborating with SE practitioners in working alliances. This finding can guide the implementation, development, and practice of SE interventions by drawing attention to the empowering of the participants, ensuring that they are offered the self-determined choice possibility and collaborating in a working alliance. The finding can also be used by a broad range of rehabilitation services responsible for the vocational rehabilitation of people with various support needs.

Declarations

References

1. Christle JW, Schlumberger A, Haller B, Gloeckl R, Halle M, Pressler A. Individualized vs. group exercise in improving quality of life and physical activity in patients with cardiac disease and low exercise capacity: results from the DOPPELHERZ trial. Disabil Rehabil. 2017;39(25):2566–2571.
2. Menchetti BM, Garcia LA. Personal and employment outcomes of person-centered career planning. Educ Train Dev Disabil. 2003;38(2):145–156.
3. Bright FAS, Kayes NM, Worrall L, McPherson KM. A conceptual review of engagement in healthcare and rehabilitation. Disabil Rehabil. 2015;37(8):643–654.
4. Williams MW, Rapport LJ, Hanks RA, Parker HA. Engagement in rehabilitation therapy and functional outcomes among individuals with acquired brain injuries. Disabil Rehabil. 2021;43(1):33–41.
5. King G, Chiarello LA, Ideishi R, Ziviani J, Phoenix M, McLarnon MJ, Pinto M, Thompson L, Smart E. The complexities and synergies of engagement: an ethnographic study of engagement in outpatient pediatric rehabilitation sessions. Disabil Rehabil. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2019.1700562.
6. Kubina LA, Dubouloz CJ, Davis CG, Kessler D, Egan MY. The process of re-engagement in personally valued activities during the two years following stroke. Disabil Rehabil. 2013;35(3):236–243.
7. Kabel A, McBee-Black K, Dimka J. Apparel-related participation barriers: ability, adaptation and engagement. Disabil Rehabil. 2016;38(22):2184–2192.
8. Waghorn G, Childs S, Hampton E, Gladman B, Greaves A, Bowman D. Enhancing community mental health services through formal partnerships with supported employment providers. Am J Psychiatr Rehabil. 2012;15(2):157–180.
9. Southwick JD, Schultz JC. Participant engagement in public vocational rehabilitation programs: an analysis of counselor ratings. J Rehabil. 2019;85(2):13–22.
10. Dutta A, Chan F, Kundu MM, Kaya C, Brooks J, Sánchez J, Tansey TN. Assessing vocational rehabilitation engagement of people with disabilities: a factor-analytic approach. Rehabil Couns Bull. 2017;60(3):145–154.
11. Iwanaga K, Chan F, Tansey TN, Strauser D, Ritter E, Bishop M, Brooks J. Working alliance and stages of change for employment:

the intermediary role of autonomous motivation, outcome expectancy and vocational rehabilitation engagement. J Occup Rehabil. 2019;29(2):315–324.

12. Suhonen R, Stolt M, Charalambous A. Supporting individualised nursing care by leadership. In: Suhonen R, Stolt M, Papastavrou E, editors. Individualized care: theory, measurement and practice. Cham: Springer; 2019. p. 195–205.

13. Bishop M, Kayes N, McPherson K. Understanding the therapeutic alliance in stroke rehabilitation. Disabil Rehabil. 2021;43(8):1074–1083.

14. Johnson RL, Floyd M, Pilling D, Boyce MJ, Grove B, Secker J, Schneider J, Slade J. Service users' perceptions of the effective ingredients in supported employment. J Ment Health. 2009;18(2):121–128.

15. Cogan AM, Carlson M. Deciphering participation: an interpretive synthesis of its meaning and application in rehabilitation. Disabil Rehabil. 2018;40(22):2692–2703.

16. West M, Targett P, Wehman P, Cifu G, Davis J. Separation from supported employment: a retrospective chart review study. Disabil Rehabil. 2015;37(12):1055–1059.

17. Bond GR. Supported employment: evidence for an evidence-based practice. Psychiatr Rehabil J. 2004;27(4):345–359.

18. Hoffmann H, Jäckel D, Glauser S, Mueser KT, Kupper Z. Long-term effectiveness of supported employment: 5-year follow-up of a randomized controlled trial. Am J Psychiatry. 2014;171(11):1183–1190.

19. Nøkleby H, Hernes T. Effekter av supported employment [The effects of supported employment]. Arbeid og velferd. 2017;2:65–76.

20. Drake RE, Becker DR, Clark RE, Mueser KT. Research on the individual placement and support model of supported employment. Psychiatr Q. 1999;70(4):289–301.

21. Elinson L, Frey WD, Li T, Palan MA, Horne RL. Evaluation of customized employment in building the capacity of the workforce development system. J Vocat Rehabil. 2008;28(3):141–158.

22. Porteous N, Waghorn G. Implementing evidence-based employment services in New Zealand for young adults with psychosis: progress during the first five years. Br J Occup Ther. 2007;70(12):521–526.

23. Waghorn G, Hielscher E. The availability of evidence-based practices in supported employment for Australians with severe and persistent mental illness. Aust Occup Ther J. 2015;62(2):141–144.

24. Church HR, Seewald PM, Clark JM, Jak AJ, Twamley EW. Predictors of work outcomes following supported employment in veterans with a history of traumatic brain injury. NeuroRehabilitation. 2019;44(3):333–339.

25. Pogoda TK, Carlson KF, Gormley KE, Resnick SG. Supported employment for veterans with traumatic brain injury: provider perspectives. Arch Phys Med Rehabil. 2018;99(2):S14–S22.

26. Sveinsdottir V, Bull HC, Evensen S, Reme SE, Knutzen T, Lystad JU. A short history of individual placement and support in Norway. Psychiatr Rehabil J. 2020;43(1):9–17.

27. Maximova-Mentzoni T. Supported employment i kvalifiseringstiltak for innvandrere. To år med metodeutprøving og metodeutvikling i åtte forsøksprosjekter [Supported employment as a qualification measure for immigrants. Two years of method testing and eevelopment in eight pilot projects]. Arbeidsforskningsinstituttet, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University (2019).

28. Khoronzhevych M, Fadyl J. How congruent is person-centred practice with labour activation policy? Person-centred approach to vocational interventions on immigrant jobseekers in Norway. Eur J Soc Work. 2020. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2020.1793112.

29. Manthey TJ. A pilot study of introductory motivational interviewing training for supported employment case managers. Int J Psychosoc Rehabil. 2013;18(1):133–138.

30. Ståhl C, Gustavsson M. Introducing motivational interviewing in a sickness insurance context: translation and implementation challenges. J Occup Rehabil. 2018;28(2):357–364.

31. Hazler RJ. Person-centered theory. In: Capuzzi D, Gross DR, editors. Counseling and psychotherapy: theories and interventions. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.; 2007. p. 189–215.

32. Rogers C. On becoming a person. New York: Constable & Robinson; 1967.

33. European Union of Supported Employment. European Union of Supported Employment Toolkit. 2010. https://www.euse.org/content/supported-employment-toolkit/EUSE-Toolkit-2010.pdf. Accessed 10 Apr 2018.

34. Arksey H, O'Malley L. Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. Int J Soc Res Methodol. 2005;8(1):19–32.

35. Prisma. Transparent Reporting of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses. Extensions. 2015. http://www.prisma-statement.org/Extensions/ScopingReviews/. Accessed 15 Sept 2020.

36. Bonfils IS, Hansen H, Dalum HS, Eplov LF. Implementation of the individual placement and support approach – facilitators and barriers. Scand J Disabil Res. 2017;19(4):318–333.

37. Ritchie J, Spencer L. Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In: Huberman AM, Miles MB, editors. The qualitative researcher's companion. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; 2002. p. 305–329.

38. Nittrouer CL, Shogren KA, Pickens JL. Using a collaborative process to develop goals and self-management interventions to support young adults with disabilities at work. Rehabil Res Policy Educ. 2016;30(2):110–128.

39. McDermott S, Edwards R. Enabling self-determination for older workers with intellectual disabilities in supported employment in Australia. J Appl Res Intellect Disabil. 2012;25(5):423–432.

40. Haslett WR, McHugo GJ, Bond GR, Drake RE. Use of software for tablet computers to promote engagement with supported employment: results from an RCT. Psychiatr Serv. 2014;65(7):954–956.

41. Bejerholm U, Björkman T. Empowerment in supported employment research and practice: Is it relevant? Int J Soc Psychiatry. 2011;57(6):588–595.

42. Areberg C, Bejerholm U. The effect of IPS on participants' engagement, quality of life, empowerment, and motivation: a randomized controlled trial. Scand J Occup Ther. 2013;20(6):420–428.

43. Blankertz L, Staines GL, Magura S, Madison EM, Horowitz E, Spinelli M, McKenzie A, Bali P, Guarino H, Grand A, Young R, Fong C. The Customized Employment Supports (CES) model of vocational rehabilitation for methadone treatment patients. J Vocat Rehabil. 2003;19(3):143–155.

44. Blankertz L, Magura S, Staines GL, Madison EM, Spinelli M, Horowitz E. A new work placement model for unemployed methadone maintenance patients. Subst Use Misuse. 2004;39(13–14):2239–2260.

45. Wehmeyer ML, Parent W, Lattimore J, Obremski S, Poston D, Rousso H. Promoting self-determination and self-directed employment planning for young women with disabilities. J Soc Work Disabil Rehabil. 2009;8(3/4):117–131.

46. Brady MP, Rosenberg H, Frain MP. A self-evaluation instrument for work performance and support needs. Career Dev Except Individ. 2008;31(3):175–185.

47. Larson JE, Sheehan L, Ryan C, Lemp S, Drandorff L. Practitioner perspectives on Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for individuals with serious mental illness. J Vocat Rehabil. 2014;41(3):225–235.

48. Johanson S, Markström U, Bejerholm U. Enabling the return-to-work process among people with affective disorders: a multiple-case study. Scand J Occup Ther. 2017;26(3):205–218.

49. Kilsby M, Bennert K, Beyer S. Measuring and reducing acquiescence in vocational profiling procedures for first time job-seekers with mental retardation. J Vocat Rehabil. 2002;17(4):287–299.

50. Kilsby MS, Beyer S. Enhancing self-determination in job matching in supported employment for people with learning disabilities: an intervention study. J Vocat Rehabil. 2002;17(2):125–135.

51. Kilsby MS, Beyer S. Engagement and interaction: a comparison between supported employment and day service provision. J Intellect Disabil Res. 1996;40(4):348–357.

52. Kostick KM, Whitley R, Bush PW. Client-centeredness in supported employment: specialist and supervisor perspectives. J Ment Health. 2010;19(6):523–531.

53. Solar A. A Supported Employment linkage intervention for people with schizophrenia who want to work: a survey of patients' views. Australas Psychiatry. 2015;23(2):163–165.

54. Kilsby M, Beyer S. Engagement and interaction: a comparison between supported employment and ATCs. J Community Appl Soc Psychol. 1996;6(2):141–152.

55. Johanson S, Markström U, Bejerholm U. Enabling the return-to-work process among people with affective disorders: a multiple-case study. Scand J Occup Ther. 2019;26(3):205–218.

56. Breeding RR. Empowerment as a function of contextual self-understanding: the effect of work interest profiling on career decision self-efficacy and work locus of control. Rehabil Couns Bull. 2008;51(2):96–106.

57. Kosciulek JF, Wheaton JE. Rehabilitation counseling with individuals with disabilities: an empowerment framework [Editorial]. Rehabil Ed. 2003;17(4):207–214.

58. McCormack B, McCance T. Person-centred nursing: theory and practice. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell; 2010.

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

Article 2.

Khoronzhevych, M. & Fadyl, J. (2022). *How congruent is person-centred practice with labour activation policy? Person-centred approach to vocational interventions on immigrant jobseekers in Norway.* Published in: *European Journal of Social Work*

How congruent is person-centred practice with labour activation policy? Person-centred approach to vocational interventions on immigrant jobseekers in Norway

I hvilken grad er personsentrert praksis forenlig med aktiveringspolitikk for arbeidslivet? Personsentrert tilnærming i arbeidsrettede tiltak for innvandrere som søker arbeid i Norge

Mariya Khoronzhevych [a] and Joanna Fadyl[b]

[a]Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work, Child Welfare and Social Policy, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway; [b]Centre for Person Centred Research, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Increased migration to OECD countries has made unemployed foreign-born immigrants a new target population for 'activation' policies to reintroduce people into the labour market. As populations receiving employment activation interventions became more diverse, individualisation of activation measures was introduced into guidelines for welfare and employment agencies. While a person-centred approach in employment-oriented social work is gaining popularity, there is little research relating to how such approaches fit the frameworks of relatively aggressive activation. This study presents a qualitative instrumental case study exploring interactions between activation policy and person-centred employment interventions with immigrant jobseekers in Norway. Data analysis applied critical orientation towards data and employed directed content analysis. Research questions include: (1) How well do person-centred principles fit with the policy of activation? (2) How do person-centred practice and activation measures interact, and what are the congruencies and tensions? (3) What are the effects and practical implications of these congruencies and tensions? Findings from the present case study indicate the policy of activation strongly affects opportunities to implement person-centred practice in vocational counselling. Further, the political agenda of activation is inconsistent with the intentions of supported employment implementation to make vocational services jobseeker-centred or jobseeker-driven.

