



UNIVERSITETET I AGDER

Labor integration policies in Norway

The effectiveness of national labor integration policies on entering newcomers into the Norway labor market

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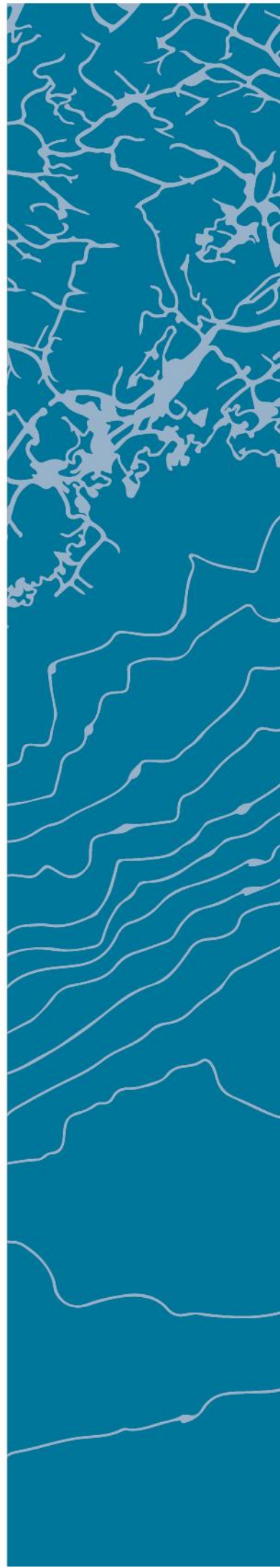
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This master's thesis was conducted as part of the academic requirement for my master's program in the Department of Global Development and Planning, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Agder. However, it is worth mentioning that the University was not responsible for the research design, research methods, or the conclusion of findings therein.

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a. Abstract

Worldwide, millions of refugees and migrants are crossing borders, seeking to flee economic, social, cultural, and political inequality and violence, and looking for a better life. As the world continues to face challenges of increased migration rates, implemented and strengthening integration programs, especially labor integration programs become vital for the host countries. Notwithstanding considerable research on the topic of refugee labor integration, the literature indicates that more research is needed, particularly in immigration-popular destinations countries, such as Norway. Hence, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of labor integration programs in Norway based on the perspectives and experiences of refugees and immigrants who attend the national integration programs. To achieve this aim, twelve semi-structured interviews with ‘newcomers’ from non-western countries, as the main group of immigrants and refugees in Norway, were conducted. The results of the findings were transcribed and analyzed using a mixed technique of coding and thematic analysis.

This study found that the effectiveness of integration programs in entering newcomers to the labor market is perceived to be largely dependent on their human and social capital. While the effectiveness of integration programs for newcomers with high education was considered less than for those who immigrate with less education and skill, most participants believed that the introduction programme offered by the Norwegian government had a positive impact on their labor integration and job-seeking process. Among the effective factors in the labor integration process, the importance of linguistic skills was highlighted by all participants. Nevertheless, *social* capital - regarding social networks and strong ties/bonds between people - also is seen to be an important factor in determining the success of immigrants in the job market which is suggested to be included in the government integration programs.

Keywords: labor integration, refugees, immigrants, Norway, human capital, social capital, immigration

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Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my mother who deserves endless gratitude, who is always there for me and offers support and love.

c. Declaration

I, Helia Sadeghianfar, hereby declare that this master's thesis, focusing on Labor integration policies in Norway: *the effectiveness of national labor integration policies on entering newcomers into the Norway labor market* is my original work. It is also critical to note that this thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution other than the University of Agder.

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f. Abbreviations

EU – European Union

EEA – European Economic Area

EEC – European Economic Community

IMDi – Integrerings- og Mangfolds Direktoratet (the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity)

IOM – International Organization for Migration

NAV – Ny arbeids- og velferdsforvaltning (New Labor and Welfare Administration)

NOKUT - Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education)

NSD – Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (Norwegian Center for Research Data)

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

SSB – Statistisk Sentralbyrå (Statistic Norway)

UiA – Universitetet I Agder (University of Agder)

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Chapter one

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 History and causes of immigration

Humans have always been on the move which has a long history as old as humankind wandering in looking for food (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). In recent decades, the rise of global neoliberal hegemony has increased migration from poor, conflict-ridden countries to the affluent, peaceful north (Sollund, 2012). Moreover, increasing demographic and economic differences between countries, as well as rural-urban movement within countries, lead to increased economically motivated immigrants who seek to take advantage of higher incomes and jobs or to gain more security and better human rights (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). Other reasons for immigration across borders include avoiding persecution, fears of war and violence, political and civil unrest, poverty (Merry, Pelaez, and Edwards, 2017), as well as work, study, visiting, or reuniting with family members. Migrants can have different situations once they arrive in their destination nations, including naturalized citizens, legal immigrants, irregular migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008).

Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, (2008) believe that migration is a reaction to differences, and there are two major types of differences that cause people to relocate: economic and noneconomic differences. They (2008) explain the causes of immigration influx through two concepts; demand-pull in destination areas, supply-push in origin areas, and network factors that connect them (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). This concept distinguishes economic migrants who migrate because there is a demand for their labor abroad from noneconomic migrants who cross borders to join family members who have resided abroad. A supply-push factor could be that the potential migrant does not have a job at home or his business is failing so he is willing to migrate (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008).

Reducing the root causes of migration is a primary goal of United Nations agencies, national government development programs, and private development efforts. The causes of inequalities that encourage migration are numerous and complex. Many of the root causes of immigration are within developing countries, also industrial nations' trade, investment, and economic policies can increase or decrease immigration pressures (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). Communities and political developments in the post-second world war period created a variety of factors that promoted worldwide migration towards the end of the twentieth century.

The increase in the global economy, the massive growth of the population in developing countries, and ongoing wars in different regions of the world have all created enormous pressures for migration, both from developing to developed countries and increasingly within developing countries (Waters, Ueda & Marrow, 2007). However, Martin, Abella & Kuptsch (2008) mention that "migration is the most under-researched of the global flows", thus the relative importance of domestic and foreign factors contributing to migration pressures is still unclear.

1.1.2 Immigration and Integration

According to the latest United Nations report, there are 281 million immigrants in the world which is 3.6 % of the world's population and it is anticipated to continue growing (OHCHR, 2020; Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). If the world's 281 million migrants were to form a country, it would rank fourth in terms of population, after China, India, the United States, and ahead of Indonesia and Pakistan. Therefore, people's migration across national borders becomes one of the most relevant and contentious issues in the contemporary world. More than five million people came to OECD countries in 2018, a 2% increase from the previous year. Over one million of them were asylum seekers, escaping wars and uncertain political situations in their home countries (OECD, 2019).

Western European countries are popular destinations among immigrants because their freedom and democracy are viewed as a stronghold around the globe. Western European countries are modern, affluent, and provide social well-being, also, political rights are secured and respected, and citizens are entitled to organize and express their views openly (Engene, 2004). Among the Western European countries, the open economies of the Nordic countries are distinguished by the significant welfare state, which includes universal benefits, free tuition, health clinics, social assistance, and integration programs. Also, strong unions, collective agreements, powerful labor rights, and a high level of workers' participation characterize their work-life system (Slettebak, 2021, Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013).

Immigrants' problems do not end when they arrive in their destination countries (Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio, 2021). On the contrary, once they get to the host countries, they will face new obstacles. The term "integration" refers to the process of overcoming these obstacles. Furthermore, the obstacles that first-generation immigrants suffer upon arrival, such as language barriers, labor market discrimination, and a reduction in social contacts, can be passed down to the second generation and their descendants (Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio, 2021).

Managing and integrating immigrants become essential in Western Europe as almost all of its labor force growth is due to immigration. Until the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, the EU had no authority over integration. Nonetheless, a limited role was agreed upon in 2003 on the basis that the failure of one member state to adopt a successful integration program may have negative consequences elsewhere (Spencer, 2011). Immigration can benefit host countries if immigrants integrate into the destination communities and become indistinguishable from the native citizens. Unemployment may rise and social stability may deteriorate if migrants fail to integrate successfully (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). Therefore, the success of immigrants' labor integration can have a significant impact on the host country's economic growth.

Immigration to Norway began later than in many other Western European countries, but it has generally followed a pattern that is fairly similar to other well-known countries of immigration (Hagelund, 2005). According to statistics, immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents are 18.9% of Norway's population, also people with refugee backgrounds are 4.5% of the whole population (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022). So, Norway started to put restrictions to limit immigrants' entrance and tried to integrate them into the new society (Gsir, 2014). Thus, through integration programs, the government had trained immigrants to enter the labor market to support their families and find economic freedom and independence (Slettebak, 2021).

My Master's program in the field of Global Development combined with my volunteer job in a non-governmental organization that delivers a variety of services to refugees in Norway, gave me the required motivation and knowledge to examine the effectiveness of national labor integration from a professional standpoint. Through my thesis, I would consider the efficiency of Norway's integration programs especially the introduction Act through newcomers' perceptions.

1.1.3 A brief history of immigration in Norway

Following the Russian revolution and its repressions in 1917, a limited influx of immigrants arrived in Norway. Later, following the Second World War, Norway was confronted with several refugee-related issues. By 1947, all former forced laborers, prisoners of war, and others immigrants had found work in various fields. Initially, only timber and land labor were available for them, but this transformed over time, and many of them followed the country's industrialization trend and found work in a variety of professions (Eitinger, 1959, p.326). In the same year, the Norwegian government decided to admit around 500 Jewish

refugees from German camps as restitution for the 700 Norwegian Jews who died in concentration camps. This was Norway's first immigration transfer. All of the people who entered had spent time in concentration camps. Many of the above-mentioned 500 Jewish refugees viewed Norway as a temporary destination and many of them fled within the first three to four years of their residence (Eitinger, 1959, p.326).

In the late 1960s, the first large number of labor immigrants from impoverished countries came to Norway (Hagelund, 2005). In the next decade, the oil crisis of 1973-74, resulted in an economic collapse and widespread unemployment in Norway (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013). The oil crisis slowed or halted the recruitment of additional guest workers from outside the EEC (EU). Many governments were concerned about the growing structural reliance on immigrant workers, and in the following decade, guest workers reunited their families (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). This time, immigrants did not come back home since unemployment had soared in their home countries, and they believed that if they did, they would be unable to find jobs in their home countries (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). When the immigrant workers opted to stay in Norway and use their legal residency status, it became clear that they were no longer temporary workers, but rather permanent residents and they began to build their own families in Norway (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013).

At the time, Norway decided to halt further immigration. Even though labor immigration to Norway was halted in the mid-1970s, and the influx of immigrants expanded due to family reunification, for example, immigrants began to marry their countrymen and bring them to the country. This contributed to an increase in the growth of immigration in Norway (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013). So, Norway needed to use some strategies to stop immigrants' entry. Following the immigration prevention policies in other European countries, Norway implemented an "immigration stop" in 1975, especially to stop third-world-wave labor immigration. But immigrants continued to enter through other schemes like professionals, family reunion programs, and subsequently as refugees and asylum seekers (Hagelund, 2005).

According to some Norwegian sociologists, migration will erode the working class's market strength and lead to the establishment of a new lower class known as the working poor. A lack of labor reserves, or full employment, was among the primary factors of social equality in Norway after WWII. So, through labor integration, the government decided to integrate more immigrants into the labor market and help them to find economic freedom and independence (Slettebak, 2021).