SAMANDRAG

Økt innvandring til OECD-landene har ført til at arbeidsledige innvandrere er blitt en ny målgruppe for "aktiverings"-tiltak som skal hjelpe mennesker tilbake inn på jobbmarkedet. Etter hvert som stadig flere typer befolkningsgrupper blir gjenstand for aktiveringstiltak, har man i retningslinjene for velferds- og arbeidskontorer innført individualisering

CONTACT Mariya Khoronzhevych ✉ marikh@oslomet.no 💬 Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work, Child Welfare and Social Policy, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, PB. 4, St. Olavs plass, 0130, Oslo, Norway

av aktiveringstiltak. Mens personsentrert tilnærming innen arbeidsrettede sosialt arbeid blir stadig mer populært, finnes det lite forskning på hvordan slike tilnærmingsmetoder passer inn i rammeverkene for den forholdsvis dramatiske aktiveringen som finner sted. Denne studien presenterer en kvalitativ instrumentell casestudie som utforsker samhandlingen mellom aktiveringspolitikk og personsentrerte tiltak for utenlandske jobbsøkere i Norge. Det er anvendt dataanalyse ved kritisk orientering overfor data og direkte innholdsanalyse. Følgende spørsmål ble stilt ved undersøkelsen: 1) Hvor forenlige er personsentrerte prinsipper med aktiveringspolitikken? 2) På hvilke områder samhandler personsentrert praksis og personsentrerte aktiveringstiltak? På hvilke måter stemmer de overens, og hvor ligger spenningsforholdene? 3) Hva er virkningene og de praktiske implikasjonene av disse overensstemmelsene og spenningsforholdene? Funn fra denne casestudien tyder på at aktiveringspolitikken har sterk innvirkning på mulighetene for å implementere en personsentrert praksis ved yrkesrådgivning. Dessuten er det ikke samsvar mellom den politiske agendaen for aktivering og hensikten med støttet sysselsetting, som er å gjøre arbeidsformidlingstjenestene mer sentrert omkring jobbsøkeren.

Introduction

During the last two decades, social work has shown an interest towards adopting the principles of person-centred practice that allow independent functioning and promote respect for individuality (Gardner, 2014; Washburn & Grossman, 2017), empowerment, self-determination, and autonomy of social service users (Hansen & Natland, 2017).

At the same time, due to the economic disturbances and rising unemployment rates experienced by the welfare states since 1990, welfare-to-work policies had to toughen demands and rules for recipients of welfare and unemployment benefits in an attempt to reintroduce them into the labour market, making unemployment a significantly tougher experience (Immervoll & Knotz, 2018; Pinto, 2019). These changes, often referred to as 'active labour market policies' (ALMP), or 'activation' (Bonvin, 2008; Gubrium et al., 2014; Immervoll & Knotz, 2018), pivot on the notion of an active citizen who is self-sufficient and responsible for social self-integration primarily through participation in the labour market (Nothdurfter, 2016). Social workers have become the agents of coercive activation policies turning social work into 'activation work' (Nothdurfter, 2016) with a focus on quick integration of the unemployed into the labour market (Hansen & Natland, 2017; Nothdurfter, 2016).

Adding to this, significantly increased migration to OECD countries during the last two decades has seen unemployed immigrants (foreign-born population) as a new target group for activation policies (Auer et al., 2017; Breidahl, 2017; Renema & Lubbers, 2019). Activation arguably facilitates their integration into the labour market and society of the host country (Breidahl, 2017; Jensen & Pfau-Effinger, 2005).

As populations receiving activation interventions became more diverse, individualisation of activation measures was introduced into guidelines for welfare and employment agencies (Solvang, 2017; van Berkel & Knies, 2018), and person-centred practice was touted as a facilitator of individualisation (Leplege et al., 2007; Lewis & Sanderson, 2011).

The Norwegian context

To reduce bureaucracy and facilitate interagency collaboration, Norwegian social insurance, employment, and local social assistance agencies were united under one organisation in 2006, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) (Gubrium et al., 2014; NAV, 2019b; Røysum, 2010). NAV became the frontline of the employment-oriented social work and activation measures in Norway

targeting the long-term unemployed, young unemployed, people with reduced working capacity, and unemployed immigrants from outside the European Economic Area (EEA; Finansdepartementet, 2019).

Activation in Norway is characterised by a 'human capital' approach to unemployment (Andreassen, 2019; Gubrium et al., 2014), including developing the skills and qualifications of an individual, who in return is expected to apply those skills to contribute to society (Dean, 2006). In the context of NAV employment measures, this includes assessment of working capacity, requalification, work trials, and employer incentives to stimulate the employment of jobseekers with limited working capacity (NAV, 2019a).

Alongside the introduction of activation policies, Norwegian social workers have argued for an empowering rather than a coercive approach (Andreassen, 2019; Hansen & Natland, 2017) with a growing interest in person-centred interventions such as developing individual plans for social service users (Breimo, 2016). In vocational follow-up, person-centred supported employment (Bonfils et al., 2017; European Union of Supported Employment, 2010) is offered to some groups of jobseekers, with immigrant jobseekers most recently included as recipients of this type of intervention (Maximova-Mentzoni, 2019).

While a person-centred approach in employment-oriented social work is gaining popularity, there is a dearth of research investigating how person-centred practice fits into the frameworks of relatively aggressive 'activation' policies, including if it undergoes any modification, or if it continues to adhere closely to its stated principles in this reciprocal action.

The research presented in this article is a case study of immigrant jobseekers who participated in supported employment in Norway. We explored the interactions between activation policy and person-centred supported employment intervention. The broad research questions were: (1) How well do person-centred principles fit with the policy of activation? (2) How do person-centred practice and activation measures interact, and what are the congruencies and tensions? (3) What are the effects and practical implications of these congruencies and tensions? The study first offers a critical introduction to both 'activation' policies and person-centred approaches before introducing the research in more detail.

Activation

Proponents of activation stress the importance of active citizenship for a welfare state and synonymise 'active citizen' with contributing to society as a self-sustained 'worker-citizen' (Clarke, 2005). These authors underline that activation facilitates social inclusion of the marginalised population groups, such as immigrants, and promotes their active citizenship through integration into the labour market (Jensen & Pfau-Effinger, 2005; Nybom, 2011) and participation in the community as valuable members (Christiansen & Townsend, 2010). They argue that under activation policies, job search support has proven to be cost-effective and increased employment rates, particularly in the short- and medium-term for diverse target groups (Kluve & Rani, 2016). However, a number of researchers have questioned how reasonable activation measures are in other respects.

Despite vocational follow-up in social work being conceptualised as facilitating a person's vocational potential, often the only activity considered to be meaningful is paid work (Bonvin, 2008; Fadyl et al., 2019). Consequently, all other jobseeker engagements are neglected or downplayed in the process of work-oriented follow-up. The lack of assistance from social workers in dealing with other challenges for the jobseeker, such as family or accommodation issues, leads to an imbalance that, together with continuous unsuccessful attempts to obtain employment, results in disappointment, frustration, and increased chance of 'deactivation' relapse (Hibbard & Mahoney, 2010; van Hal et al., 2012).

Indeed, even though 'activation' aims at inclusion through work and contribution to society, it may in fact generate social exclusion instead: first, by guiding and nudging a person towards a decision considered appropriate by the social worker, or by making the decision on her or his behalf instead of

encouraging self-determined choice and assisting in pursuing it (Gibson et al., 2019; van Hal et al., 2012). Second, by failing to assist those who are unable to articulate their needs or ask for help when they need it (van Hal et al., 2012). Third, by sanctioning those who are already economically vulnerable (Eleveld, 2017), and stigmatising them (Kluve & Rani, 2016).

Resource-consuming activation also increased the caseloads on caseworkers, with every caseworker following around 100 jobseekers simultaneously, thus decreasing the quality of the work-oriented follow-up (Hainmueller et al., 2016). Therefore, according to Hudson et al. (2010), 'creaming and parking' occurs when vocational counsellors prioritise the jobseekers they consider employment-ready and provide a minimised service to hard-to-employ jobseekers, including ethnic minority groups with cultural and language barriers.

Person-centred practice

McCance and McCormack (2010) argue that the basis of person-centred practice comprises philosophical perspectives on the meaning of being a person, with a focus on humanness that includes beliefs, values, and experiences that explain authentic choices and 'the way we construct our lives' (p.5). They argue that every person has an 'inborn potential' that is developed and exercised through social relations. Person-centred practice's focus on authenticity and elimination of constraints allows the realisation of an individual's full potential or the closest approximation to it that is achievable.

Person-centred counselling, first described by Carl Rogers (1951), placed an emphasis on every person being the expert on their own life and guiding the received service in the direction that is important for him or her, thus finding the solution to their own problems. Counsellors were to acknowledge the *person* in their clients, knowing their history and being able to empathise with them while providing non-directive counselling, thus constructing a trust-based productive relationship.

Person-centred practice as developed in health and social care disciplines over the last few decades focuses on partnership between the service provider and the person, and their shared responsibility for the person's well-being, with empowering and holistic follow-up touching on multiple spheres of the person's life (Louw et al., 2017). Its adoption into social work from health care (Washburn & Grossman, 2017) accentuated the importance of the holistic well-being of the person and underlined the importance of their preferences, expectations, needs and wishes (Carvajal et al., 2019).

While there is no commonly accepted definition of what person-centred practice is (Waters & Buchanan, 2017), scholars agree that there are core elements it includes. Therefore, a broad definition of person-centred practice describes a service that attends to the individual circumstances, needs, and preferences of a service user by involving them in service planning; respecting the person's authenticity, self-determination, and choice; supporting interpersonal relations and social inclusion; being strength focused; and facilitating engagement in the service (Louw et al., 2017; McCance & McCormack, 2016; Waters & Buchanan, 2017).

A key strategy of person-centred practice is construction of a trust-based 'therapeutic' relationship between the person and the service provider that facilitates the person's openness to challenges and the anticipation of their needs and thus, helps to adjust assistance accordingly, resulting in positive service outcomes (Crisp, 2015; Hamovitch et al., 2018; Parr, 2016).

Person-centred practice has been suggested as a means to achieve a quality service, and as such has become a key aspect of social and health policy in a range of countries (Christie & Camp, 2014; Waters & Buchanan, 2017). Person-centred policy encourages structures such as integrated services and multi-disciplinary teams, and practices like direct payment (where service users control funding allocation), as well as supporting an informed decision-making to benefit service recipients (Glasby, 2016).

Despite its increasing popularity, person-centred practice has also been criticised, particularly in the context of case management where individualisation is sometimes operationalised as client

responsibilisation. The issues debated include: lack of help when needed; creating victim blaming by expecting the individuals to resolve problems by their own effort; potentially creating unachievable goals; and inducing guilt for not doing enough to improve one's own life (Gibson et al., 2012; Kahn, 1999; Waterhouse, 1993).

Implementation of this approach can also be challenging. Critiques highlight issues such as a counsellor's lack of knowledge or skills, lack of understanding of what person-centred practice should be, reported difficulty in switching from traditional provider-centred service, and imposing their own (more 'expert' or 'informed') goals as more realistic ones (Cooper, 2004; Richard & Knis-Matthews, 2010).

Study design

This study is a part of a wider PhD research project which received ethical approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

In accordance with the aims described above, the methodology employed a qualitative instrumental case study. This type of case study serves to acquire understanding of a certain phenomenon through examining a case, focusing on a particular phenomenon (in our study, person-centred practice and its interaction with activation policies), rather than the case itself (Casey & Houghton, 2010; Luck et al., 2006).

For this case study, we looked specifically at:

1. The extent to which: (a) activation, and (b) person-centred practice are evident in vocational intervention with immigrant jobseekers.
2. The opportunities and constraints for person-centred practice in the context of activation.

Our case was a NAV location with a well-established supported employment programme targeting immigrant jobseekers. They participated in supported employment through Job Chance (*Jobbsjansen*), or as part of the Introduction Programme (*Introduksjonsprogrammet*). Job Chance targets home-based immigrant women who struggle to obtain employment, while the Introduction Programme is designed for newly arrived refugees and includes tutoring in various aspects of Norwegian society, including introduction into the labour market.

The first author collected the data. First, she approached employment specialists regarding their interest to participate in this study. Having agreed, they offered help in contacting and inviting jobseekers. Before beginning data collection, the first author also obtained necessary permission for conducting research from the head of the NAV office as well as the NAV County office.

Semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations were employed. The interviews included questions that explored jobseekers' or employment specialists' experiences of the intervention, what they liked or did not like, challenges experienced, suggested improvements, and how the employment specialists helped the jobseekers to achieve their personal goals, if at all.

Observations of meetings between jobseekers and employment specialists focused on the communication flow between the jobseeker and the employment specialist, including who talked most, what issues they raised, and the other party's responses. The first author interviewed jobseekers and employment specialists before or after meetings, according to their availability.