The Nordic model is well-known for its combination of productivity with fairness (Slettebak, 2021). In this model, social services are delivered by national organizations that are

tightly integrated into the public sector and supported through general taxation (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013). Regarding the Nordic model, immigrants and refugees have been supposed to actively participate in the reciprocal social and economic interactions between the state and the local community, as employees and taxpayers. They have been subjected to integration philosophies and policies based on Scandinavian nations of equality since the 1980s, which have had a significant impact on immigrants' and refugees' ability to stay and integrate into the receiving country (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013).

The integration project in Scandinavian welfare societies involves the settlement of immigrants' families, close monitoring of young refugees' scholastic progress, and treatment programs for traumatized refugees. These attempts to transform refugees and immigrants into "good citizens" are part of a larger Scandinavian welfare agenda aimed at giving the required support for all newcomers to become equal members of society (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013). Most migrant agreements are based on the idea of equality, which states that migrant workers should be treated the same as other laborers in the countries where they work (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008).

While migration is not a new problem in Norway, the country was largely homogenous in the early 2000s, with an immigrant population of 5%, but it witnessed an unparalleled rise in immigration in the next years, particularly after the EU expansion in 2004. By 2016, the immigrant population had risen to 13.4%, and Poles formed the majority of newcomers (Slettebak, 2021). Nowadays, the immigrant population has approximately formed one-fifth of the country's population and implementation of integration strategies found a high priority (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022).

1.2 Problem statement

The main problem of this study concerns the labor integration of newcomers to Norway and exploring the effectiveness of national integration policies on their job-seeking process. In recent years, the subjects of immigration and integration have become rather overpowering and contentious. Despite the abundance of literature on these topics, there is a clear need for more research to improve our understanding of the phenomenon and develop effective and efficient solutions for the better integration of immigrants not only into Norway but in all the host countries. I found the subject of immigrants' labor integration important as in the public debate, immigration has brought some problems to host countries such as rising unemployment and crime rate, wage-inequality, and use of taxes and the government's budget (Helbling, Simon,

and Schmid, 2020) and I wanted to examine the effectiveness of national labor integration programs in reducing these problems, especially unemployment rate.

The integration policies are a reaction to the widening divide between the wealthy north and the poor south, which has resulted in a constant increase in the number of individuals who want to and need to migrate. Some immigrants are more welcome to affluent countries than others because they are seen as contributors, while others are entitled to residency permits under international agreements because they require assistance and protection. As a result, receiving states must continuously weigh their priorities against the rights and interests of immigrants (Sollund, 2012).

One of the main immigration adjusting strategies that become popular in the last decades in host countries is integration programs. Integration is more than an analytical concept used by academics to assess a society's social and economic cohesion. It has evolved into a potent epic phrase with specific cultural, social, and political connotations, describing what it takes for immigrants and refugees and their descendants to become equal members of society. This concept is formed in public discussion and the welfare state's integration policies and measures (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013).

Given the scope of this master's thesis assignment, the study will focus on the labor integration of immigrants as a component of such a wide and multifaceted subject. More precisely, the target group of this study is limited to non-western immigrants/refugees in Norway, a demographic that appears to form a greater portion of immigrants compared to ones from other developed countries (see study subject). In addition to the viability of the topic, the study will examine the integration process, namely labor integration, which is the main part of the total integration process, according to the literature.

According to Botoon (2020), immigrants' unemployment has a substantial impact on the rising mistrust of refugees and immigration, especially in Europe. Europeans are more concerned than anything else about refugees increasing crime and criminality in their societies. Furthermore, there is a link between refugee unemployment and their vulnerability to crime and criminality. Though similar impressions exist in all host countries, the sensitivity appears to be stronger in countries with a welfare system, such as the Scandinavian countries, unsurprisingly due to the potential for immigrants to rely on taxpayers' money if they remain unemployed (Botoon, 2020). In other words, even though every host society wants immigrants to participate in the labor market as effective employees, those countries with welfare systems place a greater emphasis on immigrants' employment, partly due to concerns about their potential dependence on social assistance and thus a lack of motivation to integrate (Botoon,

2020). This suggests that labor integration is a key/fundamental to overall integration, and further justifies the study's focus on labor integration particularly in welfare societies.

The main concern on labor integration in Norway developed since the European Union (EU) enlargements in 2004 caused increasing Norway's labor immigration and a revolution in the Norwegian labor market. At this time, the economy deteriorated, productivity fell, unemployment rose, and immigration policies for non-EEC employees became more stringent and less generous (Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio, 2021). Companies suddenly had access to a huge group of skilled workers who arrived from countries where salaries were significantly lower than those in Norway. Concerns about low-wage competition and rising social inequality, which might pose a challenge to Norway's work-life system and the welfare state, quickly arose (Slettebak, 2021).

1.2.1 Study subjects

This study focuses on the experience of non-western immigrants and refugees of national labor integration policies in Norway, especially the Introduction program and language courses. According to the government statistics agency (Statistisk sentralbyrå), immigrants form 18.9% of the total Norwegian population which is a considerable part of the society. Around 27% of new residence permits issued in 2018 were for labor purposes, while the rest were for family reasons (28%) or to study (20%) or obtain international protection (10%), and other reasons (14%) that provide valuable talents and experience that should be recognized (Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio, 2021). Also, according to the rules of introduction programs, these programs are established for newcomers to Norway (see demography for further information).

Refugees have had horrific experiences, and some have developed post-traumatic stress disorders (Gsir, 2014). The reason for concerning non-western refugees and immigrants is that those who come from EU countries have almost similar backgrounds and cultures and integration into another EU country are not as challenging as non-EU immigrants who come from totally different cultures. Ideally integrating immigrants, or letting them engage in the host community to the same degree as locals, involves two parties, the host society, and the immigrants, working together to form an integrated society (Gsir, 2014). Integration policy is usually seen as solely a subject of concern for the receiving state, with little respect given to the role of the sending state (Gsir, 2014). As a result, emphasis on refugee integration, particularly their absorption into labor markets, becomes critical for overall integration processes.

For the reasons stated above, the central target group of this study was made up of 12 refugees and immigrants of both genders who were between 24 to 55 years old and had participated in governmental compulsory integration courses, such as Introduction Act, Norwegian language, skill and education courses. In Norway, the municipalities are responsible for the implementation of integration programs. The number of participants was chosen for practical reasons, while at the same time providing a sample large enough to include a relatively wide diversity of perspectives. Consistent with the qualitative and exploratory nature, the study makes no pretensions regarding the generalizability of representativity of the sample (Bryman, 2016).

1.2.2 Study objective

Migration has a substantial impact on many of the key functions of government, and here is where politicians need to put more effort and attention (Spencer, 2011). The importance of migration to conflicting policy priorities, ranging from economic competitiveness and ability to supply public services to international relationships and conformity with human rights legislation, constrains government options. However, there is no agreement on how much weight should be given to those priorities (Spencer, 2011).

Immigration is a permanent component of European societies, and the successful integration of immigrants is a crucial part of efficiently managing migration, although member state strategies and target groups will be varied. Integration is viewed as a vibrant, long-term, and constant two-sided process of mutual accommodation that necessitates the participation of each resident, not just immigrants, and this burden is on states to create possibilities for immigrants' economic, social, cultural, and political engagement (Spencer, 2011).

In terms of immigrants' integration impacts on the host country, Tadesse & White (2010) express that an infusion of immigrants may revitalize towns and promote constructive neighborhood social processes, which eventually increase safety (Tadesse & White, 2010). Also, one possible interpretation of recreational satisfaction is that immigrants bring amenities, such as ethnic or multicultural commodities that can improve locals' well-being in terms of their living habits (Akay, Constant, & Giulietti, 2014, p.36). The influence of immigration is also affected by the degree of economic and cultural integration of immigrants in the region. While economic reasons play a role in shaping perceptions toward immigrants, other variables such as culture and locals' social position also shape how immigrants are seen (Akay, Constant, & Giulietti, 2014).

Integration of immigrants and refugees found rising priority in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden through public discussion, legislation, and government, and when immigrants settle in these countries, they found strong welfare societies that strove to integrate them through various integration initiatives. Immigrants and refugees have responded by engaging in what is known as the 'Introduction programme', they have thus embraced the welfare society's integration endeavor and taken use of the opportunities it provides, all while attempting to keep the purpose that drove them to immigrate or return (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013)

However, according to the literature, there are some barriers and problems regarding welfare societies' integration programs. One of the most fundamental issues with integration initiatives is that they are frequently intended to match the Scandinavian welfare system rather than the needs of refugees. It is anticipated that refugees will remain in their current location and will not have any social commitments that would drive them to relocate elsewhere (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013).

Another issue coming from welfare societies' integration programs is their insistence on learning the local language, social norms, and cultural beliefs and norms before applying for jobs in receiving society. While the introduction program undoubtedly provides useful information to newcomers, their strong emphasis on local socio-cultural skills that must be attained before managing in society has had the big drawback of treating newcomers in terms of what they lack rather than what they can offer to the host community (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013). Also, Botoon (2020) highlights some main barriers to the labor integration of refugees, such as getting their educational qualifications accredited, taking new or supplementary education in Norway, and learning to speak fluently enough Norwegian. Poor social networking especially with natives and employers is another integration barrier that Botoon (2020) points to.

Come to conclude, as is shown, this research is important for several reasons. Firstly, the immigration trend in Norway has increased in recent years, and it caused economic challenges in terms of integration strategies. Secondly, the study found most of the previous research has focused on the immigration and integration issues but as Botoon (2020) points out, 75 percent of the integration research in Norway, during the recent decade, lacks interviewing refugees as a method of data collection. Thirdly, according to the literature, there are some drawbacks and barriers to integrating immigrants and refugees which need more effort to increase our knowledge about their situation and can improve integration strategies.

As a result, this study attempted to achieve an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon which is newcomers' feelings and perceptions (dependent variable) of the government's

integration programs (independent variable) through their own words and using their frames of reference. We hope this research contributes to filling this gap on a national and international level and be a guideline for policymakers to find a new perspective on the effectiveness of their integration programs and improve them. Also, the results of this research can be a basis for further research in integrating subjects.

The following research questions connect the project's emphasis and scope with its fundamental objectives.

1.3 Research questions

Main question: To what extent do the current national labor integration policies meet non-western immigrants' and refugees' needs to enter the labor market?

Sub-questions

1. *How do the national labor integration policies increase employment opportunities for newcomers?*
2. *What is the role of social capital in securing employment opportunities for newcomers?*

*Non-western newcomers are the main target of this research as they form the main groups of refugees and immigrants in Norway and the unemployment rate among this group is higher than other groups of refugees and immigrants (see the Demography)

1.4 Study area

1.4.1 Geography

As mentioned already, the influx of the immigrants in Norway in recent decades had an increasing trend, and it has converted the ethnically homogeneous Norwegian society into an ethnically varied and multicultural community that faces similar challenges to other non-settler European countries in terms of immigrants integration (Martiny et al., 2020). Slettebak (2021) believed that immigration will erode the working class's market strength and establish a new lower class known as the working poor in Norway. While migration is not a new issue in Norway, the country was largely homogenous in the past, with an immigrant population of 5%, in the early 2000s, according to Statistics Norway data. Norway witnessed a phenomenal rise in immigration in the next years, particularly after the EU expansion in 2004. By 2016, the immigrant population had risen to 13.4%, and Polish people formed most newcomers (Slettebak, 2021). And now, according to the Statistisk sentralbyrå (statics website of Norway

population), the immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents include 18.9% of Norway's population in March 2022 (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022).