Prior to conducting each interview or observing meetings, research participants confirmed and signed consent to participate. Explicit consent to use a voice recorder was also sought. Five participants consented to participate in the research but not voice recordings. In these cases, hand-written notes were taken.

When transcribing interviews, each participant was allocated a pseudonym that was used throughout the interview transcript and observation notes. After transcriptions and anonymization were completed, the original data was erased.

The interviews were conducted and transcribed in Norwegian, while data analysis and analytical coding was done in English. As the transcript was in Norwegian, the first author referred to it

throughout the analysis to assure that the proper meaning was interpreted and conveyed. Interview extracts presented in this article are transcribed according to intelligent verbatim and translated.

Data analysis

Our data analysis applied critical orientation towards data and employed directed content analysis as described by Hsieh and Shannon (2005). This type of content analysis is used when the goal of the research is the further development and differentiation of existing knowledge. Thus, coding of data is done using a coding framework derived from pre-existing research and includes key characteristics of the phenomenon of interest. During the process of coding, new codes and sub-codes may emerge from the data that will extend the coding. This type of content analysis builds on existing knowledge by identifying the way in which the phenomenon occurs in the data, as well as adding new information about the phenomenon that emerges from the study. Coding processes were managed using NVivo v12 software. Figure 1 shows the coding structure with examples of codes and consequent emergence of the themes. The arrows show the coding process algorithm.

We developed our coding framework from theoretical and conceptual literature in both activation policy and person-centred practice in a rehabilitation and social work context. Emergent codes are the codes that we did not predetermine because they were not derived from the literature reviewed. The emergence of these codes was not anticipated.

We repeated the coding process several times to ensure appropriate coding of all relevant information. The codes were combined in categories that in turn constructed themes, which are presented in the results section.

Figure 1. Coding structure.
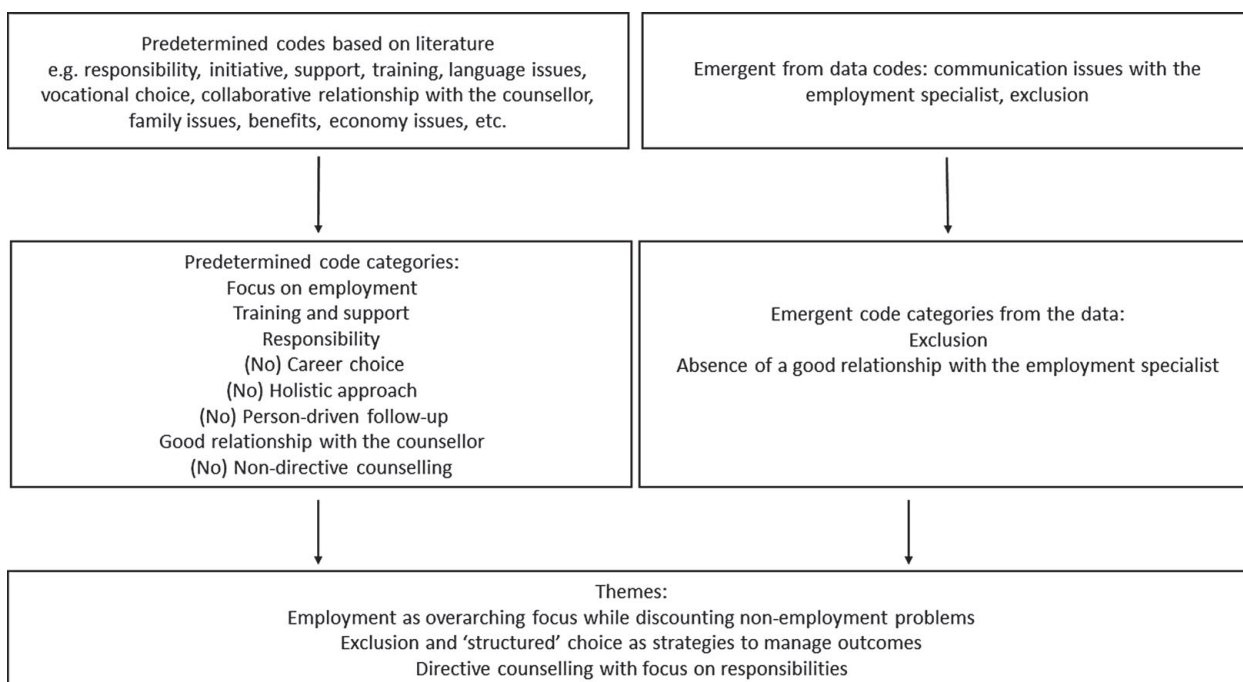
Results

Participants

In total, data consisted of 23 interviews and 10 observations of meetings between jobseekers and employment specialists, conducted between July–October 2018.

This data comprised 18 individual interviews with jobseekers (5 male, 13 female) who participated in supported employment as part of the Introduction Programme and Job Chance. They originated

from Syria (*n* = 5), Eritrea (*n* = 2), Somalia (*n* = 2), Kosovo (*n* = 2), Iran (*n* = 2), Romania (*n* = 1), Democratic Republic of the Congo (*n* = 1), Bosnia (*n* = 1), Kurdistan (*n* = 1), and Nigeria (*n* = 1), and were aged between 25 and 50. The employment specialists had assessed them as 'employment ready', i.e. ready to take up employment at any time.

Four individual interviews and one group interview were conducted with four employment specialists (1 male, 3 female). All employment specialists had previous working experience as caseworkers in NAV. They had also acquired supplementary education in supported employment and motivational interviewing. One also had experience of working as a follow-up counsellor in a mental health institution, one worked at the municipality follow-up service for people with mental health problems, and one had experience as a nurse. Each employment specialist worked with up to 20 jobseekers.

Findings

Overall, the findings from our analysis indicate that the person-centred approach is present to some degree but is largely influenced and modified by activation principles.

Having analysed our codes, we constructed the following three themes: employment as the overarching focus while discounting non-employment problems; exclusion and 'structured' choice as strategies to manage outcomes; and directive counselling with focus on responsibilities. Further, we expand on these themes through a discussion of the data. Thereafter, we discuss the interaction between activation and person-centred practice as evident from the data.

Employment as an overarching focus while discounting non-employment problems

Data clearly indicated that the employment specialists were acutely aware of their perceived role as focused on employment and were well prepared to support jobseekers in the job-hunting process. They provided assistance in searching for employment opportunities, preparation and sending of CVs and cover letters, and training in interview skills. They approved supplementary courses for the jobseekers if those facilitated employment, accompanied them to meet employers, and approved incentives to stimulate employers to employ or provide a work trial. They also addressed the importance of mastering language skills, described differences in working culture, such as shaking hands with customers or wearing hijab at work, and other issues that affected how jobseekers operated in job-related situations.

At the same time, jobseekers' problems perceived to be non-employment-related were generally not addressed by the employment specialists. The jobseekers spoke of struggling with problems within their families, encounters with child protection services, worries for and necessity to attend to close family members living abroad, and challenges in establishing a network outside of the family.

> My sister died, then she had to be transported and buried in [homeland]. I was very sad, to go to school [language and employment courses] did not go very well […]. (Ajola, jobseeker)

> We talk about job, economy, home, how it is going at home, how you pay your invoices […] I feel really sad and just break down and start crying […] Sometimes you feel like this programme is not helping you. (Neema, jobseeker)

We observed a conscious reluctance of the employment specialists to address needs other than those directly connected to employment and, thus, to provide holistic follow-up.

> I make it clear from the first meeting that my job is to help them to find employment and I cannot answer [other] questions […] I think it is good that we are not responsible for these. It would detract from the employment specialist role. I don't think it would be possible to put under one role. (Inger, employment specialist)

Some of the employment specialists experienced frustration at being unable to assist jobseekers with other needs due to pressure to find a work placement for them as soon as possible. One of the

employment specialists acknowledged the need to 'tidy up' other problems before focusing on employment and admitted having accompanied and supported jobseekers in meetings with child protection services, as well as 'pushing' NAV colleagues to provide necessary assistance in a timely manner and arranged stakeholder meetings with NAV, or other relevant actors.

Others did not see a problem with employment pressure and considered it the point of the intervention. At the same time, they expressed frustration that some jobseekers travelled to other countries because of family matters when they were in an active job search process in Norway, thus missing out on employment opportunities.

It emerged that jobseekers referred to employment specialists who assisted them with non-employment-related issues in a more positive way than those whose employment specialists focused solely on employment goals. They were also more satisfied with the collaboration process.

> It is important to find someone who you can talk to and she understands you and gives you advice: you can do this, you can do this. (Neema, jobseeker)

Other jobseekers experienced difficulties in connecting to their employment specialists and talking about the challenges they experienced, including those that occur at work trials or work.

> They don't attack, like, but when you say something – they don't like it. It is childish, but it hurts. (Thomas, jobseeker)

The jobseekers also identified their own inability to discuss difficult issues due to language barriers, awkwardness in discussing something negative, unawareness of the possibility to request more meetings if needed, and concern that those discussions may backfire. At the same time, employment specialists asked the jobseekers to re-channel employment-irrelevant enquiries to other services. Therefore, some jobseekers perceived the employment specialists as indifferent and believed that they were not receiving the support they needed.

Strategies to manage outcomes: exclusion and 'structured' choice

From the interviews with employment specialists, it emerged that some jobseekers wishing to participate in supported employment, or who were referred to supported employment by their caseworkers in NAV were not admitted to the intervention for various reasons, mostly lack of resources.

> Though supported employment is an offer for everyone, we have so limited resources that we have to prioritise, though we should not. (Inger, employment specialist)

Therefore, employment specialists considered whether a person fit the intervention target group, the correlation of resources, and number of potential jobseekers. They then chose and enrolled those who would most benefit. Other jobseekers were to consider alternative employment measures.

The jobseekers identified as having poor language skills were either denied enrolment or sent for a three-month language course precluding their participation in the intervention.

> I would like to have a conversation with them without an interpreter. Then they will go straight into work life. The employers are sceptical if someone cannot speak Norwegian at all. (Veronica, employment specialist)

We observed that re-direction of jobseeker expectations and focus was accepted practice, as opposed to advocacy on behalf of the jobseeker's goals and needs. In one of the observed meetings, a jobseeker was upset after the employment specialist told him of the meeting between his employer and the employment specialist, and the agreement between them that the jobseeker would continue in a work trial. The jobseeker expressed frustration at being excluded from decision-making and not being provided with the information he needed to obtain the employment he expected. The employment specialist thought that his continuation in a work trial was positive, because the jobseeker still had a chance to eventually receive an employment offer.

Prolonged participation in work trials instead of employment was a point of frustration for many interviewed jobseekers. While some of them received work trials in their desired industry, they

struggled to get a job offer. Therefore, while jobseekers could express their career choices, they were guided by employment specialists towards 'realistic' job opportunities, for example, as a cleaner instead of a kitchen assistant. If employment specialists considered the career choice unrealistic or hard to implement, they prompted jobseekers to change their career goal and pursue another vocation.

Together with the unavailability of job vacancies with preferred employers, reasons to modify career choice were not based on jobseeker needs and preferences, but rather on the local and regional labour market needs, jobseekers' qualifications, and the possibility of obtaining the desired job through requalification. Some jobseekers expressed disappointment because of choice limitations due to their geographical location and limitations in the labour market, though they understood the need for compromise.

Together with employment, applying for full-time tertiary education instead of employment was technically a possibility for the Introduction Programme's participants. However, employment specialists appeared not to view this as desirable for jobseekers approaching their 50s.

> If you come to Norway as 45 year-old and have seven kids, and if both the husband and the wife will study, how will you support yourself? You need somehow to support yourself! It is true that in Norway you can become what you want to, but you need to prioritise […] It is very challenging to dampen these demands or wishes of education. (Andy, employment specialist)

Therefore, employment specialists often guided jobseekers towards employment as their only reasonable choice, considering the necessity to ensure some kind of income for their families, and their ineligibility for student loans or welfare benefits to cover costs of education and living. This was often achieved through directive counselling.

Directive counselling with focus on responsibilities

In the meetings with immigrant jobseekers, employment specialists emphasised striving to achieve employment goals to become self-supportive. Jobseekers were responsible for contacting potential employers, applying for relevant jobs, and improving language skills.

> First, I applied for jobs. She said: 'you must apply for jobs by yourself, you need to try to apply for jobs alone.' (Alina, jobseeker)

> They say: 'you must look for a job by yourself. And we can also help you.' (Larissa, jobseeker)

Meetings between a jobseeker and an employment specialist often started with the employment specialist asking: 'What have you done to improve your language skills?', or 'What have you done for today?'

Jobseekers were expected to be available for impromptu meetings, unless they were in an employment-relevant activity. The meetings were mainly updates of the current situation in the job seeking process and making agreements on what the jobseeker should do next.

We only observed one self-determined initiative shown by a jobseeker, who decided to pursue education in another town and would therefore quit supported employment if accepted. We saw mainly directive counselling employed by the employment specialists, though one employment specialist mentioned the visualisation techniques she employed with her jobseekers, such as asking them to imagine where they were in five years (the employment goal) and what they had done to achieve it.