According to IMDi, currently, the Introduction ACT, with two schemes: the introduction program (from 2004) and Norwegian language training and social studies for adult immigrants (from 2005), is implemented in Norway. The main goal of this strategy is to increase the opportunity for groups of newcomers in Norway to rapidly find work or enroll in education or training. Work and education are both essential for securing societal engagement and economic independence. The goal of the language training is that participants achieve a level of Norwegian competency that allows them to use or improve their language abilities in education, work, and society in general (IMDi, 2019, November 28).

The popularity of Norway as a welfare state for immigration along with the complete and well-known integration strategies such as the Introduction program caused to choose Norway as a study area to consider the effectiveness of its labor integration policies on entering newcomers to the labor market.

1.4.2 Demography

Almost two-thirds of the population growth in Nordic countries is because of the immigration influx in Norway and Sweden. The majority of immigrants come from Europe to these countries but there have also been large groups of immigrants from non-EU countries (Calmfors & Gassen, 2019). The unemployment rate of non-EU immigrants is higher compared to other groups of immigrants (see table 2) also, they have less education and less knowledge of the host country's language.

According to SSB, immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents include 18.9 percent of Norway's population 1,025,175 persons, moreover, people with a refugee background formed 4.5 percent of the whole population (240,239 people), these are while born in Norway to Norwegian-born parents are 3,821,953. Among these populations (18/9%), immigrants from EU/EEA countries (7.1%), Asia including Turkey (6.3%), and Africa (2.7%) are the main parts of the immigrant population by far from other groups (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021). In addition, as table 1 shows, the refugees' major groups are from Asia including Turkey, Africa, and Eastern Europe.

According to literature and immigrants' and refugees' population statics in Norway, understanding the importance of studying these three major groups of immigrants and refugees (EEA, Asia, and Africa) is easy. So, both groups of immigrants and refugees will be considered

the main targets of this study. However, among all groups of immigrants, just a specific group of them who benefit from integration programs and are in the family reunification category have been chosen for this research.

Parts of the world	Refugees
	2021
Western Europe	912
Eastern Europe	32 601
Africa	75 286
Asia including Turkey	125 755
North-America and Oceania	160
South and Central America	5 525
Total	240 239

Table 1: 08376: Persons with a refugee background and country background

To determine the participants of this research, the target groups of the national integration programs (Introduction program and Norwegian training) had a significant role. According to these programs, the target group consists of persons between 18 and 55 years who:

- have been granted asylum and thus the status of refugees is resettlement refugees
- have been granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds following an application for asylum
- are reunited with the groups mentioned above as part of a family reunion
- following the breakdown of a marriage or cohabitation, have been granted a residence permit on an independent basis due to abuse in the marriage or cohabitation (as from 1 July 2011)

Another specific group of immigrants that can benefit from the free Norwegian courses are people who have family reunification with:

- a person in one of the groups above
- or a person who has a permanent residence permit (government article, 2014, December 14)

1.5 Limitations of the study

1.5.1 Sample size

The sample size for this study was relatively small, and the generalization of data was limited. Because of the small sample size, it was difficult to find a significant relationship from the information obtained from the participants that can be generalized to all the immigrants within and outside Norway. The participants were non-western refugees and immigrants who were born out of Norway or Norwegian-born with immigrant parents. Therefore, this study can only apply to cases concerning Norway and only immigrants in Norway. This is because the views of the participants may vary from one country to another because of the effectiveness of the integration programs in different countries. So, this makes the study limited to generalizing the findings.

1.5.2 Reliable data and limitations of the method

The information obtained for this study cannot be considered reliable because the participants had a free will to disclose as much information as they wish though. Consequently, the participants could have withheld vital information that could make the study more reliable. This could have happened due to fear of disclosure despite the assured confidentiality of the information recorded. In addition, the fact that the participant knew the interview was recorded might have avoided disclosing true information and how they truly feel about the matter at hand. Possibly, a more reliable study can be done using a different method of data collection, like non-participant observation to make the research more reliable.

1.5.3 Lack of adequate studies on the topic

While immigration is not a new topic in the field of global development, there is still more work needed to be done on the integration programs within Norway. There is a limited number of researchers who have focused on the effectiveness of the national labor integration programs, especially in Norway. While this study will provide useful information regarding the efficiency of newcomers' labor integration programs, more work needs to be done. This is not a field that can be exhausted by a handful of researchers but requires the contribution of all beneficiaries to obtain and put the information for public use.

1.5.4 Language Barrier

The interviews were conducted in English. During the interview, some participants were unable to express their points of view in English due to a language barrier that prevented them from being more clear in expressing their experiences. Some needed more explanation to understand the questions and they responded by using lots of time to find definitions. This could affect the quality of information collected for the study and make some misunderstandings for both interviewer and participants. In these cases, I tried to listen to recorded voices to have a better understanding of the interviewees' viewpoints and collect more trustable data.

1.6 conclusion

To sum up, through the problem statement part the significance of the aim of this research which is examining the efficiency of national labor integration programs in Norway was explained. The study subjective focused on newcomers' experiences of integration programs and the importance of choosing refugees and immigrants to study while the study objective elaborates on the impacts of immigration on the host communities and informs us about the value of integration programs, especially labor integration in leading newcomers to the labor market.

Also, in the study area, the reasons for choosing Norway as an area of study were explained through the Geography part and in Demography the reasons and importance of studying the specific group of refugees and immigrants (non-western newcomers) were investigated. Furthermore, in the limitations of the study, four main barriers that we faced during conducting the research were explained to increase the value and reliability of our research. Eventually, according to the above explanations, the results of this research would support further studies and policy decisions. Moreover, another reason for choosing Norway was that I have been living in Norway as a student for about two years and become a volunteer in one of the non-governmental organizations (Reddbarna) that works to integrate refugees' children and their families into Norway and defense the childrens' rights. So, contacting personally with refugees and immigrants motivated me to choose this topic to work on. In the following, the main concepts and terms of this research are defined to make a better understanding of the study subjects. Besides a summary of the thesis structure is presented to give an overview of the whole project before starting in-depth discussions.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Before starting deep arguments in the field of labor integration of immigrants and refugees in Norway, it would be helpful to clarify some expressions and concepts of this study. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines immigration as the process through which non-nationals relocate to a country with the purpose of living (Spencer, 2011). In this research, **immigrants** are defined as people who are born out of Norway, or in Norway with immigrant parents. Immigrants are only registered as settled in a municipality if they are living in Norway for at least six months (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008, p.1).

However, refugees because of their special legal position, are frequently labeled separately, as people who have applied for or plan to apply for asylum (Spencer, 2011). **Refugees** in this study according to Botoon (2020) and Spencer (2011) refers to people who are forced to abandon their countries due to violence and/or persecution. Moreover, the word “**newcomers**” connote the combination of refugees and a special group of immigrants who benefit from Norway’s integration programs. This will be further explained in the Demography.

Introduction programs are internationally unique features of the integration policies in Norway. These programs include language training, courses in civic orientation, and labor market measures that apply for newly arrived refugees and family immigrants. Implementation of these programs is the municipalities’ responsibility (Calmfors & Gassen, 2019).

1.8 Overview of the Thesis Structure

This thesis will identify the different factors that influence the effectiveness of labor integration policies for newcomers with a focus on their employment capabilities.

- **Chapter 1** will begin with a brief history of immigration and its causes in Norway. Then it identifies the study objectives, subjective, and problem statements and narrows it down to research questions. Also, it discusses the research problem in terms of demography and geography which helps to understand which target groups and areas are applicable for this study. It also briefly outlines the limitations of the study and defines the core expressions used in this research.
- **Chapter 2** is literature a review where all the relevant literature on the research questions is collected. Through reviewing the related literature the two main

theories and concepts, human capital and social capital, which form the framework of this study, will be described.

- **Chapter 3** explains the methodology of this research. In this chapter, the research design applied in the study will be discussed in detail. The qualitative research methods used to answer the research questions and the reason why they are preferred methods will be explained comprehensively. This chapter also explains the sampling methods of choosing participants, the employed data collection tools, and analyzing methods. The effectiveness of these methods and why they were chosen are also discussed. The chapter also discusses the reliability and validity of the study and how the recruitment methods contribute to the validity of the research data and results. The chapter also includes the ethical consideration to meet academic research standards and avoid violating any legal requirements.
- **Chapter 4** presents the results of the findings of the study. The data are collected through semi-structured interviews and literature reviews under the two main theories.
- **Chapter 5** answers the research questions. The empirical findings of the research would be discussed and analyzed under the four main conceptual themes (educational background, language knowledge, job experiences, and social networks) that emerged during analyzing. Also at the end of each theme, the related research questions will be answered
- **Chapter 6** concludes the results and findings of the study and summarises the key research findings of the research aims and research question. It will also review the limitations of the study and propose opportunities for future research. Some useful policy recommendations based on study findings are provided in this research too.

Chapter two

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The economic effects of foreigners and foreign workers are frequently contested in Europe, and high unemployment rates and high rates of dependency on social assistance keep them in the news. Foreign workers were usually regarded as an economic benefit for host countries during the peak years of guest worker recruitment, 1961–1973, and they also supported the political purpose of increasing economic integration within the European Economic Community (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). Meanwhile, many European governments believed that immigration is necessary to avert demographic and labor force declines, as well as to minimize dramatic cuts to social security systems that rely on current workers to support retirees (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). However, over the years, the rising difference between employed foreign employees and total foreign residents became a potent argument against more immigration because more immigration did not always bring more job opportunities (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). So, many governments decided to ban immigrants' entry to their countries or control immigration by applying integration strategies and leading them to the labor market.

In this chapter, by reviewing available literature, different debates regarding immigration and integration are provided. Although great numbers of research have been conducted in terms of immigration, finding specific information about the problem statement of this study, the effectiveness of labor integration policies to entering newcomers to the labor market under the frame of human capital or social capital theories, especially in Norway was a bit challenging. In the following, the overview of the literature presents the relative findings and theories of immigration and integration in Europe and the United States and eventually narrows down to Scandinavian countries and Norway, and then the main theories and concepts which make the research theoretical framework are presented.

2.2 Overview of the Literature

People immigrate because they believe that changing their environment will better their situation. The results of migration research that examine such improvement in terms of pre-defined parameters relating to migrants' and their descendants' position in the receiving country as reflected in, for example, occupation, education, income, housing, and legal status, show that

the goal of migration is to settle down and become excellent middle-class citizens in a nation with greater social and economic possibilities. As a result of their integration into the receiving society, migrants will certainly gain social and economic mobility (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013). Migration is becoming more crucial for industrial countries' labor force growth. While migration may create inequality between richer and poorer countries, some policy measures could prevent future difficulties.

During and after WWII, in response to the market requests for foreign employees, the United States and western European countries established “guest worker” programs. The timing was crucial because it explains why policies with significant socioeconomic consequences were not widely contested before migrants arrived to fill employment opportunities. Perhaps the most important assumption underlying massive guest worker programs was that migrants could be rotated in and out of destination nation jobs according to program rules, acting as a barrier labor force, recruited when unemployment was low, and sent home when unemployment rose, thereby keeping native workers' unemployment rates low (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008).