In one observed meeting, an employment specialist reminded a jobseeker that her time in the programme was nearly finished, including the benefits connected with it, and asked her what she planned to do next. The employment specialist put responsibility for the situation on the jobseeker as she had not applied for the jobs she was referred to, while the jobseeker seemed to be in distress. She swung between explaining her perceived duty as a mother and being available for her young

children when they come home from school, the need for a stable income, and her hopes to find a job that would correspond with her interests and qualifications.

Here, we observed a close correlation between directive counselling and the denial or heavy structuring of choice when the jobseeker was reminded that the job-hunting process was her responsibility, as she had not applied the jobs suggested to her.

In summary, Figure 2 depicts the elements of activation and person-centred practice we identified in the studied intervention context in correlation to their foundations. The colour coding shows the dominance of activation measures in the intervention. In many cases, the practices we saw directly reflected activation policies. In others, a person-centred approach is modified by activation policies. The only aspect in which it is fully consistent with a person-centred framework is with respect to low caseloads.

Thus, analysis of the interviews and observations reveals that activation policy is dominant and affects opportunities for implementing person-centred practice in important ways. In the section below, we critically analyse this relationship further and consider recommendations for practice.

Discussion

Our case study indicates that activation policy strongly affects opportunities to implement person-centred practice in employment-oriented social work. The political agenda of activation is in many ways inconsistent with the intentions of supported employment implementation to make vocational services jobseeker-centred or jobseeker-driven.

The idea behind supported employment is that it is delivered in the context of person-centred practice (Bonfils et al., 2017; EUSE, 2010). However, the context in which these immigrant jobseekers received it in our study was more representative of keen activation measures than person-centred practice. Together with the absence of a holistic approach, overarching focus on employment, and constructed choice, exclusion and directive counselling rely on the political context of activation with its focus on getting the unemployed into work as soon as possible.

An unexpected finding was that despite the theoretical assumption common to both person-centred practice and supported employment that the services are inclusive, i.e. non-discriminative

Activation foundations	Person-centred foundations	The intervention
Political context	Rehabilitation context	Political context
Focus: employment	Focus: general well-being and life consistency (holism)	Focus: employment
Choice regulated by the counsellor	Self-determined choice	Choice regulated by the counsellor
May be excluding	Including	May be excluding
Provider-driven	Person-driven	Mainly provider-driven
Directive	Nondirective	Mainly directive
Trust-based relationship is not prioritised	Trust-based relationship between the person and his/her counsellor	Trust-based relationship is not present in all cases of follow-up
Needs other than employment are treated as secondary or are overlooked	All needs are equally important	Support of needs other than that of employment is seen as an exception
Standardised employment measures	Individualised follow-up	Individualised follow-up, based on standardised employment measures
Time pressure	Unlimited time	Technically no time pressure, but jobseekers depend on benefits or finding a job ASAP
Large caseloads	Low caseloads	Low caseloads

Figure 2. Relationship between activation measures and person-centred practice in the intervention (supported employment).

towards potential and current participants (e.g. EUSE, 2010; Kass, 2017), we observed clear examples of excluding practices. Our analysis indicates that it was used as a strategy to manage caseloads and (coupled with a structuring of choice) influence measurable outcomes. A lack of trust-based relationships between some of the jobseekers and employment specialists can be attributed to exclusionary techniques such as exclusion from the decision-making process, and one-sided focus of the employment specialist on enhancing employment opportunities without pursuing a holistic approach, addressing jobseekers' other important needs. Along with the other indicators of activation dominance already discussed, this is a further indicator that supported employment as it is implemented in this context is scarcely person-centred.

This study further contributes to a discussion about whether it is possible to properly implement person-centred practice in the context of vocational follow-up. The labour market is demanding and discriminative (and arguably becoming more so; Branker, 2017; Dancygier & Laitin, 2014; Waite, 2017), and competition for jobs is high. In contrast, a person-centred approach may seem 'soft', impractical, or failing to prepare jobseekers for the challenges they may experience in the labour market while trying to obtain the 'perfect job'.

Solely focusing on activation measures in order to turn the unemployed into 'working citizens' and minimising other aspects of being may be an unwise course for social policy and social work. A one-sided focus on employment can miss other ways a citizen can participate in the life of the community, including socially, politically, and civically (Jensen & Pfau-Effinger, 2005). The issues at stake are arguably not as straightforward as just 'obtaining employment'. It is important not to underestimate the potential benefits of a person-centred approach, especially with vulnerable jobseekers.

The challenges experienced by the study target group are linked to complex issues such as family dynamics or adaptation to a new culture and community life, which affect employment potentials. As research in vocational rehabilitation continues to show, 'work functioning cannot be understood outside its social context' (Sandqvist & Henriksson, 2004, p. 155). Ensuring inclusion of jobseekers, allowing them to guide the job search process, and providing support are likely to decrease misunderstandings and help to develop the trust relationship with the counsellor. This in turn provides the opportunity to address complex psychosocial issues, which are the key barriers to positive vocational outcomes internationally (Fadyl et al., 2010; Sandqvist & Henriksson, 2004). From this perspective, a person-centred approach in social work is essential for sustainable outcomes.

Practical implications

The absence of a holistic approach in employment-oriented social work leads to situations where jobseekers risk many problems affecting their wellbeing and vocational success remaining hidden, or not being discussed in the necessary depth to be solved. There is a clear need for a more holistic approach that supports other needs and makes the employment specialist more effective.

We suggest that employment specialists' qualifications and skills correspond with possibilities to provide holistic follow-up for unemployed people, enabling this role in social work to be delegated to them. It would help to avoid making the jobseeker a 'shuttlecock' of the system by redirecting them to other actors, facilitating a therapeutic relationship that the jobseeker would benefit from the most. The political agenda of activation needs to recede to allow employment specialists to learn, practice, and utilise holistic counselling. Consequently, reduced caseloads would allow time to address the real needs and goals defined by the jobseeker, where employment is an element of the holistic assistance of social work.

Study limitations and suggestion for further research

Due to limited time and resources, we conducted one set of interviews and observed a limited number of meetings. Therefore, we suggest a longitudinal study that would look at the process of person-centred practice in vocational counselling at all stages, following jobseekers from enrolment

into person-centred vocational counselling and finishing after obtaining a job and/or stopping participation in the intervention. This would help to register all the possibilities for the dominance of activation over the person-centred approach, and to evaluate the reasonableness of this deviation by assessing the overall life quality of the jobseekers and consequently, to support this tendency or suggest how to change it.

Conclusion

We have explored how vocational person-centred practice is congruent with the policy of activation. We found that while certain features of the person-centred approach, such as low caseloads and attempts to individualise the follow-up are present, activation is the keynote of vocational counselling and the intense pursuit of employment hinders actualisation of a person-centred approach.

This study extends knowledge on activation theory and person-centred approaches and serves as a base for further knowledge development on implementation of person-centred approaches in the frames of vocational counselling. The findings of our research may engage practitioners and policy makers who work with person-centred practice in general and implementing person-centred approaches in vocational counselling in particular.

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Funding

Notes on contributors

Mariya Khoronzhevych is a PhD fellow at OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway. Her PhD study in social work and social policy focuses on labour integration of immigrants in Norway with focus on immigrant jobseekers' activation and engagement. She holds a Master Degree in Peace and Conflict Transformation from University of Tromsø in Norway and a Master Degree in Secondary Education from Kherson State University in Ukraine. Her main research interests are immigration, social policy and integration of immigrants, international politics and conflict transformation.

Joanna Fadyl is a senior lecturer at Auckland University of Technology and deputy director of AUT's Centre for Person Centred Research, a centre for trans-disciplinary research and teaching in rehabilitation and disability. Her research programme has a focus on vocational rehabilitation and includes exploring how different methodologies can open up new opportunities to address challenges.

ORCID

Mariya Khoronzhevych 🔾 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0237-6576

References

Andreassen, T. A. (2019). Measures of accountability and delegated discretion in activation work: Lessons from the Norwegian labour and welfare service. *European Journal of Social Work*, *22*(4), 664–675. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2018.1423548

Auer, D., Bonoli, G., & Fossati, F. (2017). Why do immigrants have longer periods of unemployment? Swiss evidence. *International Migration*, *55*(1), 157–174. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12309

Bonfils, I. S., Hansen, H., Dalum, H. S., & Eplov, L. F. (2017). Implementation of the individual placement and support approach – facilitators and barriers. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, *19*(4), 318–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2016.1222306

Bonvin, J.-M. (2008). Activation policies, new modes of governance and the issue of responsibility. *Social Policy and Society*, *7*(3), 367–377. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746408004338

Branker, R. R. (2017). Labour market discrimination: The lived experiences of English-speaking Caribbean immigrants in Toronto. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *18*(1), 203–222. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-016-0469-x

Breidahl, K. N. (2017). Scandinavian exceptionalism? Civic integration and labour market activation for newly arrived immigrants. *Comparative Migration Studies*, *5*(1), 2. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-016-0045-8

Breimo, J. P. (2016). Planning individually? Spotting international welfare trends in the field of rehabilitation in Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, *18*(1), 65–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2014.972447

Carvajal, A., Haraldsdottir, E., Kroll, T., McCormack, B., Errasti-Ibarrondo, B., & Larkin, P. (2019). Barriers and facilitators perceived by registered nurses to providing person-centred care at the end of life. A scoping review. *International Practice Development Journal*, *9*(2), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.19043/ipdj.92.008

Casey, D., & Houghton, C. (2010). Clarifying case study research: Examples from practice. *Nurse Researcher*, *17*(3), 41–51. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2010.04.17.3.41.c7745

Christiansen, C. H., & Townsend, E. A. (2010). *Introduction to occupation: The art and science of living* (2nd ed.). Pearson.

Christie, J., & Camp, J. (2014). Critical reflection on the process of validation of a framework for person-centred practice. *International Practice Development Journal*, *4*(2), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.19043/ipdj.42.008

Clarke, J. (2005). New labour's citizens: Activated, empowered, responsibilized, abandoned? *Critical Social Policy*, *25*(4), 447–463. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018305057024

Cooper, M. (2004). *Person-centred therapy: myths and reality*. Working paper. https://pure.strath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/18354036/2004_myths_of_PCA.pdf

Crisp, R. (2015). Can motivational interviewing be truly integrated with person-centered counselling? *The Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling*, *21*(1), 77–87. https://doi.org/10.1017/jrc.2015.3

Dancygier, R. M., & Laitin, D. D. (2014). Immigration into Europe: Economic discrimination, violence, and public policy. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *17*(1), 43–64. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-082012-115925

Dean, H. (2006, October 20–21). Activation policies and the changing ethical foundations of welfare. *ASPEN/ETUI Conference: Activation Policies in the EU*. Brussels.

Eleveld, A. (2017). Activation policies: Policies of social inclusion or social exclusion? *The Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, *25*(3), 277–285. https://doi.org/10.1332/175982717X15024428691894

European Union of Supported Employment. (2010). *European Union of supported employment toolkit*. http://euse.org/content/supported-employment-toolkit/EUSE-Toolkit-2010.pdf

Fadyl, J. K., Mcpherson, K. M., Schlüter, P. J., & Turner-Stokes, L. (2010). Factors contributing to work-ability for injured workers: Literature review and comparison with available measures. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, *32*(14), 1173–1183. https://doi.org/10.3109/09638281003653302

Fadyl, J. K., Teachman, G., & Hamdani, Y. (2019). Problematizing 'productive citizenship' within rehabilitation services: Insights from three studies. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2019.1573935

Finansdepartementet. (2019). *Muligheter for alle — Fordeling og sosial bærekraft*. [Possibilities for everyone – distribution and social sustainability]. Meld. St. 13 (2018–2019). Stortingsforhandlinger.

Gardner, A. (2014). Personalisation - where did it come from?. In A. Gardner, J. Parker & G. Bradley (Eds) Transforming Social Work Practice Series: Personalisation in social work (pp. 1–19). 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781473922471.n1

Gibson, B., Teachman, G., Wright, V., Fehlings, D., Young, N., & McKeever, P. (2012). Children's and parents' beliefs regarding the value of walking: Rehabilitation implications for children with cerebral palsy. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, *38*(1), 61–69. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01271.x

Gibson, B., Terry, G., Setchell, J., Bright, F., Cummins, C., & Kayes, N. (2019). The micro-politics of caring: Tinkering with person-centered rehabilitation. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, *42*(11), 1529–1538. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2019.1587793

Glasby, J. (2016). Person-centred approaches: A policy perspective. In B. McCormack & T. McCance (Eds.), *Person-Centred practice in Nursing and health care: Theory and practice* (p. 67). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Gubrium, E., Harsløf, I., Lødemel, I., & Moreira, A. (2014). Norwegian activation reform on a wave of wider welfare state changes. In I. Lødemel & A. Moreira (Eds.), *Activation or workfare? Governance and neo-liberal convergence* (pp. 19–46). Oxford University Press.

Hainmueller, J., Hofmann, B., Krug, G., & Wolf, K. (2016). Do lower caseloads improve the performance of public employment services? New evidence from German employment offices. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, *118*(4), 941–974. https://doi.org/10.1111/sjoe.12166

Hamovitch, E. K., Choy-Brown, M., & Stanhope, V. (2018). Person-centered care and the therapeutic alliance. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *54*(7), 951–958. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-018-0295-z

Hansen, H. C., & Natland, S. (2017). The working relationship between social worker and service user in an activation policy context. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 7(2), 101–114. https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2016.1221850

Hibbard, J. H., & Mahoney, E. (2010). Toward a theory of patient and consumer activation. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 78(3), 377–381. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2009.12.015

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277–1288. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687

Hudson, M., Phillips, J., Ray, K., Vegeris, S., & Davidson, R. (2010). *The influence of outcome-based contracting on provider-led pathways to work.* http://www.psi.org.uk/pdf/2010/rrep638.pdf

Immervoll, H., & Knotz, C. (2018). How demanding are activation requirements for jobseekers. *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 215*. OECD Publishing.

Jensen, P. H., & Pfau-Effinger, B. (2005). Active citizenship: The new face of welfare. In J. G. Andersen, A-M. Guillemard, P. H. Jensen &; B. Pfau-Effinger (Eds.), *The changing face of welfare: Consequences and outcomes from a citizenship perspective* (pp. 1–14). The Policy Press.

Kahn, E. (1999). A critique of nondirectivity in the person-centered approach. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 39(4), 94–110. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167899394006

Kass, J. D. (2017). *A person-centered approach to psychospiritual maturation: Mentoring psychological resilience and inclusive community in higher education.* https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.hioa.no/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-57919-1

Kluve, J., & Rani, U. (2016). *A review of the effectiveness of active labour market programmes with a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean*. ILO.

Leplege, A., Gzil, F., Cammelli, M., Lefeve, C., Pachoud, B., & Ville, I. (2007). Person-centredness: Conceptual and historical perspectives. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 29(20-21), 1555–1565. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638280701618661

Lewis, J., & Sanderson, H. (2011). *A practical guide to delivering personalisation: Person-centred practice in health and social care*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Louw, J. M., Marcus, T. S., & Hugo, J. F. M. (2017). Patient- or person-centred practice in medicine? – A review of concepts. *African Journal of Primary Health Care & Family Medicine*, 9(1), e1–e7. https://doi.org/10.4102/phcfm.v9i1.1455

Luck, L., Jackson, D., & Usher, K. (2006a). Case study: A bridge across the paradigms. *Nursing Inquiry*, 13(2), 103–109. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1800.2006.00309.x

Maximova-Mentzoni, T. (2019). Kvalifiseringstiltak for innvandrere og muligheter for supported employment [Labour market measures for migrants and opportunities for supported employment]. *Søkelys på arbeidslivet*, 36(01-02), 36–54. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1504-7989-2019-01-02-03

McCance, T., & McCormack, B. (2010). *Person-centred nursing: Theory and practice*. Wiley-Blackwell.

McCance, T., & McCormack, B. (2016). *Person-Centred Practice in Nursing and Health Care: Theory and Practice* In B. McCormack & T. McCance. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration. (2019a). *Tiltak for å komme i jobb*. [Employment schemes]. https://www.nav.no/no/Person/Arbeid/Oppfolging+og+tiltak+for+a+komme+i+jobb/Tiltak+for+a+komme+i+jobb

Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration. (2019b). *What is NAV?* https://www.nav.no/en/Home/About+NAV/What+is+NAV

Nothdurfter, U. (2016). The street-level delivery of activation policies: Constraints and possibilities for a practice of citizenship. *European Journal of Social Work*, 19(3-4), 420–440. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2015.1137869

Nybom, J. (2011). Activation in social work with social assistance claimants in four Swedish municipalities. *European Journal of Social Work*, 14(3), 339–361. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2010.501021

Parr, S. (2016). Conceptualising 'the relationship' in intensive key worker support as a therapeutic medium. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 30(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2015.1073146

Pinto, M. (2019). Exploring activation: A cross-country analysis of active labour market policies in Europe. *Social Science Research*, 81, 91–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.03.001

Renema, J. A. J., & Lubbers, M. (2019). Welfare-based income among immigrants in the Netherlands: Differences in social and human capital. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 17(2), 128–151. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1420276

Richard, L. F., & Knis-Matthews, L. (2010). Are we really client-centered? Using the Canadian occupational performance measure to see how the client's goals connect with the goals of the occupational therapist. *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*, 26(1), 51–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/01642120903515292

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications, and theory*. Constable.

Røysum, A. (2010). Nav-reformen: Sosialarbeidernes profesjon utfordres [Nav reform: Social worker profession is challenged]. *Fontene Forskning*, 1, 41–52.

Sandqvist, J. L., & Henriksson, C. M. (2004). Work functioning: A conceptual framework. *Work*, 23(2), 147–157.

Solvang, I. (2017). Discretionary approaches to social workers' personalisation of activation services for long-term welfare recipients. *European Journal of Social Work*, 20(4), 536–547. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2016.1188777

van Berkel, R., & Knies, E. (2018). The frontline delivery of activation: Workers' preferences and their antecedents. *European Journal of Social Work*, 21(4), 602–615. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2017.1297774

van Hal, L. B., Meershoek, A., Nijhuis, F., & Horstman, K. (2012). The 'empowered client' in vocational rehabilitation: The excluding impact of inclusive strategies. *Health Care Analysis*, *20*(3), 213–230. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10728-011-0182-z

Waite, L. (2017). Asylum seekers and the labour market: Spaces of discomfort and hostility. *Social Policy and Society*, *16*(4), 669–679. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746417000173

Washburn, A. M., & Grossman, M. (2017). Being with a person in our care: Person-centered social work practice that is authentically person-centered. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, *60*(5), 408–423. https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2017.1348419

Waterhouse, R. L. (1993). Wild women don't have the blues: A feminist critique of 'person-centred' counselling and therapy. *Feminism & Psychology*, *3*(1), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353593031004

Waters, R. A., & Buchanan, A. (2017). An exploration of person-centred concepts in human services: A thematic analysis of the literature. *Health Policy*, *121*(10), 1031–1039. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2017.09.003

Article 3.

Khoronzhevych, M. & Eriksson, R. *Career Agency of Immigrants Participating in Employment Interventions in Norway.* Resubmitted after comments from reviewers to: *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*

Career Agency of Immigrants Participating in Employment Interventions in Norway

Mariya Khoronzhevych[ab] and Rikard Eriksson[a]

[a] Department of Welfare, Management and Organisation, Østfold University College, Halden, Norway;

[b] OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

In this study, we apply a theoretical framework that combines the life-course perspective and the concept of temporality to explore the career agency of immigrants participating in employment interventions in Norway. Findings suggest that immigrants' career agency is influenced by several factors, including the management of family duties and temporal asynchronies; career history and temporal liminality; and coping with past traumas and temporal suspension. Immigrants might overlook job opportunities due to family obligations or opt for low-skilled professions, seeking an exit from temporal liminality. The endured traumas, followed by temporal suspension, prompt the pursuit of the employment opportunities that are less mentally taxing. Our study highlights the need for employment counselling that acknowledges the effects of disrupted life courses and temporality on immigrants' career agency. By comprehending clients' experiences of temporal challenges, counsellors can create tailored strategies and advice that resonate with clients' lived experiences and current social context.

INTRODUCTION

Owing to the consistent rise in migration to European states for economic and humanitarian reasons, the host states' integration policies have increasingly prioritised supporting immigrants in labour market integration and offering employment-facilitating interventions (Shaw & Funk, 2019; Ullmann, 2023). Previous research demonstrates that for immigrants, including refugees, obtaining employment in the countries of settlement is essential for their economic self-sufficiency and successful integration into the host societies (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014). Employment facilitates their psychosocial adjustment in the new social context, enhancing their general well-being, while preventing social exclusion and poverty

(Kleppe & Glemmestad, 2019; Sultana, 2022). Therefore, successful employment guidance and the integration of immigrants into the labour market have become the focus of the welfare policies in the host states (Eugster, 2018).

Simultaneously, immigrants worldwide face complex challenges that impede their ability to secure employment in the countries of settlement. These include unfamiliarity with local customs, rights, responsibilities, and labour market culture, such as employment application procedures and communication norms. Language and cultural barriers often restrict their ability to navigate and adapt to the new work environment (Campion, 2018; Sultana, 2022). A likelihood exists for immigrants' prior experience and qualifications to be deemed irrelevant in the new labour market context (Mozetič, 2022b; Proba Research, 2020). Refugees may struggle with trauma-related mental and physical health problems, discrimination, and separation from family members (Ballard-Kang, 2017; Potocky, 2016). Furthermore, they may encounter difficulties in validating their past work experiences or educational qualifications owing to the nonavailability of necessary documentation (Dumont, 2016). Consequently, immigrants ultimately engage in part-time, low-paying, and physically challenging jobs, often undesired by the local population, such as jobs in elderly care or sanitation work (Friberg, 2012; Sultana, 2022). Confinement in 'undesired' jobs and facing 'brain waste' can lead to feelings of frustration, demotivation, and diminished self-efficacy, which hinders the pursuit of better employment opportunities (Sultana, 2022), resulting in further unemployment (Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010; Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

In Norway, immigrants are more likely to be employed in part-time and temporary positions, which are prevalent in the sectors where they frequently find work, such as cleaning services or grocery sales (The Directorate of Integration and Diversity [IMDi], 2022). Even when employed in high-skilled professions such as nursing, immigrants report a greater prevalence

of part-time contracts and lower pay compared to the native population (Dahlen & Dahl, 2015). They struggle with insufficient Norwegian language skills and limited knowledge of the Norwegian work culture while facing direct and indirect discrimination by employers (Bjerck et al., 2018). Often, the professional experience gained in their home countries does not seamlessly transfer to the highly digitalised workspaces and routines in Norway (Proba Research, 2020). Furthermore, Norwegian employers increasingly seek employees with higher education and formal qualifications and show scepticism towards foreign qualifications (Berg, 2015).

The Norwegian employment-oriented strategy targeting immigrants is based on the notion of minimising disparities between foreign or missing qualifications and skills and the requirements of the Norwegian labour market (The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration [NAV], 2021). The well-established Norwegian Introduction Programme (NIP), targeting refugees, and Job Chance, which targets settled female immigrants, aim to bridge the gap between local employment opportunities and immigrants' qualifications. These programmes include language courses, social studies, and employment counselling, encompassing career guidance and job placements (Høgestøl & Kristoffersen, 2019; Sultana, 2022). However, the sustainability of the employment outcomes achieved has been subjected to numerous debates. Immigrants who have completed interventions are often employed in part-time positions, earning significantly lower incomes in comparison to their native counterparts, and face longer gaps between employment (Statistics Norway, 2020; Proba Research, 2020).

In recent academic discourse, there is growing concern over the use of a standardised 'one-size-fits-all' approach in employment counselling, particularly when addressing immigrant populations. Such an approach neglects the nuanced differences in skills, educational

backgrounds, and past experiences of these individuals, failing to address their specific circumstances and challenges (Mozetič, 2022a, 2022b; Spehar, 2021). Critiques point out the counsellors' generalised assumptions that categorise all immigrants as a homogeneous group, ignoring factors such as reasons for migration, cultural background, gender, age, and professional history (Mozetič, 2022b; Spehar, 2021). Furthermore, research underscores the crucial need for tailored approaches in employment counselling, focusing on the distinct needs and obstacles faced by individual clients, while also stressing the importance of acknowledging their diverse backgrounds (Andersson & Muhrman, 2023; Gubrium & Leirvik, 2021; Whelan, 2023).

Aim of the Study

Recent research suggests that a life-course perspective can facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the employment challenges that immigrants often encounter in the country of settlement (Mozetič, 2022b; Omar, 2022) by providing explanatory insights into the life-course events that shape their agency. Changes in socioeconomic conditions, specifically due to migration, cause individuals to grapple with the tension of their past and the uncertainty of the future, leading to a prolonged sense of temporal ambiguity and challenges in normalising their life courses (Folke, 2018; Griffiths, 2014). Such experiences may affect individual career agency, defined as the act of making and pursuing choices related to one's career trajectory, with these choices being influenced by past experiences, societal norms, environmental constraints, and future aspirations (Bilon-Piórko & Thomsen, 2022; Elder et al., 2003).

This study aims to contribute to the understanding of how immigrants' disrupted life courses and experiences of temporality shape their career agency. We use a theoretical framework that integrates the life-course perspective and the concept of temporality to address the

following research question: **How do immigrants' disrupted life courses and experience of temporality affect their career agency when participating in employment interventions**?

Through our study, we aim to contribute to the expanding body of research on client diversity in employment counselling, highlighting the importance of recognising each client's unique characteristics. We seek to deepen the understanding of the challenges immigrants face in re-establishing their careers in their new country of settlement and to enhance the personalisation of employment counselling, ultimately aiming for more sustainable employment outcomes.

Next, we present the theoretical framework of our study, which comprises the life-course perspective and the concept of temporality.