However, when some migrants settle in destination nations, all guest worker programs fail. As the need for guest workers grows, the employment-to-migrant ratio falls and leads to the proverb that “there is nothing more permanent than temporary workers”. Migrants are allowed or even encouraged to settle, like when employers requested highly skilled to settle. Guest worker programs, on the other hand, are designed to move foreigners in and out of a country's labor market, and migrants' arrival and exit have an impact on workers and society in both sending and receiving countries (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008).

Low fertility rate and almost regular reports of migrants dying while attempting to cross the Arizona desert into the United States or crossing the Mediterranean sea to reach Spain or Italy characterize a migration era, in which the vast majority of migrants are moving from developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to North America and Europe. Thus, labor migration management is especially essential in North America and Western Europe because foreigners account for a large portion of labor force growth in low-fertility societies (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008).

People’s migration across national borders has become one of the most relevant and contentious issues in contemporary Western countries as migration's social, economic, and political consequences are intricately woven into the fabric of Europe and its destiny. None of the European countries started to increase their postwar population via permanent migration, nor did they make a purposeful decision to become multicultural countries. Nonetheless, by 2008, more than 30 million foreign nationals lived in the 27 member states of the European

Union (EU), accounting for 6.4 percent of its population. Two-thirds of those were nationals of countries outside the EU (Spencer, 2011, p.1).

Moreover, in 2015, the European Union was confronted with a unique problem when nearly two million individuals came to its shores in less than two years, seeking asylum or a new life, many risking their lives to flee conflict, political tyranny, or poverty. Dealing with the human catastrophe developing in the Mediterranean, the EU moved quickly and decisively to prevent further deaths at sea (Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio, 2021). However, the EU Member States lacked a unified approach to migration management and border security at the time. It became evident soon that individual Member States could not solve the migratory situation alone and that only a combined European solution could address the issues. In reply, the Juncker Commission presented a European Agenda on Migration (European Commission 2015) in May 2015, to address urgent issues and equip the EU with the tools it needs to manage migration in the medium to long term in areas such as irregular migration, borders, refugee, and legal migration (Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio, 2021).

The immigration integration measures are a reaction to the widening divide between the wealthy north and the poor south, which has resulted in a constant increase in the number of individuals who want to and need to immigrate. As a result, affluent host nations seek innovative ways to seal their borders or confine their admissions, revealing a tremendous deal of creativity in the policies that govern people's mobility (Sollund, 2012). In another word, migration is becoming more crucial for industrial countries' labor force growth. While migration may create inequality between richer and poorer countries, some policy measures could prevent future difficulties. The methods for enrolling and employing migrants have an impact on their possibilities for upward mobility, native workers' and migrants' salaries, and working conditions (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008). Many times in social science research, it is mentioned that integration is a beneficial strategy and it is a necessity to absorb immigrants into the societies where they have relocated. Integration is the most popular term used in European scholarly writings to describe the growing connection between immigrants and the host society (Spencer, 2011). Integration has emerged as a fundamental governmental goal in the resettlement of refugees and immigrants, as well as a topic of substantial public debate. However, both coherent policy formulation and beneficial public discussion are threatened by the fact that the word integration is employed with vastly diverse conceptions (Ager & Strang, 2008).

2.2.1 Migration in the Scandinavian

The Scandinavian welfare system has given a significant basis for newcomers to integrate into. Many newcomers acquire about Scandinavian society, especially Norway, on a more specialized level through universal benefits, health clinics, free tuition, social assistance centers, and integration programs (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013). Consequently, the integration of immigrants and refugees found rising priority in Norway's public discussion, legislation, and government. When immigrants settle in this country, they find a strong welfare society that strives to integrate them through various integration initiatives. Immigrants and refugees have responded by engaging in what is known as 'selective accommodation.' They have thus embraced the welfare society's integration endeavor and taken use of the opportunities it provides, all while attempting to keep the purpose that drove them to immigrate or return (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013).

Key domains of integration in Norway are proposed by Ager & Strang (2008) in four overarching themes: i) achievement and access in the sectors of employment, housing, education, and health; ii) assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; iii) processes of social connection within and between community groups; and iv) structural barriers to such connection related to language, culture, and the local environment. A framework connecting these areas is offered as a tool to encourage debate and formulation of normative concepts of integration in resettlement situations (Ager & Strang, 2008).

2.3 Norway Integration Strategy

According to IMDi, currently, the Introduction ACT, with two schemes: the introduction program (from 2004) and Norwegian language training and social studies for adult immigrants (from 2005), is implemented in Norway. The Introduction Act was established in response to a growing belief that integration policy was in danger. Even after many years in Norway, many immigrant groups had low labor-force participation rates and substantial reliance on social benefits. The quality of the municipalities' integration activities, as well as the more fundamental concepts of integration work, were both criticized in the political discussion and research (IMDi, 2019, November 28).

The main goal of this strategy is to increase the opportunity for groups of newcomers in Norway to rapidly find work or enroll in education or training. Work and education are both essential for securing societal engagement and economic independence. Since 2010, one of the Act's set objectives has been for 70 percent of participants to be in a paid job and/or education within a year of finishing the course. The goal of the language training and social studies

component is for participants to achieve a level of Norwegian competency that allows them to use or improve their language abilities in education, work, and society in general (IMDi, 2019, November 28). The Introduction Act was established in response to a growing belief that integration policy was in danger. Even after many years in Norway, many immigrant groups had low labor-force participation rates and substantial reliance on social benefits. The quality of the municipalities' integration activities, as well as the more fundamental concepts of integration work, were both criticized in the political discussion and research (IMDi, 2019, November 28).

Immigrants had worse living standards and lowered social involvement with the public in 2016, but later, the integration policies became one of the six main Norwegian government agendas. The goal of this agenda is greater participation in working life and society, in general, to encourage immigrants to participate more in the labor force and wider community (Slettebak, 2021, p.9). This strategy is established for the years 2019 to 2022 to handle the immigrants' challenges in Norway, such as low immigrant employment rates, lack of skills, and isolation along economic, social, and cultural boundaries

The Norway-integration-strategy is categorized into four main sections: Education and Qualification (providing equal education from kindergarten to secondary education to refugee kids and young adults to supply them with adequate Norwegian language proficiency, basic competencies, and job skills), work (making secure and stable work-life), everyday integration (promote a sense of belonging and participation in society) and the right to live a free life (Preventing negative social control and removing limitations to individual liberty) (Slettebak, 2021).

2.3.1 Limitations of Integration strategy

While several limitations make integration programs unsuccessful, one of the most fundamental issues with integration policies is that they are frequently intended to match the welfare system rather than the needs of immigrants, as Olwig, Larsen & Rytter (2013) anticipated, refugees, will remain in their current location and will not have any social commitments that would drive them to relocate elsewhere. They (2013) also highlight another issue of immigrants' integration which occurs when the program insists on learning the local language, social norms, and cultural beliefs and norms before applying for jobs in receiving society. While the introduction programs undoubtedly provide useful information to newcomers, their strong emphasis on local socio-cultural skills that must be attained before

managing in society has had the big drawback of treating new arrivals in terms of what they lack rather than what they can offer to the host community (Olwig, Larsen & Rytter, 2013).

In the table below, the unemployment rate of the immigrants with their nationality distribution is observable. According to the statistics in table 1 and table 2, we can understand that the main share of the unemployment rate among refugees and immigrants is allocated to the three groups of non-EU nations, Africa, Asia, including Turkey, and South and Central America, respectively.

4th quarter 2020		
	Unemployed persons	Registered unemployed in percent of the labor force (percent)
All immigrants	45 838	9.2
The Nordic countries	2 281	4.9
Western Europe else	3 294	6.5
EU countries in Eastern Europe	13 438	9.4
Eastern Europe else	3 263	7.5
North-America and Oceania	380	4.9
Asia includes Turkey	14 192	10.3
Africa	7 418	13.7
South and Central America	1 572	9.6

Table 2: Registered unemployed, by immigrant background and region of birth, Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 11 February 2021

All over Europe, the policy emphasizes some integration domains over other aspects of integration. States that run temporary labor programs, for example, may focus minimal emphasis on migrants' social integration, even though the migrants reside in the society and may stay for an extended period (Spencer, 2011). Similarly, a focus on labor market integration in the migration debate may disregard public views about migrants, while a concentration on cultural integration may disregard access to employment and services (Spencer, 2011).

Despite academics' focus on the necessity of employment in integration and the prioritizing of national policies and practices to tackle immigrants' unemployment, the current state of labor integration in Norway appears that more efforts in other factors are needed to have a successful integration. Meanwhile, some researchers believe that the failure of labor integration or lack of successful programs is not related to the drawbacks of integration strategies exclusively. Rather, individual factors such as language barriers, lack of social networks, lack of self-motivation, and trauma/mental disorders are important factors that should

not be underestimated. Moreover, Botoon (2020) refers to more structural, institutional, and systematic problems as the primary causes of malfunctioning such as xenophobia, discrimination, cultural differences, and policy-related shortcomings (Botoon, 2020).

As highlighted above, the challenges of labor integration are complex and multidimensional, which cannot be summarized as black and white. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the efficiency of labor integration by using some of the main theoretical and conceptual discourses in the literature.

2.4 Theories and Concepts

The issue of immigration in general, and their integration into host cultures in particular, is a complicated and diverse matter, just like any other topic in social sciences. Although it is a challenging responsibility for host countries' governments, gaining a true understanding of a problem of this complexity largely relies on the development of effective theoretical and conceptual frameworks that break down the different underlying variables and provide a clear picture of the phenomenon. Even though there is a significant amount of literature on refugee immigration and integration, it is not as complete or comprehensive as it should be. The two main theoretical frameworks of this study, as outlined below, focus on the human capital and social capital of immigrants.

Although these theories give a basic knowledge of immigration and integration in general, they fall short of providing the required interrelationships and interdependencies between the many other concepts and theories. This study builds trustworthy linkages between diverse theoretical and conceptual segments and displays their vital influence on each other alongside the integration process by utilizing existing theories while being open to prospective new themes or theories. These links are not only theorizations in an analytical or statistical context; they reflect the intricacies revealed by the study's empirical findings.

2.4.1 Human capital Theory

In immigrants' labor market integration research, the human capital theory is a popular paradigm. The human capital theory has different definitions in different contexts, but all of them focus on the same central subjects, namely, the people's educational and intellectual qualifications in general and the working class in particular. Botoon (2020) emphasizes the importance of immigrants' human capital in securing their employment and defines human capital as an investment in people to improve their skills and efficiency. Luik, Emilsson, &

Bevelander (2016) believe that the human capital theory states that disparities in human capital are what determine labor market success. However, because of the obstacles in transferring human capital, immigration undermines this relationship. The human capital theory is crucial to our research because newcomers need to integrate into the new societies, particularly their labor market. As a result, most of the research emphasizes the importance of immigrants' educational qualifications, language abilities, and work experiences in their integration into the labor market of host countries.

Luik, Emilsson, & Bevelander (2016) highlight the important relationship between human capital qualities and migrant categories for employment rates in Sweden, where significant – mostly humanitarian and family – immigration flows are the norm. The difficulty of labor market integration may be exacerbated by the type of immigrants arriving in Sweden. There are two key extra challenges that these two immigration groups may face. To begin with, humanitarian and family migrants have lower levels of human capital, and what they have is less transportable internationally. Second, and linked to the previous argument, there may be a selection effect in which unknowable variables relate to the reduced labor market success of humanitarian and family immigrants, independent of observable human capital (Luik, Emilsson, & Bevelander, 2016).