LIFE-COURSE PERSPECTIVE

The life-course perspective refers to the complex interplay between diverse and interconnected trajectories, or 'states' (Macmillan & Eliason, 2003), such as parenthood or career, that occur across both biologically and socially defined life stages. As Leisering (2003) points out, the concept of 'life course', unlike 'life' or 'biography', manifests as a social institution (Leisering, 2003), where every life stage corresponds to a society's expectations of a member at a certain age. Thus, a life course is a progression marked by a sequence of transitions traditionally tied to specific ages, during which individuals encounter new entitlement and social expectations (Alwin et al., 2016; Elder & George, 2016).

Elder et al. (2003) outline the five fundamentals of the life-course framework: lifespan development, agency, time and place, timing, and linked lives. This framework recognises that social and historical contexts shape individuals' lives as well as the choices they actively make. Choosing from the available alternatives, developing a strategy, and subsequently

acting to implement this choice — that is, *agency* — is one of the fundamental elements of the life-course paradigm (Elder et al., 2003; Leisering, 2003). It emphasises the interplay between individual choices and environmental constraints and opportunities, past life course events and experiences, and the social environment (Elder et al., 2003; Zacher & Froidevaux, 2021). Traditionally, a life course has been connected to the work-life and viewed as a 'tripartite life course' (Heinz, 2003) comprising education, employment, and retirement stages, with employment being a defining indicator of life stage transitions and social status in the society (Leisering, 2003).

According to Hitlin and Kwon (2016), agency can manifest both consciously and unconsciously. The unconscious form is rooted in cultural priorities or societal structures, and agency is intertwined with societal expectations and the anticipated roles at specific ages and life stages. 'Social time' (Moen, 2016), that is, the socially accepted timeline for transitioning through different life stages and life-course events, may even marginalise those who fail to meet the 'deadlines' within the expected social time frames (Moen, 2016). Thus, the timing of such events is experienced as 'early, on time, or late' (Elder & George, 2016, p. 59).

Within this context, career agency is conceptualised as making and pursuing choices influencing one's career trajectory. It is shaped by both general and professional experiences, encompassing aspects like professional status and autonomy alongside societal norms, current environmental challenges, and envisioned future aims. Additionally, it is influenced by culturally embedded stereotypes, especially those tied to gender and age-specific expectations across different life stages, which in turn shape an individual's employment decisions and aspirations (Elder & George, 2016; Moen, 2016). As Moen (2016) points out, in many societies, an adult man is still expected to transition into a breadwinner, while a woman is expected to become a mother and kinkeeper.

6

Migration to a new country, whether intended, such as family reunification, or an outcome of a traumatic event, such as war, results in a disrupted life course (Cwerner, 2001; Griffiths, 2014), characterised by deviations from the anticipated development of life course trajectories, primarily due to the dramatic change of the social context. Individual agency, grounded in prior experiences and anticipations, evolves in response to the changing social context and the challenges and opportunities it offers, thus shaping future aspirations and plans (Elder et al., 2003). The changing social context coupled with the timing of the migration — such as the age and life stage of the person, young or old, newly educated or with a rich professional history — play an essential role in shaping career agency in the new environment and its corresponding social time (Moen, 2016).

Temporality and the Disrupted Life Course of Immigrants

Temporality refers to an individual's subjective perception of time, which is shaped by their understanding of their past life course and future projections (Caldas & Berterö, 2012). While time is experienced as a continuous forward movement (Mezzalira, 2021), the experience of temporality is more complex and multidimensional, involving the contemplation of various future scenarios through 'reflective action' (Patomäki, 2011) and remembrance and interpretation of past events (Mezzalira, 2021). As Patomäki (2011) highlights, reasoning about present agency includes 'reflexive self-regulation' (p. 340) when one acts to avoid unwanted results and achieve preferred results. The meaning of the past is not established until the consequences of past events are determined in the future.

In the realm of migration literature, temporality encompasses not only an individual's subjective experience and perception of the passage of time but also how this experience is influenced by a disrupted life course and changing social contexts (Cwerner, 2001; Griffiths et al., 2013). Temporal experience has previously been recognised as a critical element in an

individual's response to and understanding of the process of transitioning to a new social context (Caspi & Roberts, 2001; Giele & Elder, 1998). It has gained significance in experiencing a new social environment, such as immigrants' re-establishing their lives in a new country, that manifests as a multidimensional temporal process and includes 'an ongoing negotiation between past and present, wherein […] identity is contested and shifting' (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014, p. 520).

Following a life-course disruption, such as the one resulting from migration to a new country, the experience of temporality is shaped by heightened levels of anticipation or future uncertainty (Caspi & Roberts, 2001; Giele & Elder, 1998). Furthermore, the experience of temporality is influenced by the extent to which the life course is disrupted and whether expected events occur as envisioned or not. During the migration process and upon arrival, immigrants often encounter extended periods of waiting, short notices, and sudden, substantial changes beyond their control (Folke, 2018; Griffiths, 2014). These experiences of 'temporal uncertainties' contrast with the 'imagined progression' (Folke, 2018; Griffiths, 2014) that immigrants would have anticipated in their life course, including their career expectations or 'occupational recovery' (Castagnone et al., 2015).

Adopting a temporal perspective enables establishing a connection between immigrants' past experiences and their anticipation of the future, which in turn allows an interpretation of their career agency in the present as their past experiences 'mature' (Facchini & Rampazi, 2009, p. 352) into present decisions. By employing the life-course paradigm and experience of temporality, we aim to gain insights into how these factors influence career agency among immigrants participating in employment interventions.

METHOD

This study is part of a larger PhD research project that addresses immigrants' experiences of participating in employment interventions and explores the personalisation of employment interventions tailored for immigrants in Norway. This project was approved by the Ethics Board of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) [ref number 57269]. Each study participant who gave their consent to participate in this study signed an informed consent document according to NSD regulations.

The first author reached out to a NAV office renowned for its comprehensive Introduction Programme and Job Chance, which consented to be part of the research project. Due to strict information-sharing regulations that prevent the dissemination of personal details, the first author depended on NAV employment specialists, who primarily work with immigrants, to invite participants for the study. A total of eighteen immigrants were recruited, all of whom were engaged in employment interventions either through the Introduction Programme or Job Chance. The recruited participants (5 men, 13 women) were natives of Syria ($n = 5$), Eritrea ($n = 2$), Somalia ($n = 2$), Kosovo ($n = 2$), Iran ($n = 2$), Romania ($n = 1$), Democratic Republic of the Congo ($n = 1$), Bosnia ($n = 1$), Kurdistan ($n = 1$), and Nigeria ($n = 1$), and were aged between 25 and 50.

The first author conducted eighteen individual semi-structured interviews with 'an experiential focus' (Willig, 2007). The interviews resembled a natural conversation but included key questions, which helped guide the conversation (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The interviews focused on participants' experiences with employment interventions and their life situations. They included, among others, questions about what participants liked or disliked about the interventions they participated in, their career goals, and the challenges they experienced. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian and English, sometimes

interchangeably, depending on the interviewees' preferences.

Data Analysis

The first author transcribed the interviews using NVivo v12 software. Transcriptions were anonymised, using pseudonyms, with all identifying details removed. Once the transcription and anonymisation processes were finished, the original data was deleted.

 The data analysis in this study followed a thematic approach (Polit et al., 2021) and involved several stages:

1. Familiarisation: We carefully read and acquainted ourselves with the interview data.

2. Coding evolution of events: Next, we coded life course events, including participants' career events, family events, and life course disruptions that resulted in migration. We charted the 'evolution of events' (Polit et al., 2021) leading to participants' current career agency.

3. Coding career agency: Subsequently, we coded the career agency at the time of the interview and examined vocational choices, career decisions, and the reasons behind these decisions, such as economic concerns or family caretaking responsibilities.

4. Coding temporality: We explored how participants experienced the passage of time in relation to life-course events, drawing inspiration from research studies that focus on experiences of time during migration, including Cwerner (2001), Griffiths et al. (2013), and Folke (2018). Consequently, the themes of *temporal asynchronies*, *temporal liminality*, and *temporal suspension* were constructed.

5. Linking: Finally, we linked the identified themes together to examine their interconnectedness and influence on each other.

Throughout the data analysis process, we engaged in extensive discussions and the analysis was repeated multiple times to ensure comprehensiveness and accuracy in the coding and interpretation of data.

RESULTS

The data analysis resulted in the construction of the following three distinct themes: (1) career agency influenced by transnational family duties and temporal asynchronies; (2) career agency influenced by career history and temporal liminality; and (3) career agency influenced by traumatic events and temporal suspension. The following sections give an insight into these themes, followed by a thorough discussion of the research data.

Career Agency Influenced by Transnational Family Duties and Temporal Asynchronies

The data indicates that several study participants highlighted the challenges associated with family caretaking responsibilities and time management, and linked these challenges to their career agency. In addition to the caretaking within nuclear families in Norway, the primary challenge for many participants was managing transnational family responsibilities involving family members residing outside of Norway, including elderly parents and relatives left behind. This dual challenge of keeping up with family trajectories both abroad and in Norway created experiences of temporal asynchronies, where unfolding family events in different spatial locations made it challenging, if not impossible, to synchronise the two family trajectories into a unified spatio-temporal trajectory, which would be easier to navigate.

Notably, particularly female study participants expressed the desire to maintain contact with and support family members who still lived in their home countries or had settled in a country other than Norway. Taking care of the nuclear family, raising children, and the need

to obtain employment conflicted with the caretaking responsibilities and the time required for family duties in the home countries or other countries where the other family members reside.

> In [the home country], I help my Mom. My dad has died. I help her, do the cleaning, iron, also in the garden, trim the apple trees [...]. [Me], and my brother went to [the home country]. Mom visited me and my brother for three months, but now she doesn't come. She's sick and old […] I worked at an elderly care centre. I liked it, but it was only a work trial. [Then] my sister died and was transported and buried in [the home country]. I got sick [because of this event]. Could not think. I went to school but was upset. Then there were problems with my son. (Ajola)

Before starting the employment intervention, some female participants had spent many years as stay-at-home mothers, with only short stints of employment. Although their children and husbands spoke Norwegian well, the family spoke the home country's language at home, and these women never got an opportunity to develop their Norwegian language skills. Finding time for participation in the intervention activities, including learning the language and participating in the work trials, proved to be challenging. While being primarily responsible for raising their children in Norway, many participants also had elderly parents who had remained in the home country and needed caretaking. Therefore, participants faced the need to travel frequently to take care of their parents and to assist with the parent's household. The career agency in such cases was significantly influenced by the dynamics of linked lives of the family members, with added complexity due to the family responsibilities in both Norway and home countries. The unfolding events in the family's life course in the home country, notably the parents' ageing, necessitated informed and active involvement in family life there, reinforcing roles as both kinkeeper and caretaker. Simultaneously, the nuclear family's caretaking responsibilities in Norway demanded presence and involvement, which included securing employment.

Travel limitations intensely impacted many participants, as they expressed a deep longing to

visit or reunite with their family members. At the same time, the interventions required their participants to maintain consistent attendance to keep their placement.

> I have not seen my sister for four years. However, during the summer break, I went to Germany to visit my siblings, aunt, and uncle. [The employment specialist] told me, 'You must stay for one month to work at the hotel, and if you do well, you may get the job'. But I was in Germany during summer vacation [...] Yes, the whole summer. I told [the advisor] that [ever since] I came to Norway, I had not had a vacation, and my kids needed one [...] So, I lost [that placement possibility]. (Yana)

Such a decision to visit family members residing abroad instead of continuing to pursue employment opportunities in Norway conflicted with the employment specialists' expectations, leading to their disapproval, and resulted in the loss of work trial placements and employment opportunities. This way, participants were navigating two asynchronised temporal trajectories—one tied to family events unfolding in the home country or another country where the family members were residing, and the other connected to their life in Norway—requiring them to keep pace with both.

Facing this temporal asynchrony, participants expressed that juggling between two trajectories—one in Norway and the other one abroad —was overwhelming, in some cases leading to the onset of health problems. Experiencing the consequent temporal asynchrony not only affects their availability and ability to engage fully in employment interventions but also impacts their overall well-being.

Career Agency Influenced by Career History and Temporal Liminality

Numerous participants voiced concerns over the necessity to support a family, particularly those with several children, and to assume the role of breadwinner. Their employment choices were motivated by the aim of attaining economic self-sufficiency for their families at the earliest opportunity, towards the conclusion of their involvement in the intervention. In

this context, certain participants, possessing a robust educational background and a history of high-skilled careers in their home countries, aspired not only to secure employment but also to continue their pre-migration trajectory in high-skill professional roles. However, despite their education from their home countries being assessed and approved by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), they experienced the impossibility of securing relevant employment and continuing their previous career path in Norway. Back home, they could be valued high-skilled professionals and the breadwinners for their families. However, in Norway, despite undertaking several relevant work trials relevant to the prior career and receiving commendable references, they struggled to secure the employment of their choice. Having attempted numerous ways to return to their pre-migration careers, they found themselves in a state of temporal liminality, where their career trajectory progression seemed to stall. Often, their previous education and work experience did not result in gainful employment in the digitalised workspace in Norway, which rendered their previous skills almost irrelevant.

> In Norway, I read extensively and learned a lot. My family travelled to the Netherlands to visit my daughter. I stayed in Norway as I wanted to study. [The boss at my work trial] told me, 'You have excellent credentials, and you are good in Norwegian, but we have no job'. Back home, I was the head of a large company [in the agricultural industry]. However, here in Norway, they need experience and use new systems, computers, and devices […] Now, I am at a fork on the road. I do not know what I will do now. I underwent a work trial at a nursing home […] I have sent an application to the municipal adult education centre [a municipal health care worker programme] and [also] registered for a chauffeur's course [...] I do not want to rely on social assistance benefits. (Ahmed)

Participants, striving to maintain their high-skilled professional status, engaged in appropriate work trials with the hope of being offered a job afterwards, while also applying for other relevant positions. They prioritised the unpaid work trials related to their previous profession instead of trying to obtain low-skilled employment that would secure economic independence

14

more easily and sooner. Meanwhile, after several work trials relevant to the past career did not lead to employment, participants were encouraged by their employment specialists to explore other options, including low-skill jobs, such as caretaking at a nursing home. They faced the reality of professional de-skilling and the loss of their previous professional status to exit the prolonged liminality and move forward.

> Before I came here, I worked as a lawyer for about 15 years. I think it is hard here in Norway [to obtain a job] as a lawyer. You need fluent language; you need English. And you need to understand many dialects. It is hard for me. I have only two years [in the NIP]. You need to know many IT systems, English, many things […] I thought I would get help to find the right place for me […] I hope to find a job close to my [previous] career, such as a caseworker… Child protection services or [similar]. I hate [the idea of receiving] social assistance benefits. (Haya)

Participants highlight the importance of understanding numerous Norwegian dialects as well as learning English, a time-consuming process, as they experience pressure to find ways to economically support their families by the time their participation in the NIP comes to an end. Having invested considerable time in employment interventions, participating in work trials relevant to their career history, and hoping to find a job close to their previous profession, they were visibly frustrated and losing motivation, grappling with the realisation that their anticipated career trajectory might not materialise, leaving their career with an uncertain future. Striving to balance their roles as family breadwinners with the pursuit of career continuity, they find themselves in a situation where their career development has not only stalled but is also at risk of devaluation. Despite engaging in relevant work trials and seeking jobs that align with their skills, they are faced with the dilemma of either settling for lower-skilled jobs to ensure financial stability or persisting in a state of uncertainty while trying to reclaim their professional identities.

Career Agency Influenced by Traumatic Events and Temporal Suspension

Immigrants who have experienced disruptive and traumatic events leading to migration may find that their challenges do not cease upon settling in the new country. Instead, bureaucratic delays often exacerbated their situation, leading to prolonged and enduring temporal suspension of their life courses for several years. Whilst numerous immigrants articulated frustration with the protracted bureaucratic processes in Norway, refugees were especially susceptible. In certain instances, the immigration procedures spanned months, delaying the issuance of the refugee residence permit requisite for participation in the NIP, securing employment or initiating education.

One of our study participants came to Norway as a political refugee. His political activities in his home country led to confrontations with the local authorities, leading to imprisonment and torture. Despite the repression, he continued his education but was expelled due to his political beliefs and refusal to collaborate with the authorities. Continued reprisals forced him to flee to Norway. While life in his home country was deeply marked by numerous traumatic events and violence, in Norway, his problems did not disappear as he encountered bureaucratic challenges with the Norwegian immigration authorities. His asylum application took 15 years to proceed, which resulted in his life-course development being suspended for 15 years, a period in which he not only faced the risk of deportation and was barred from working but also suffered from social exclusion, forcing him into a state of limbo for a decade and a half. He explains:

> Of course, over the last many years here in Norway, I've lost what were actually my best years. I could have been an active person in many ways - at work, in courses, in the community. But then there was the UDI [Norwegian Directorate of Immigration] and the Norwegian authorities, who were somewhat disagreeable. (Fadil)

The past traumatic experiences have significantly shaped career decisions of this participant.

Having developed health problems and being mentally exhausted, led him to seek psychiatric services to cope with the trauma.

> As I was in prison in [the home country] and tortured, I became ill. Therefore, I started to limit many things; things are hard for me now […]. All 15 years were a struggle for me, battling with the Norwegian system, authorities, and immigration service. I was mentally exhausted.
>
> I cannot study at university. I only consider this course [the NIP], learning a bit about the rules and the Norwegian language to find a job. If it is possible […] Given my [health] situation, finding a suitable work placement where my responsibilities are clearly defined is important for me. I have not worked for many years, and now I am confused. Therefore, [the employment specialist] explains my situation to potential employers. (Fadil)

His employment opportunities are constrained by his health needs, reflecting the profound and lasting influence of past traumas enhanced by the temporal suspension as the result of the Norwegian bureaucratic run-around on his present and future. While he felt relieved that his refugee residence permit enabled him to progress with his life, his declining health and trauma-related mental health issues impacted his employment choices. Recognising his constrained opportunities in the Norwegian labour market, he remained hopeful that his employment specialist could find a work placement suited to his health challenges — a job that is neither mentally taxing nor physically demanding, with clearly defined responsibilities. He intends to accept a job offer only if he is confident in his ability to effectively perform the role.

DISCUSSION

Our findings demonstrate that disrupted life courses and experiences of temporality significantly influence the career agency of immigrants participating in employment interventions. The interplay of family duties in the country of settlement and abroad, career

history and the experienced traumas, along with experienced temporal asynchronies, temporal liminality, and temporal suspension, emerge as complex factors that shape the career agency of immigrants in several ways.

Career agency influenced by transnational family duties and temporal asynchronies highlights the complex balancing act required of the immigrants in their struggle to obtain employment in the country of settlement. The challenges posed by transnational family duties, the pressure of 'doing family across distance' (Acedera & Yeoh, 2019, p.250) and experiencing temporal asynchronies are particularly evident among female immigrants and underscore a gendered dimension to these challenges (McDonald, 2018; Moen, 2016). The added complexity of kinkeeping duties, already a barrier to achieving full career potential (Putney & Bengtson, 2003), is magnified by transnational living, intensifying the work-family balance conflict. With the focus of women on mother and kinkeeper roles, career pursuits may become secondary even when participating in employment interventions. This is particularly pronounced in Norway, where societal norms and expectations for women to undertake full-time employment (Ellingsæter & Jensen, 2019) clash with traditional mother and kinkeeper roles. This discrepancy creates a conflict between the pre-migration traditional life course and the expectations of the employment interventions in the country of settlement, leading to a sense of being 'late' in meeting both family and career obligations. The significant demands of time and resources in managing transnational life course (Acedera & Yeoh, 2019; Cwerner, 2001) can hinder the transition into waged employment for those women prioritising caretaking responsibilities, both in the country of settlement and abroad. Consequently, such immigrants may miss out on employment opportunities or seem unmotivated while struggling with transnational family responsibilities. These facets highlight the male-oriented nature of modern labour markets and employment interventions (Moen, 2016; Tomlinson et al., 2018), signifying the need for personalised approaches in

employment counselling that cater to specific needs, particularly for women deep-rooted in transnational family dynamics and traditional roles.

Career agency, influenced by pre-migration career history and experienced temporal liminality due to stagnation of career development upon migration, encapsulates the struggle faced by immigrants as they attempt to reconcile their established professional identities with the divergent employment landscapes in their new country of settlement. This reconciliation frequently leads to a revaluation of their career trajectories and professional aspirations. Experience of temporal liminality, arising from a stagnated career trajectory, mainly affects high-skilled immigrants due to a reluctance to depart from their professional past. They are caught in a dilemma between accepting social assistance and maintaining their identity as specialists. They experience what Moen (2016) describes as a 'dissolution' of institutionalised 'contracts' in employment path progression and the loss of their secure breadwinner's role. Confronted with the 'nullification of occupational biography' (Mozetič, 2022a), de-skilling, and the potential stigma of being labelled as benefit-dependent (Gateley, 2014; Mozetič, 2022b), these immigrants undergo a process akin to the five stages of grief (Kübler-Ross, 1969), mourning their lost high-skilled careers and professional status. They often *deny* participating in work trials unrelated to their career, become *angry* at not obtaining desired jobs, and eventually start *bargaining* by considering any job, even those not matching their qualifications. The subsequent *depression* following unsuccessful job applications leads them to a 'pick-your-poison' scenario of *accepting* low-skilled jobs. While such career decisions may seem incongruent with their past high-skilled trajectory, these jobs offer financial support for their families. However, this shared experience among immigrants who are deprived of their preferred career paths (Mozetič, 2022b) may not result in sustainable employment outcomes owing to a lack of motivation for low-skilled jobs or those irrelevant to their previous careers. Experience of brain waste, professional status annihilation, and skill

devaluation impacts their long-term productivity and job retention (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

Career agency influenced by traumatic events and temporal suspension results in challenges in employment interventions. These stem from the long-term impacts of trauma and the stagnation of the life course progression in the new environment due to uncertainty. The suspension from normal life-course development inhibits one's ability to follow a conventional life progression, such as gaining employment or starting a family. The experience of wasting their 'best years' can potentially exacerbate previous traumas (Griffiths et al., 2013; Mansouri & Cauchi, 2007). Although some researchers argue that long temporal suspension does not necessarily imply wasted time and may be characterised by certain meaningful activities such as networking or volunteering (Clayton & Vickers, 2019; Rotter, 2016), others indicate the experience as traumatising. The structural violence (Canning, 2017) embedded in the challenging asylum procedures and the continuous threat of 'deportability' (De Genova, 2002) disrupts temporal progression, rendering individuals oblivious to new information and struggling to make plans (Mezzalira et al., 2023). The search for a 'clear' job with clearly defined tasks emerges as a coping strategy aimed at dealing with existing traumas, avoiding new ones, and achieving controllability, predictability, and intellectual capability (Atkinson et al., 1996). Consequently, their career agency shifts focus from professional advancement to achieving stability in daily life and healing from past traumas and prolonged temporal suspension. This observation challenges the perception that, despite traumatic experiences, refugees, in particular, resist being seen as victims, preferring instead to be recognised as 'survivors' (Gateley, 2014). By 'limiting many things' and opting for 'clear' jobs during employment interventions, they seek to safeguard themselves against further mental exhaustion.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

While the sample size of 18 immigrants offers valuable insights, it does not fully capture the diverse experiences of Norway's immigrant population engaged in employment interventions, potentially limiting the generalisability of the findings. The reliance on NAV employment specialists for the recruitment process might have inadvertently introduced a selection bias, as the employment specialists could have chosen participants based on specific experiences or criteria. Moreover, because interviews were held in Norwegian and English, which were not the mother tongues of the interviewees, 'language discordance' (Buzungu & Rugkåsa, 2023), including linguistic nuances or cultural expressions, might not have been entirely captured or might have resulted in less precise expression of the study participants' thoughts.

In future, a longitudinal study observing a similar cohort of immigrants over an extended period would offer valuable insights into the evolution of their career agency due to the impacts of life course disruptions and experience of temporality. Moreover, contrasting the experiences of immigrants from diverse countries of origin might elucidate the role of cultural and regional nuances in shaping their temporal perceptions and resultant career choices.

CONCLUSION

By applying a theoretical framework that combines a life-course perspective with the concept of temporality, this study aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the career agency of immigrants participating in employment interventions in Norway. Our findings reveal that the career agency of immigrants was significantly influenced in several ways by disrupted life courses and experiences of temporality.

Study participants managed transnational family obligations and temporal asynchronies, handled family responsibilities amidst temporal liminality, and grappled with trauma-induced temporal suspension. They had to balance transnational family obligations while participating in employment interventions in Norway, often finding themselves at a crossroads when deciding what to prioritise. High-skilled professionals could opt to transition into low-skilled professions, seeking a swift exit from temporal liminality and unproductive work trials, thereby securing economic stability. The endured traumas, followed by long temporal suspension and uncertainty, prompted the search for vocations that are less mentally taxing, which served more as a coping strategy than a deliberate career choice.

Comprehensive employment counselling can benefit from acknowledging that career agency may be influenced by time-demanding family dynamics and responsibilities, both in the country of residence and abroad. Therefore, it is important to work on finding strategies to effectively balance these obligations with job seeking activities. Further, given that high-skilled professionals may choose to transition to low-skilled professions, employment counselling might assist in identifying opportunities that allow these professionals to leverage their expertise without getting caught in prolonged periods of underemployment. Finally, the collaboration between employment counsellors and trauma-informed care specialists, who can offer coping mechanisms, would enable immigrants to make career choices that are not based on mere coping strategies but on progress towards fulfilling and sustainable careers.

Departing from this, our study emphasises the importance of developing employment counselling that recognises the impact of a disrupted life course and the experience of temporality on immigrants' career agency. By understanding the complexities of clients' experiences of temporal liminality, temporal asynchrony, and temporal suspension, counsellors can develop strategies and interventions that are sensitive to individual needs and

provide guidance to clients that align with the client's lived experiences and current social context. Considering long-term career satisfaction and growth, an individual's professional background and aspirations, such counselling would ultimately promote social justice and equity in the job market, regardless of the jobseekers' background or circumstances. Such guidance would facilitate a smoother integration into the workforce and contribute to the overall well-being and adjustment of immigrants in their new country.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on the knowledge of employment counselling of immigrants. The findings of the study may be used by counsellors in employment services as well as policymakers who aim to target sustainable employment outcomes for immigrants and enhance the personalisation of employment interventions for this group.