Regarding immigrants' educational qualifications Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio (2021). believe that immigrants with higher levels of human capital, including education and work experience, are more likely to integrate quickly and successfully into the receiving society (Fauri, Mantovani, & Strangio, 2021). But Botoon (2020) has a more critical perspective on the efficiency of immigrants' education and experiences of their home countries in host countries. Also, Luik, Emilsson, & Bevelander, (2016) argue that the migration-related depreciation of human capital is one of the issues of human capital theory when it comes to immigration. They (2016) describe skills as labor market knowledge, destination-language competence, occupational licenses, certifications, or qualifications, as well as more precisely defined task-specific skills, and believe it is possible that skills are not completely transferrable from one country to the next (Luik, Emilsson, & Bevelander, 2016).

According to Luik, Emilsson, & Bevelander's (2016) argument, potential immigrants with the lowest transferrable skills are unlikely to become economic immigrants. Refugees, on the other hand, have a different set of goals in mind when they decide to immigrate. Income disparities may be key determinants for refugees, but non-economic concerns about their safety and security also impact their decisions. In essence, refugee streams contain a higher share of immigrants who are less suited to integrating into the job market. Positive human capital

selection does not always translate into superior labor market outcomes. This is because many of these traits, such as education and experience, are virtually invariably gained in origin countries and have little or no value in the host country's labor market, and hence have little predictive ability in projecting short-term labor market results (Luik, Emilsson, & Bevelander, 2016).

In this regard, Botoon (2020) mentions a Norwegian survey that shows an equally skilled immigrants' wages are 14% less than a native. The actual relevance of migrants' human capital is called into doubt by the occurrence of such discrepancies between theoretical premises about the importance of immigrants' human capital and perceptions of immigrants in practice across the literature. It appears that sentiments of undervaluing foreign-born human capital are widespread within all host countries, not just Norway or Europe (Botoon, 2020). Botoon (2020) argues that refugees who obtain a university degree or supplement their education with some type of complementary courses in the host country have a better chance of finding work and will be able to find a job and a higher income than those whose qualifications were obtained in their home countries.

Botoon (2020) adds that people from poor backgrounds' educational degrees and vocational abilities cannot be easily transformed into human capital, which is also true for Norway too. In terms of job chances, immigrants' professional experiences are insignificant. There is a clear association between undervaluing refugees' human capital and most refugees being unemployed or working in positions for which they are overqualified, making them dissatisfied and unmotivated (Botoon, 2020). Therefore, current integration policies and measures appear to force immigrants to acquire new human capital rather than supplementing their existing qualifications and making productive use of their competence, which could be a win-win situation for both refugees and host countries (Botoon, 2020).

Meanwhile, Kogan (2011) believes immigrants' educational qualifications are insufficient or irrelevant to the host communities. Kogan (2011) stated that there are inequalities in the mean degree of educational possibilities among countries, particularly between Western industrialized countries as host societies and less-developed countries as sending societies nations (Kogan, 2011). Controversly Martin, Abella & Kuptsch (2008) argue lower education levels are linked to lower productivity and economic growth for a variety of reasons, including the fact that a country's short- or long-term loss of human capital can make it less appealing to local and foreign investors, as well as the fact that immigration can lead to a loss of vibrancy, improvement, and innovation (Martin, Abella & Kuptsch, 2008).

Other dimensions of human capital, such as language skills and cultural knowledge, are also more relevant and productive in some sociocultural circumstances than others. These characteristics of migration are disregarded to some extent as a result of immigration which leads to a devaluation of human capital. As the more structural and cultural differences between sending and receiving societies exist, the more difficult it is for immigrants to adapt to a new society. When immigrants learn the host country's language, an understanding of how the labor market works, and when acquiring education, the gap between natives and immigrants in terms of human capital should decrease (Kogan, 2011).

And the third issue to mention is that if immigrants are unwilling or unable to integrate into the human capital of the host country, especially the host country's language, the tendency toward assimilation may be hindered or even derailed. One of the reasons for this hesitancy is that immigrants frequently regard their residence in the host country as temporary and hence hesitate to make investments that are not guaranteed to pay off. Employers may also be reluctant to invest in immigrants' education or provide job training because such efforts could be wasted if immigrants come back to their native countries. Educational investments by the host country are also not guaranteed for immigrants with a strong permanent orientation, as immigrants' older ages at the time of migration or the lack of institutional structures in the host country to foster life-long training for the working-age population may pose additional challenges (Kogan, 2011).

While educational credentials are highly predictive of immigrants' labor market success in some countries, other elements appear to mitigate the effect of education on newcomers' chances to a great extent in other countries. One of these factors is the language barrier. As Kogan (2011) highlights, even highly educated immigrants in modern economies to require additional resources to obtain suitable employment. Employers frequently regard higher qualifications only if they can be backed up by fluency or even eloquence in the host country's language. Additionally, the importance of host country language fluency can be observed in Botoon's (2020) study while he examines the barriers and limitations of immigrants' labor integration. He (2020) puts a great emphasis on the role of immigrants' language fluency and states that low-skilled refugees who are new to Norway and have insufficient Norwegian language skills have additional problems, which can be exacerbated if they are women and are illiterate and have had no contact with Norwegians.

Regarding present policy effectiveness, Botoon (2020) asserts that initial skill evaluation through profiling, evaluating individual competence and identifying capacity development requirements, and strengthening recognition of prior qualifications can all play a

critical role in facilitating immigrant labor-force integration. He (2020) elaborates it with an example of Sweden's introduction plan. Sweden's reform of the Introduction Program (Establishment Reform) in 2010, which introduced an early screening of newcomers' qualifications and a continuous and consistent individual follow-up, has been quite successful in improving labor integration by assisting refugees in getting their credentials approved in Sweden and making their career development plans as early as possible. Sweden's reform, which recognizes refugees' human capital and supplements it with short-term courses, possibly on-the-job training, appears to be both cost-effective and practical (Botoon, 2020).

As explained in chapter one, Scandinavian countries use similar integration strategies. In Norway, the similar Introduction programs are applied to integrate newcomers and a government organization, NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education), is responsible for accreditation immigrants' and refugees' human capital, specifically their higher education, such as university, college, and vocational school but the requirements for accreditation process in Norway are unrealistically high, and the process is lengthy (Botoon, 2020).

Entering the labor market, obtaining suitable work, and following a successful occupational career are all critical events in an individual's life. Such events may occur numerous times in distinct country contexts among immigrants, meaning that the opportunities and restrictions of social circumstances of these individuals must be considered. Migration is inextricably linked to the aforementioned life course events; therefore, understanding these interrelationships and determining how they may differ across different immigrant origins and socioeconomic groups are essential goals of migration-related life course research (Kogan, 2011).

Immigrants must have a thorough understanding of how the host society's labor market operates. Furthermore, the availability of social contacts and network resources can often make it easier to find good job prospects. Besides, attributes that are not reflected by formal qualifications, such as motivation or willingness to take a risk, might be important for immigrants' productivity and hence for their successful integration into the receiving society's economic institutions (Kogan, 2011). Botoon (2020) asserts that the constraints to operationalizing refugees' human capital in host nations are usually policy/system-related, as opposed to social capital, which is mostly determined by people's attitudes and culture. Therefore, to examine the effectiveness of immigrants' labor integration more comprehensively, besides considering the human capital of immigrants, it would be useful and interesting to consider the impacts of social capital in their labor integration process as well.

2.4.2 Social Capital Theory

In addition to human capital, the social capital theory is recognized as an effective and important factor in the labor integration of immigrants and refugees. The concept of linked lives, or the embeddedness of life course events in social interactions, is one of the most important concepts in life course study (Kogan, 2011). Scholars emphasize the relevance of social networking for career growth in addition to human capital, particularly for immigrants who are struggling to integrate and enter the labor markets of their host countries for the first time. Meanwhile, Kogan (2011) states Social networks are effective sources of job vacancies, reduced transaction costs, and greater efficiency from an economic standpoint. Also, Botoon (2020) states despite social capital's multifaceted structure and numerous applications. Social capital can be defined simply as strong ties between individuals. In more technical terms, social capital is defined as an investment in social relationships with expected returns (Botoon, 2020; p.20).

2.4.2.1 Social Networks

The very basis of social capital is formed by social networks, and social ties among and within individuals and groups (Botoon, 2020). Regarding entering the labor market, as Kogan (2011) believes, both employers and job seekers consider informal search tactics to be more effective. Employers benefit from third-party referrals because they eliminate confusion about the value of potential employees' talents and credentials. Additionally, using social resources to acquire information on job opportunities and boost the efficiency of job searches is beneficial to job seekers too. Germany, where about half of all employment taken by immigrants is obtained through the use of networks (among the native-born, the corresponding figure is 30 percent) is a good example that can prove the increasing interest in social networks (Kogan, 2011).

The literature emphasizes the importance of refugees' social capital, in the form of their networks with natives and among themselves, in successful labor integration. Botoon (2020) elaborates on the importance of social capital for immigrants' labor integration by distinguishing four levels of social capital support: early integration support, preparation for labor market entry, support entering the labor market, and work support. He believes bonding and bridging social capital can be helpful for labor integration. Horizontal bonding social capital (family members and friends of the same ethnic group), vertical bonding social capital (institutions based on shared religion, nationality, or ethnicity), horizontal bridging social capital (friends of different nationalities), and vertical bridging social capital (social system

contacts, volunteers, colleagues, and supervisors) are all examples of traditional bonding and bridging of social capital.

2.4.2.2 Social Capital Significance

While the importance of immigrants' social networks with family, friends, and other refugee groups (refugees of other nations or languages) in labor integration is easy to understand, Botoon (2020) places a greater emphasis on refugees' social networks with natives. Botoon (2020) emphasizes the importance of immigrants' social networks with the natives as much as the crucial importance of refugees' networks with family members, friends, and other immigrant groups. Immigrants' social networks, which are made up of family members and friends, have not been as helpful in obtaining their steady jobs (Botoon, 2020). The detrimental effects of immigrants' lack of social networks with indigenous are also common in Norway. As is shown in Botoon's (2020) Study, 40 percent of Tamils, Kurds, Iranians, Somalis, Chileans, and Vietnamese, for example, who have lived in Norway for six to seven years, have had no interaction with a Norwegian in the previous year. It is reasonable to expect the worst from migrants who are new to Norway, especially who live in remote rural municipalities (Botoon, 2020).

The creation and development of social capital, according to the literature, are important in the overall integration process, not only labor integration. However, contrary to our predictions, the literature also indicates that developing such a large and well-functioning network is a time-consuming process. This notion appears to be supported by references such as “the longer the residence, the better the integration” which means the integration of immigrants with citizenship situations is better than those with temporary residence permits (Botoon, 2020).

Although social capital is marketed as a necessary component of effective labor integration, there is a contradiction: immigrants require social capital to find work while having a job is a significant aspect of generating social capital. It also becomes clear that having a functioning social network is impossible for refugees in Norway because they are unable to leave the municipalities where they were settled when they first arrived, particularly in the first few years, because they would otherwise lose their welfare benefits (Botoon, 2020). Botoon (2020) considers refugees' limited mobility as a hindrance to their labor integration, pointing to another paradox in labor integration discourses: if a refugee cannot succeed in one area, it is nearly difficult for him or her to try their luck elsewhere. In such perverse circumstances,

refugees' ability to form a larger network is entirely contingent on local opportunities (Botoon, 2020).

The above-mentioned paradoxes are what we need to learn more about to approach the topic of integration fully and rationally. The human capital and social capital form part of the strategic and resourceful aspects that are needed for immigrants to secure job positions and other opportunities as mentioned in this chapter by literature reviewing. While failing to explain how they can get jobs if not approved by the public in the first place, participation in the labor market has a vital impact on being accepted in societies. The literature demonstrates the need to define the nature and contextual relevance of refugee social capital, as well as the existing mechanisms that facilitate it. Still, there is a lack of study on refugees' social capital and its possible impact and role in labor integration. In another word, the limited literature on refugees' social capital, especially when compared to their human capital, indicates the need for more research, ideally at the grassroots level, where the majority of refugees begin their new lives. Most forms of social contacts or exchanges among refugees' relatives and friends, as well as among other refugee groups, cannot be classified as social capital since these networks lack the embedded resources that social capital requires (Botoon, 2020).

2.5 Labor integration barriers

The employment rate of immigrants and refugees remains substantially lower than that of natives in Norway, especially among out-of-EU-born immigrants. Conversely, the unemployment rate among non-EU immigrants is higher than natives. Immigrants majorly get employment as a result of their ability to portray and possess different qualities, especially through their social capital (Martiny et al., 2020). Immigrants are employed to do more while they work with their employers because they do not have as much experience and knowledge as the native people. However, newcomers are a powerful part of the workforce and should be given credit. Some of the ways through which they get employment are through the ability to do more, which is because their experience and knowledge are not as good as that of the native people (Stachowski, 2020).

Meanwhile, some may have a negative view of immigrants since newcomers hold jobs that citizens do not want. The truth is that there are many successful immigrants in the workforce, who have exceeded the expectations of all. Immigrants can take up a job that others would not be able to do to make bigger paychecks (Rye, 2018). Immigrants are also instrumental in bringing about success for the global economy. Many companies hire

immigrants since they have familiarity with their culture, which is vital when working with different people from different cultures (Rye, 2018).

These are just a few of the many barriers that might hinder an immigrant or refugee from entering the job market. They all contribute to a negative outlook for immigrant workers as well as their families. Employers might see this and decide not to hire an immigrant worker based on their lack of skills in comparison with other workers within their company (Ims, 2021). Thus, some immigrants and refugees choose not to go through all of the trouble it takes to enter the job market because they will most likely not receive a job offer. Additionally, newcomers may face other challenges such as housing, transportation, and language. Due to the housing market, immigrants may have a difficult time finding a home that is affordable in the area of their choice, if any (Terragni et al., 2018). Finally, newcomers who do not speak the native language may find it difficult to communicate with coworkers and clients in their place of business and even more difficult to keep up with training at work due to the language barrier (Terragni et al., 2018).

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the importance of immigration and integration and their possible impacts on host countries were discussed. In the first part, the economic impacts of immigration on the labor market and the significance of their labor integration were provided. Also, different debates on immigration and integration strategies in different countries were highlighted which confirmed the importance of conducting this research. By literature review, different theories and concepts regarding refugees and immigrants and their integration are evaluated among them, two theories human capital and social capital were derived to make the theoretical framework of this research. According to literature, human capital and social capital have been considered important and effective theories in the labor integration process which are a need to achieve the goal of this research (examining the effectiveness of national labor integration to enter the newcomers to the labor market). At the end of the chapter, the barriers to labor integration of refugees and immigrants are provided that show a need for more study and research in immigration and integration. The research questions and analyzing methods have been formed under the human capital and social capital theoretical framework that in the following chapter will be elaborated on.

Chapter three

3. Methodology & Data Validity

3.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a summary of the methods used in the design, execution, and completion of this master's thesis research project. The various methodological techniques used in this study to solve the research problem statement. However, to properly solve the research problem, the methodology's major purpose was to determine responses to the research questions (see chapter one).

This is a qualitative study in the form of a master's thesis on immigrants to understand the effectiveness of national labor integration in entering newcomers to the Norwegian labor market. The research data collection is conducted under the human capital and social capital theoretical frameworks, relying primarily on participants' perspectives of the problem and the way they portray it. The combination of convenience and snowball sampling methods was utilized to select the most relevant immigrants and refugees for the research study. The data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews and analyzing proceeded by using coding and thematic analysis frameworks.

3.2 Research design

This study will implement a qualitative research method to answer the research questions. Qualitative research enquires into and provides more information about real-world issues, it assists in the development of hypotheses and the investigation and comprehension of qualitative data. Qualitative research is an inductive approach to the interaction between theory and research that focuses on gaining a better knowledge of social reality by looking at how participants interpret experiences, perceptions, and behavior (Bryman, 2016).

Some factors were crucial in choosing a qualitative research method for this study. First, this method could be designed as a stand-alone study that just uses qualitative data or as part of a mixed-methods study that uses both qualitative and quantitative data (Tenny, 2017). It gives us this opportunity to conduct our qualitative interviews besides considering and analyzing texts and quantitative statics. Second, it encompasses a large range of research methods that differ significantly from one another such as qualitative interviewing, which is a broad word that encompasses a wide range of interviewing styles (Bryman, 2016). Thus, there is considerable

variability in the collection of data among studies that are typically deemed to be qualitative, which is very useful in our study.

Phenomenology is used as the research design of this study. Phenomenology is defined as the study of the meaning of phenomena or the study of the particular. Phenomenology, at its core, seeks to investigate experiences from the perspective of the individual. It is essentially an examination of the participants' lived experiences, to determine how and why they behaved in a particular way from their perspective (Tenny, 2017). This design is appropriate for the problem we are working on as it helps to investigate the effectiveness of government labor integration programs and measures on newcomers' job-seeking process by describing and interpreting participants' experiences and perceptions. While experiences, attitudes, and behaviors can be difficult to quantify, a qualitative approach such as phenomenology allows us to explain how, why, or what immigrants and refugees are thinking, feeling, and experiencing at the moment about their working life and situation in a new country.

3.3 Sample group

To understand and consider the experiences and perceptions, we need to conduct interviews and have conversations with people who can help us answer the research questions. The reason for choosing the interview method as a data collection tool is that it let interviewees express their feelings and experiences in an open and free way compared to other data collection methods. Respondents of this research are refugees and immigrants from non-western countries who have participated in Norway's integration programs. They have been chosen by the following criteria.

- Participants are from a non-western nation and settled in Norway for at least 6 months and are registered in their municipalities.
- They are of both male and female sex.
- They should be adults between 24-55 years old (according to integration programs' target groups)
- Immigrants group should have a family reunion situation (according to the government integration programs to can attend the courses).

3.3.1 Sampling approach

To select respondents, the combination of convenience sampling and Snowball sampling methods, which are non-probability sampling methods, are utilized. Convenience

sampling is simply available to the researcher by its accessibility and snowball sampling is a referral from other participants or people who know potential participants (Bryman, 2016). These features help us at the beginning to use convenience sampling as it is more available and then after making initial contact with the convenience sample group, we establish contact with others by asking them to introduce us to more potential participants.

I have conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with refugees and immigrants who had participated in Norwegian national labor integration programs. During conducting my interviews, I was a volunteer in a non-governmental organization, which aims to defend children’s rights and attempts to integrate refugees’ children and their families into Norwegian societies. This volunteer job was an opportunity for me and helped me in conducting some of my interviews. During this time I asked the employers of this organization to connect me with some adult refugees related to my research and then they introduced me to some interested refugees who had participated in integration programs. Other participants were chosen by snowball method when I was introduced to more refugees and immigrants. I tried to ensure a variety of nationalities, including some of the main national groups with high immigration and unemployment rates as explained in the Demography section.

In the table below the list of participants is provided. According to ethical considerations, interviews were conducted anonymously so instead of participants’ names the substitution codes are used.

Respondent	Gender	Age	*Education	Country of origin	*Skills and experience	Date of interview
Participant 1	male	42	High school	Afghanistan	Food oil business/sport	20/04/2022
Participant 2	male	25	High school	Afghanistan	-	22/04/2022
Participant 3	female	55	High school	Ukraine	employee cook	25/04/2022
Participant 4	female	35	High school	Syria	cleaner	27/04/2022
Participant 5	female	27	Two years university	Syria	waitress Kindergarten employee	26/04/2022
Participant 6	male	39	Bachelors	Syria	freelancer waiter	28/04/2022
Participant 7	female	30	Bachelor	Turkey	teacher	29/04/2022
Participant 8	male	40	High school	Turkey	employee	29/04/2022
Participant 9	male	42	Master	Turkey	teacher	28/04/2022
Participant 10	male	35	One year university	Russia	-	23/04/2022
Participant 11	male	44	Bachelors	Iran	teacher	22/04/2022
Participant 12	Female	35	High school	Iran	Cloth business	29/04/2022

Table 3: List of research participants

*education and skills and experience are related to newcomers’ arrival time

3.4 Data collection

To achieve a better understanding of the research questions, I chose semi-structured interviews as the main data collection tool for this study. The semi-structured interview is a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, structured and unstructured interview that is often accompanied by follow-up “why” or “how” questions (Adams, 2015). I performed interviews that delved into the experiences of a group of individuals who immigrate to Norway and passed the integration programs to know their perceptions of the impact of the government’s integration policies on their labor integration and job-seeking process.

Some profitable characteristics of the semi-structured interview cause us to opt for this data collecting method. First, it is an adjunct method to supplement and add depth to other approaches. It helps us know the independent thoughts of participants about immigrants’ impacts on their lives. When documentation and conducted surveys cannot help to find our answer, this method can efficiently address the questions and extend probing deeply.

Second, this method is a combination of structured and unstructured questions. This feature lets us ask set questions in a set order which makes the comparison between respondents easier, but it can be limiting, so less structure can help consider patterns while still allowing for comparisons between respondents. Third, the flexibility and not fixed numbers of questions give this opportunity to the interviewer to ask additional questions if needed, as well as participants can easily answer any follow-up questions and clear up misunderstandings, contribute with additional information and ask questions themselves (Bryman, 2016).

Due to the current situation, the pandemic of Covid-19 in the world, we opted to conduct the interviews both online and physically. We adjust concept forms (Appendix 1) and interview guides with explanations of research goals and participants’ volunteering and anonymous rules and ask respondents to sign the forms before starting the interviews. For five of the participants who attend physical interviews the consent form was signed on paper and for other online interviews the consent form was sent to their email and also their rights were explained first in the interviews. The interviews started with introducing myself and get-to-know-you questions to make a comfortable environment for participants. During the interviews, I tried to be an active listener and use body language to show my attention. Also, I moved back and forth between questions to avoid a boring atmosphere and keep them interested. In the end, I asked if they want to add any subject and then appreciated their time and help. After finishing the interviews, the collected answers through voice recording and taking some notes were ready for coding and analyzing.

The first part of the questions in the interview covered the basic background and demographic information about the participants as age, studies, immigration status, work, etc. I then went into themes such as why the individual immigrated to Norway, their job-seeking procedure, whether or not their experience and education were approved, and any other bureaucratic difficulties they may have encountered. The participants were also asked to note when they initially enter the labor market, and subsequently, the jobs that they might have had (Appendix 2).