REFERENCES

Acedera, K. A., & Yeoh, B. S. (2019). 'Making time': Long-distance marriages and the temporalities of the transnational family. *Current Sociology, 67*(2), 250–272. doi:10.1177/0011392118792927

Alwin, D. F., Thomas, J. R., & Wray, L. A. (2016). Cognitive development and the life course: Growth, stability and decline. In M. J. Shanahan, J. T. Mortimer, & M. Kirkpatrick Johnson (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course: Volume II* (pp. 451–488). Springer.

Andersson, P., & Muhrman, K. Study and career counselling in Swedish adult education. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2023.2247549

Atkinson, R. L., Atkinson, R. C., Smith, E. E., Bem, D. J., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (1996). *Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology* (12th ed.). Harcourt Publishers Brace College

Publishers.

Ballard-Kang, J. L. (2017). Using culturally appropriate, trauma-informed support to promote bicultural self-efficacy among resettled refugees: A conceptual model. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *29*(1–3), 23–42. doi:10.1080/15313204.2017.1409676

Berg, B. (2015). Velferd og migrasjon – sosialt arbeid i et flerkulturelt samfunn. In I. T. Ellingsen, I. Levin, B. Berg, & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Sosialt arbeid: en grunnbok* (pp. 244-258). Universitetsforlaget.

Bilon-Piórko, A. D., & Thomsen, R. (2022). A critical review of contemporary concepts of agency in the field of career guidance: life-design counselling and a systems theory framework. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(4), 533-546. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2022.2101614

Bjerck, M., Eide, T., Røhnebæk, M., & Andersen, T. (2018). Motivasjon og hindre for inkludering av flyktninger: Et dypdykk i arbeidsgiverperspektivet. *ØF-Rapport*, *2*.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3 ed.). Sage.

Buzungu, H. F., & Rugkåsa, M. (2023). Lost in culture: Language discordance and culturalization in social work with migrants. *Nordic Social Work Research*, *13*(4), 1–13. doi:10.1080/2156857X.2023.2216707

Caldas, C. P., & Berterö, C. (2012). A concept analysis about temporality and its applicability in nursing care. *Nursing Forum*, *47*(4), 245–252. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6198.2012.00277.x

Campion, E. D. (2018). The career adaptive refugee: Exploring the structural and personal barriers to refugee resettlement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *105*, 6–16. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2017.10.008

Canning, V. (2017). *Gendered Harm and Structural Violence in the British Asylum System*. Taylor & Francis.

Caspi, A., & Roberts, B. W. (2001). Personality development across the life course: The argument for change and continuity. *Psychological Inquiry*, *12*(2), 49–66. doi:10.1207/S15327965PLI1202_01

Castagnone, E., Nazio, T., Bartolini, L., & Schoumaker, B. (2015). Understanding transnational labour market trajectories of African-European migrants: Evidence from the MAFE Survey. *International Migration Review*, *49*(1), 200–231. doi:10.1111/imre.12152

Cheung, S. Y., & Phillimore, J. (2014). Refugees, social capital, and labour market integration in the UK. *Sociology*, *48*(3), 518–536. doi:10.1177/0038038513491467

Cwerner, S. B. (2001). The times of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *27*(1), 7–36. doi:10.1080/13691830125283

Clayton, J., & Vickers, T. (2019). Temporal tensions: European Union citizen migrants, asylum seekers and refugees navigating dominant temporalities of work in England. *Time & Society*, *28*(4), 1464–1488. doi:10.1177/0961463X18778466

Dahlen, K. J., & Dahl, K. (2015). Flerkulturelle sykepleiere. *Sykepleien*, *103*(4), 52–54. doi:10.4220/Sykepleiens.2015.53641

De Genova, N. P. (2002). Migrant 'illegality' and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *31*(1), 419–447. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.31.040402.085432

Dumont, J. C. (2016). Integrating Humanitarian Migrants in OECD Countries: Lessons and Policy Recommendations Fourteenth coordination meeting on international migration, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/14/documents/presentations/Jean_Christophe_Dumont_14CM.pdf

Elder, G. H., & George, L. K. (2016). Age, cohorts, and the life course. In M. J. Shanahan, J. T. Mortimer, & M. K. Johnson (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course: Volume II* (pp. 59-85). Springer.

Elder, G. H., Johnson, M. K., & Crosnoe, R. (2003). *The emergence and development of life course theory*. In J.T. Mortimer & M.J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course* (pp. 3-19). Springer.

Ellingsæter, A. L., & Jensen, R. S. (2019). Politicising women's part-time work in Norway: A longitudinal study of ideas. *Work, Employment and Society*, *33*(3), 444–461. doi:10.1177/0950017018821277

Eugster, B. (2018). Immigrants and poverty, and conditionality of immigrants' social rights. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 28(5), 452-470.

Facchini, C., & Rampazi, M. (2009). No longer young, not yet old: Biographical uncertainty in late-adult temporality. *Time and Society*, *18*(2–3), 351–372. doi:10.1177/0961463X08099949

Folke, J. N. (2018). Moving on or moving back? The temporalities of migrant students' lived versus imagined school careers. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *44*(9), 1506–1522. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2017.1329008

Friberg, J. (2012). Culture at work: Polish migrants in the ethnic division of labour on Norwegian construction sites. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *35*(11), 1914–1933. doi:10.1080/01419870.2011.605456

Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *26*(4), 331–362. doi: 10.1093/OBO/9780199846740-0182

Gateley, D. (2014). Becoming actors of their lives: A relational autonomy approach to employment and education choices of refugee young people in London, UK. *Social Work and Society*, *12*(2). https://ejournals.bib.uni-

wuppertal.de/index.php/sws/article/view/405/782

Giele, J., & Elder, G. (1998). Life course research: Development of a field. In J. Giele & G. Elder (Eds.), *Methods of Life Course Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Sage. doi:10.4135/9781483348919.n1

Griffiths, M. B. E. (2014). Out of time: The temporal uncertainties of refused asylum seekers and immigration detainees. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *40*(12), 1991–2009. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2014.907737

Griffiths, M., Rogers, A., & Anderson, B. (2013). Migration, time and temporalities: Review and prospect. *COMPAS Research Resources Paper*, *3*.

Gubrium, E., & Leirvik, M. S. (2021). Taking time seriously: Biographical circumstance and immigrant labor integration experience. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *23*, 303–320. doi:10.1007/s12134-021-00830-4

Høgestøl, A., & Kristoffersen, E. M. (2022). Individrapportering Jobbsjansen 2021. https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/8151584c2c6e4bb6b4489dad1c0deff0/individrapportering-2021-jobbsjansen.pdf

IMDi. (2022, Jan 31). *Work and Finances*. https://www.imdi.no/en/facts-about-immigrants-and-integration/work-and-finances/

Heinz, W. R. (2003). *From work trajectories to negotiated careers: The contingent work life course*. In J.T. Mortimer & M.J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course* (pp. 185-204). Springer.

Hitlin, S., & Kwon, H. W. (2016). Agency across the life course. In *Handbook of the Life Course: Volume II* (pp. 431-449). Springer.

Khoronzhevych, M., & Fadyl, J. (2022). How congruent is person-centred practice with labour activation policy? Person-centred approach to vocational interventions on

immigrant jobseekers in Norway. *European Journal of Social Work*, *25*(4), 577–591. doi:10.1080/13691457.2020.1793112

Kleppe, L. C., & Glemmestad, H. (2019). Arbeidsinkludering i sosialt arbeid. In H. Glemmestad & L. C. Kleppe (Eds.), *Arbeidsinkludering i sosialt arbeid* (pp. 15-26). Fagbokforlaget.

Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying* (1st ed.). Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203010495

Leisering, L. (2003). *Government and the Life Course*. In J. T. Mortimer & M.J Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course* (pp. 205-364). Springer.

Littman-Ovadia, H., & Steger, M. (2010). Character strengths and well-being among volunteers and employees: Toward an integrative model. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *5*(6), 419–430. doi:10.1080/17439760.2010.516765

Macmillan, R., & Eliason, S. R. (2003). Characterising the life course as role configurations and pathways: A latent structure approach. In J.T. Mortimer& M.J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course* (pp. 529-554). Springer.

Mansouri, F., & Cauchi, S. (2007). A psychological perspective on Australia's asylum policies. *International Migration*, *45*(1), 123–150. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2007.00398.x

McDonald, P. K. (2018). How 'flexible' are careers in the anticipated life course of young people? *Human Relations*, *71*(1), 23–46. doi:10.1177/0018726717699053

Mezzalira, S. (2021). *Trauma and its Impacts on Temporal Experience: New Perspectives from Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis*. Routledge.

Mezzalira, S., Santoro, G., Bochicchio, V., & Schimmenti, A. (2023). Trauma and the disruption of temporal experience: A psychoanalytical and phenomenological perspective. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, *83*(1), 36–55. doi:10.1057/s11231-

023-09395-w

Moen, P. (2016). Work over the gendered life course. In M. Shanahan, J. Mortimer & M. K. Johnson (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course: Volume II* (pp. 249–275). Springer.

Mozetič, K. (2022a). A help or hindrance? Highly educated refugees' perceptions of the role of civic integration programmes in accessing the labour market in Oslo, Malmö and Munich. *Comparative Migration Studies*, *10*(1), 8. doi:10.1186/s40878-022-00279-z

Mozetič, K. (2022b). In their own time: Refugee healthcare professionals' attempts at temporal re-appropriation. *Time and Society*, *31*(3), 415–436. doi:10.1177/0961463X221083788

NAV (2021). *Nasjonale mål og hovedprioriteringer for de sosiale tjenestene i arbeids- og velferdsforvaltningen i 2021*.

Omar, L. (2022). Foreclosed futures and entangled timelines: Conceptualisation of the 'future' among Syrian newcomer mothers in Canada. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *49*(5), 1210–1228. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2022.2029372

Patomäki, H. (2011). On the complexities of time and temporality: Implications for world history and global futures. *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, *57*(3), 339–-352. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8497.2011.01600.x

Polit, D. F., Beck, C. T., & Polit, D. F. (2021). Nursing research: generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Potocky, M. (2016). Motivational interviewing: A promising practice for refugee resettlement. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *25*(3), 247–252. doi:10.1080/15313204.2015.1028121

Proba Research. (2020). *Hvorfor faller flyktninger ut av arbeidslivet?* https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/a9cc8d30b1f142f3b850ab117f54c5bc/hvorfor-faller-flyktninger-ut-av-arbeidslivet.pdf

Putney, N. M., & Bengtson, V. L. (2003). Intergenerational relations in changing times. In

    J.T. Mortimer & M.J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course* (pp. 149-164).

    Springer.

Rotter, R. (2016). Waiting in the asylum determination process: Just an empty interlude?

    Time & Society, *25*(1), 80–101. doi:10.1177/0961463x15613654

Shaw, S. A., & Funk, M. (2019). A systematic review of social service programs serving

    refugees. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *29*(8), 847–862.

    doi:10.1177/1049731518824405

Spehar, A. (2021). Navigating institutions for integration: Perceived institutional barriers of

    access to the labour market among refugee women in Sweden. *Journal of Refugee*

    Studies, *34*(4), 3907–3925. doi:10.1093/jrs/feaa140

Statistics Norway. (2020). *To av tre introduksjonsdeltakere i arbeid eller utdanning etter fem*

    år. https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/to-av-tre-

    introduksjonsdeltakere-i-arbeid-eller-utdanning-etter-fem-ar

Sultana, R. G. (2022). The labour market integration of migrants and refugees: Career

    guidance and the newly arrived. *International Journal for Educational and*

    Vocational Guidance, *22*(2), 491–510. doi:10.1007/s10775-022-09529-z

Tomlinson, J., Baird, M., Berg, P., & Cooper, R. (2018). Flexible careers across the life

    course: Advancing theory, research and practice. *Human Relations*, *71*(1), 4–22.

    doi:10.1177/0018726717733313

Ullmann, J. (2023) Labor-market integration projects targeting refugee women in Germany:

    How organizations with different inequality regimes negotiate economic integration.

    Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies. doi:10.1080/15562948.2023.2264809

Van den Broeck, A., Vansteenkiste, M., De Witte, H., & Lens, W. (2008). Explaining the

    relationships between job characteristics, burnout, and engagement: The role of basic

psychological need satisfaction. *Work & Stress*, *22*(3), 277–294.

    doi:10.1080/02678370802393672

Whelan, N. (2023). Creating space for praxis in adult and employment guidance:

    collaborative development of the model of enabling employment guidance (MEEG).

    British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 1-15.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2023.2258447

Willig, C. (2007). Reflections on the Use of a Phenomenological Method. *Qualitative*

    Research in Psychology, *4*(3), 209-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780880701473425

Zacher, H., & Froidevaux, A. (2021). Life stage, lifespan, and life course perspectives on

    vocational behavior and development: A theoretical framework, review, and research

    agenda (Review). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *126*, 103476.

    doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103476