3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

Some of the major ways the interviews can be analyzed include having a clear pathway to the data analysis process. There are many ways through which an interview can be analyzed, but it should not just jump straight into analyzing collected interviews' responses without taking time to step back and analyze everything else going on during the conversation with the participants (Herzog, Handke & Hitters, 2019). While working through the different ways of analyzing a conversation, it is important to remember that the analysis of an interview needs to be carried out ethically. The reason for this is that the interviewee is not aware of the person who is going to be analyzing their answers, so to ensure that they do not feel uncomfortable with what they have interpreted from what they have said and how they say it, they must analyze while taking into consideration their feelings and reactions to what one is doing (Subbarao, 2019).

The way that is chosen to analyze interviews will depend on a variety of factors. For example, the data collected during interviews may relate to the topic that the interviewer has researched. The people who give the answers to the questions asked may also often be another factor that determines how an interview should be analyzed (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). When analyzing data from interviews, it is essential that we carefully look at what has been said and what has not been discussed. It is important that we as the interviewer understand why certain answers were given or why certain things were not discussed in detail (Peraza, n.d.). By considering these points, we will be able to build a better picture of what was going on during the interview.

According to the criteria mentioned above for choosing analysis methods, the combination of coding and thematic analysis methods is utilized to examine the researchtionups qualitative collected data. the coding was the first step in analyzing and making the way for identifying main themes and thematic analysis more easier and understandable. Applying these

methods happened in several stages. First, the interview responses were transcribed with all details and information related to the research questions. Then by reading the transcriptions several times line by line I familiarized myself with the gathered information, as recommended by Bryman (2014). While the interviews were conducted in English as a second language for both interviewer and interviewees, reviewing and understanding the points of participants was a time-consuming process.

In the next stage, I tried to bold and highlight the key features of the responses by reading and considering each line of transcriptions. In the coding process, I faced lots of significant and interesting codes some of them were similar to each other or were repeated and a few were opposite the others. After finishing coding, I tried to find similar codes and put them in the same categories. In this stage of analysis, I had several themes but still, there were some relations and similarities between them, in another word, I had found sub-themes and needed to go to the next level of analysis, by deeply reviewing of collected data, I could derive four main themes from all codes and sub-themes which are education, language fluency, and knowledge, work skills and experiences and social networking. The last stage was to write down and define the themes which were recognized during analyzing. To make a more reliable and confident analysis, during writing up the results, the analytical review was conducted to make sure of a clear relationship between the responses and themes.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

According to UiA ethical rules, avoiding misbehavior, developing trust, accepting responsibility for research data protection, and being respectful are priority ethical values for any researcher. These have also been among the core parameters for my research project, especially considering the nature of my research on refugees and immigrants' labor integration, a very contentious topic involving sensitive groups. I introduced myself and my study project to the participants both verbally and written in the consent form (Appendix 1) before conducting interviews. When they willingly expressed their interests, and read and signed consent forms, I started interviewing them. Each participant chose the location and time of his or her interview. It is critical to note that, due to the necessity of collecting personal data in this study, the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) was notified of the research project and NSD consent was obtained before collecting any personal data.

The use of interviews can undoubtedly prove challenging. The interviewees may, for instance, say what they believe the interviewer wants to hear, and thus not provide their own

true opinion so it makes it hard to distinguish their socially acceptable answer from their true opinion. In addition, personal perception is not always reliable, thereby making the interviews challenging to assess. Also, the time and the day of interviews can be effective on participants' feelings and moods as they might have a busy or hard day, so the time and date of interviews have been set with interviewees' agreements.

One of the main challenges I faced during interviews was the English knowledge of refugees and immigrants. It was difficult to find immigrants who were fluent in English and can handle the interview. When refugees and immigrants arrive in Norway, mostly they do not have enough English knowledge and after arriving they start Norwegian courses. So interviewing some who had poor knowledge of English, was a time-consuming process. They did not know many words and talked very slowly and needed to think to find definitions for words. I tried recording their voices (with their permission) and listening to them later to have a better understanding of their meaning and point. However, some participants were better at English and it went very well.

As the target groups of this study are considered vulnerable groups, the risk of confidential information leakage was a worry for me. The study was aware of this risk. Thus, every necessary step was taken to ensure that every participant's privacy was respected. The confidentiality was sealed following the respective regulatory and ethical rules and procedures, such as de-identifying, anonymizing, and encrypting personal and sensitive data, not acquiring them if unnecessary, not storing them for longer than necessary, and using only my University's OneDrive.

According to interviewer bias and errors, it has tried to avoid asking biased questions, imposing personal ideas, staying objective during the interview, and controlling my body language. Moreover, to prevent forgetting interview details and answers, the voice recording instrument besides taking notes was utilized. Conducting interviews was divided into different days to be fresh during the interviews and not be confused about getting lots of information. These are all sources of error that must be taken into account, but it is believed that the positives outweigh the negatives and interviews cannot be completely disregarded based on possible sources of error.

3.7 Data Quality and Validity

3.7.1 Data Validity

As mentioned already, my reach is based on a qualitative method by using semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool. While unstructured interviews would have supplied a stronger guarantee of validity, I tried to give my research participants the freedom to express their thoughts and opinions in whatever way they felt comfortable and reflect on their personal and collective social realities in whatever way they saw fit. Since the participants were guaranteed complete anonymity and strict confidentiality, it is reasonable to assume that their narratives accurately reflect their views on labor integration and policy effectiveness.

Predetermined interview questions served as more of a compass or guide than a means of directing the interviews as in structured interviews, and freedom of speech in the unstructured interviews together with data analysis via a combination of coding and thematic analysis played a critical role in ensuring that my findings were valid.

3.7.2 Data reliability

Reliability was considered throughout the data collection period. The tool used in this study (semi-structured interview) and the results are expected to be reliable. Despite the information collected once, it is evident from the tools used that a repeat of the same would provide the same findings. The questions were also framed the same way for each of the eighteen respondents. This was vital in ensuring the findings are replicable in consecutive research. Despite that, the conditions of the research were not standardized. Because the participants were in different environmental conditions and were therefore not tested under the same conditions.

Chapter four

4. Empirical Findings

4.1 Introduction

As indicated in the first chapter, this qualitative research aims to understand the effectiveness of Norway's labor integration programs in the job-seeking process of newcomers. Under the study problem statement, the study explores the most influential factors of integration programs, such as introduction programs, for non-western immigrants and refugees in the frame of human capital and social capital. The effort of this research was to answer the following question:

To what extent do the current national labor integration policies meet non-western immigrants' and refugees' needs to enter the labor market?

And sub-questions

- *To what extent does the human capital can secure employment opportunities for newcomers?*
- *What is the role of social capital in securing employment opportunities for newcomers?*

The research questions played a significant role in conducting semi-structured interviews, especially in developing an interview guide for the sample group. And despite the nature of the semi-structured interview, the participants were free to tell their ideas and experiences relevant to the research problem and questions which helped to understand their issues and perspectives better. But it was critical to ensure that the interview questions derived from the research questions and literature would not interfere with the inductive data collecting and analysis method.

Individual qualitative interviews employing a semi-structured interview style were used to obtain data for this study. The study included twelve immigrants and refugees as participants (seven male and five female). All twelve interviews were done in English, transcribed, and analyzed using coding and thematic analysis methods. Because of the participants' safety and privacy, the findings are presented fully anonymously, without any directly or indirectly recognizable names or pseudonyms.

The research findings shed light on several personal, systemic, and background effective elements in newcomer labor integration in Norway. The factors related to immigrants' and refugees' human and social capitals, as well as the implications of ethnocultural diversity and structural limitations, were identified and categorized through an analytical thematic analysis as effective elements of accessing employment, especially for the first time. The findings of this study are provided in the context of numerous theoretical and conceptual themes and subthemes that have developed from the collected data in an attempt to make it easier to follow and contextualize.

In this chapter, the main findings of this study through conducting semi-structured interviews are provided. The gathered data are categorized and analyzed through the main framework of this research, human capital, and social capital. Also, any related and useful information of participants' responses that could help us to answer our research question and evaluate the effectiveness of national policies in labor integration are presented in this chapter, such as their perceptions regarding integration strategies and policies barriers to entering the labor market.

4.2 Human capital

As mentioned in the literature review in chapter two, the main focus of human capital in social science is on individuals' educational and linguistic skills which consider significant resources in entering the labor market. The examination of the effectiveness of labor integration programs for immigrants and refugees regarding the human capital theory is categorized into different themes. In this study, we consider three categories of them, namely: newcomers' Educational backgrounds, language knowledge and skills, and experiences. The findings revealed the following breakdown of newcomers' human capital as the main theory theme:

4.2.1 Educational backgrounds

The human capital model is based on the idea that people make educated investment decisions to maximize their lifelong benefit. Individuals are supposed to have perfect knowledge of future skill demand and to be free of credit market frictions also they should evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of education. Education is regarded to have two sources of utility-enhancing benefits. Firstly, education increases labor market productivity, allowing people to earn greater pay and consume more goods. Second, education may have some benefits in terms of consumption for individuals (Calmfors & Gassen, 2019).

As many newcomers are uneducated and come from countries with labor markets that are vastly different from those in the Nordic nations, their skills and experiences are frequently insufficient to meet the demands of the destination nations' labor markets (Calmfors & Gassen, 2019). There is a fact that foreign-born people are more likely than native-born people to have only poor educational attainment. This is especially true with immigrants from outside the EU, who make up about 30% of the population in all Nordic nations (Calmfors & Gassen, 2019; p.12). So this poorly educated group of immigrants and refugees as is found and mentioned by participants needs to attend introduction programs and finish Norwegian training (two and half years) and then high school courses, which is called videregående skole (high school in the Norwegian education system) for at least two and half years. And then based on their acquired knowledge and skills they can enter the labor market.

Participants explained that having a twelve-year high school education is mandatory for all citizens and newcomers, including those who do not have this level of education or whose education is not valid and acceptable in the Norwegian system, and they must participate in videregående skole. For example, Afghani participants stated that their high school diplomas from Afghanistan were not valid in Norway and they needed to pass high school courses for two and half years again.

But some of the participants or their families had higher education when they arrived in Norway. For this group of immigrants and refugees, one of the challenges was to equivalence and validate their degrees and education with the Norwegian education system. In this regard, accreditation of previous educational credentials of immigrants and refugees appears to be a necessary but difficult step for operationalizing their existing competency and so facilitating their integration into the Norwegian job market. As Botoon (2020) explains in his study as well, most migrants, particularly those with a university degree, appear to fail to have their qualifications validated in Norway due to administrative and procedural complexity (Botoon, 2020).

The validity and accreditation of diplomas and certificates are varied for immigrants from different nations and to a large extent depend on the education system of sending countries. As two of the participants from Afghanistan expressed, their diplomas were not valid in Norway and they had to pass their high school studies after finishing the Norwegian course again. Which took about two and half years. Also, one refugee from Syria with cleaning and kindergarten job experiences express that:

“It is not easy to find a job in Norway with my experiences in my home country. I must have an experience certificate validated and translated into

Norwegian and other supporting documents, which I do not have and it makes it hard to find a job”.

Other participants from Turkey, Ukraine, and Russia expressed that their education was accepted in Norway and they could continue or complete their education, but equivalent the documents and certificates was a complicated and time-consuming process for them. Also, finding a related job to their education and experiences requires a good level of Norwegian knowledge and passing more completing courses and exams.

Meanwhile, an immigrant from Russia with the situation of family reunion with a high school diploma asserts that:

“When I arrived in Norway, the required qualification for continuing education and entering university with a Russian diploma was a high school diploma together with one year of higher education and B2 level Norwegian language skills, fortunately, I had a high school diploma and one-year education in economics from a university in Russia which were equivalent to Norwegian high school level and after finishing Norwegian courses I could continue my education”.

It can be understood from the interviews that immigrants with high educational degrees like doctors, nurses, managers, and teachers can enter the labor market more difficult than people who come with less educated but practical skills and work experiences. The process of finding a job after finishing the language courses is complicated for the educated group of immigrants. Even if the university degrees of highly educated immigrants and refugees be approved by the government, still they need to pass many exams and qualifications processes and if necessary, more relevant courses to can enter the labor market.

In this case, another refugee participant who had immigrated to Norway earlier than his family states that his wife and children joined him when he found a job and stable situation. But when his wife could not find a job after some years yet although she has a health care university education as a nurse. They found it difficult to find a job in the health care field with education background from Afghanistan. As he experienced, he said finding a job with only high education degrees cannot be very easy. To enter the labor market newcomers, need to approve and equivalence their degrees. Also, he considers learning the host country’s language is the most important factor and a key to entering the labor market and even with valid education but a lack of language knowledge finding a relevant and proper job is almost impossible.

In this term, another woman immigrant from Turkey who was a teacher in Turkey before immigrating said that her education is valid in Norway but she needs to pass special courses or

take a Master's degree and language courses to be a teacher in Norway. She expressed that the field she wants to continue studying in university (Master's degree in Mathematics) is only English, so besides the introduction program, she needs to attend the English course and pass it to can enter the university. The same process needs to be done with other educated participants in different fields to can enter the labor market.

Most of the research participants and their families have attended the education courses (videregående skole) are at adult ages, between 18 and 35, that together with Calmfors & Gassen's (2019) research, it can be understood that immigrants have a substantially higher rate of engagement in formal adult education than natives. It reflects a broad focus on secondary education and labor market training for individuals who need to bridge educational gaps and specific language instruction for immigrants. The high rate of immigrant involvement in adult education in Norway suggests that the courses effectively reach out to this demographic and these education classes helped them improve their skills. Nevertheless, some immigrants believed that the courses are not enough for those who join the courses at an adult age and are low educated.

“The introduction programs are not enough to educate adults. It would be better if there were solutions to integrate adults as soon as possible into the labor market so they can adapt faster and become self-reliant, which can lead to a decreased unemployment rate, in my opinion” (one Syrian adult refugee).

In all cases, participants agree that gaining some type of education can help them find a job, while a lack of it will prohibit them from finding a proper job or any job. One refugee who participated in education courses stated that: “education programs are 99 percent effective in integration and finding a job”.

One advantage of integration programs as one of the immigrants expressed is "the equality of job-seeking process for all". After finishing the introduction programs, he stated that there would be no differences between citizens and refugees or immigrants in getting support and help to find a job and entering the labor market and that rules are equal for all. As a family reunion immigrant, he expresses that when he finished and passed the exams, he did not feel any differences between himself and a Norwegian high school graduate student in the process of job-seeking.

Also, another immigrant said that the introduction program consultant and his advisor on the NAV introduced him to many employers and helped him create a network and find his first job. Furthermore, almost all other participants agreed on the efficient support of the government during and after the educational courses in entering them into the labor market. After finishing

the courses, they stated that they had the opportunity to extend the course between one to two and half years to pass all exams and become prepared for the labor market. During these extra years, the government sent them to field courses in which they are interested to work as part-time employees, and during the working in the actual market, they received a salary from the government and learn the job. This opportunity could help them to both acquire knowledge and experience and become familiar with the labor market. In this regard, one of the immigrants expressed that:

“After finishing my educational courses, I was introduced to a company related to my courses through my NAV advisor as a 10 percent employee first and bypassing a time, the portion of my employment situation increased to 70 percent. There is a role in Norway that when people go for an internship and part-time employment to a company for years, the employer finds this responsibility to hire him/her so I benefited from this role and gradually I became a permanent employee in that company”

It is highlighted in interviews, that the educational background of newcomers is a significant factor in their human capital which Norwegian policies had an emphasis to improve.

4.2.2 Language knowledge

One of the basic reasons for low employment, particularly among refugees, is a lack of proper knowledge needed by Norwegian employers. Around 70% of the refugees who arrived in Norway in 2015 and 2016 had no or only a primary school education (Slettebak, 2021, p.7). Knowledge and fluency in the Norwegian language are key factors for becoming acquainted with Norwegian society, completing daily tasks, becoming self-sufficient, building trust and a sense of belonging, finding a job, continuing education, and making a good life. As a result, the most crucial phase in the government's integration strategy is to invest in knowledge, skills, and qualifications. Without knowledge of Norwegian, immigrants will be vulnerable and dependent on others (Slettebak, 2021). Immigrants believed that after learning the language, Norwegians regarded them differently (Brook, & Ottemöller, 2020).

Among introduction courses, language training is the most common course that both groups of refugees and immigrants (such as family reunions) can join. Language instruction has been successful in enhancing the skills of immigrants in Norwegian as well as their employment situation (Calmfors & Gassen, 2019). As is shown by Calmfors & Gassen (2019), in Norway this training had a positive impact on immigrants' employment in the long run but not on their earnings.

Apart from the emphasis on the importance of learning destination countries' languages in literature, all the participants across the data samples stressed the impacts of learning the language on their everyday life, communications, and job opportunities. One refugee asserted that:

“When I learned the Norwegian language, making friendships became much easier and Norwegians helped me more”.

Another immigrant claimed that:

“without language knowledge, immigrants and refugees cannot find a qualified job or sometimes even low-level job. I could find a better position in Norwegian society after learning their language and improve the level of my job”.

Attending the two- and half-year Norwegian course is mandatory for all newcomers but depending on their educational backgrounds and skills this time can be varied. For example, one of the participants could finish his language course within 8 months but the other refugee asserted that he needed more time than the normal period (more than two and half years). Also, one of the refugees who had English knowledge and could find a job early after arriving only attended the language course for six months.

All participants agreed on the significant impact of language courses on their job-seeking process. One immigrant asserts that *“depending on the type of job, the effectiveness of the language course can be 90 percent, and without knowledge of the language the chance of finding a good job is very low”*. The other immigrant who passed language courses some years ago and now works as a specialist stated that: *“according to my experience after living in Norway for 18 years, learning the language is one of the three main factors (language, education, and job experience) in finding the job and it is the basis for other factors too.”* And the common expression of all the participants is *“language is the key to enter the labor market”*.

Regarding the quality of courses and instructors, almost all participants were satisfied and expressed that the books are very good and give useful information about Norwegian culture too, also the teachers are helpful and patient and generally, they have a positive perception of the quality and effectiveness of language courses.

4.2.3 Newcomers' Skills and Experience

Low-skilled migrants, in particular, have a difficult time finding work in the Nordic labor markets. One rationale is that in the Nordic economies, few basic professions merely demand rudimentary abilities, especially in Norway which is among the five European

countries with the lowest percentages of such jobs. As a result, many immigrants' talents do not meet the skill requirements for most professions in these nations (Calmfors & Gassen, 2019; p.12).

One of the refugee participants moved to Norway with previous work experiences in sports skills and he believes that his previous work experiences and skills were very effective and helpful to jobs. He states that finding a job with having previous skills and experiences caused him to enter the work market fast and easier.

However, in most cases, the previous work skills and professions of newcomers were not very helpful in entering the labor market. In three cases, the previous experiences of refugees were in the business of food oil, a family business of cloth, and economic management. The three expressed that their high experiences were not useful in Norway and they just decided to start a new field to study and work. For example, the family cloth businesswoman said that all knowledge is useless in Norway and she decided to continue studying and be a teacher. So depending on the experiences and skills, the opportunities for jobs can be different.

4.3 Social capital

The role of social capital in immigrants' and refugees' labor integration was one of the most underlined ideas in the data. All survey participants underlined the critical and basic importance of refugees' social capital in their overall integration and, in particular, their labor-force integration. For easier comprehension of such a complicated and varied issue and figuring out the effectiveness of this concept in entering the labor market, this thematic concept may be described into two categories. As shown below, the role of socializing with other immigrants and refugees in finding a job and the role of government and programs in making social networking is considered within the social capital part.

4.3.1 Social networking and labor market

The most important and extensively stressed component of refugees' priority investment in developing profitable social capital was socializing with other immigrants and refugees. As it can be observed from information gathered from interviews, five participants found their first jobs through social networking and through their friendships with other immigrants, especially those who come from their home countries. Social networking could help these five refugees and immigrants to enter the labor market easier and faster than other participants who found a job by themselves and with their knowledge. For instance, one refugee from Afghanistan found

his first job after 3 weeks in Norway in a library in Oslo through another Afghani immigrant. In another case, an immigrant from Ukraine expressed:

“ When I arrived in Norway, I had 9 years of work experience in different fields such as cooking, service, selling, etc. but I found my first job through social networking and [through] my Norwegian husband after 2 weeks as a cleaner in a Kommune [municipality],. But my second job after 10 years in Norway, my second job was a specialist job and the collection of all the skills, such as a high level of Norwegian, education, and experiences during these years helped me get this job”.

It is the same story with other participants who found a job in restaurants and cleaning fields between some weeks and some months after arrival through their social networking.

The emphasis on the importance of social networking in entering the labor market can be observed in all participants’ responses whether those who have entered the labor market through social connections or those who systematically found jobs. For example, one woman refugee from Syria stated that:

“After finishing my introduction courses, I had a plan to find a job in kindergarten as a teacher. while I had related experience and education for some years, I believed that social networking can be very helpful in this process and I felt I need to work on it more. So, by putting efforts and social connections I could find the job I was searching for”.

Another immigrant with 15 years of teaching experience in Turkey expresses that:

“I received a document from official institutions that I can work as a teacher in Norway, but it is very difficult to a job as a teacher without completing language learning and speaking like a Norwegian. Although it has been about 4 years since I came to Norway, I could not find a job related to my profession. I am currently working in a non-governmental organization which I found through my good social networks”.

As the research participants highlighted, one of the main factors to gain a job in Norway is to have good references created through well social connections and networks.

“I think having social relationships is very effective in finding different kinds of jobs. Knowing many people and gaining the trust of many people means that many people will be your reference. My references had a great impact on my finding a job.” (One refugee)

4.3.2 Integration strategies and social capital

Almost all refugees have contact with other immigrants and refugees, especially those from their home countries. They have made these connections and social groups and friends through introduction programs. Also, that group of immigrants (family reunion) who had not participated in introduction programs found friends and social networks through the Norwegian course. As they assert, the government has not done any special measures to put immigrants in different social groups or help them improve their social networking and many of them have problems with finding friends, communication, and the social part of life in Norway.

The majority of refugees and immigrants claim a lack of or very limited contact with Norwegian natives, and their existing relationships with other immigrants are mostly limited to people who come from their home countries. They stated that mostly they made their friendships and social networks through the courses. They found a better understanding between immigrants and refugees with other newcomers due to similar cultures and backgrounds than natives and it has strengthened their relations. In this regard, one Turkish male refugee states:

“We have a very close relationship with those from Turkey because we speak the same language and have the same culture. We have good connections with other immigrants as we met at the course or participated in joint activities”.

As mentioned in the human capital concept, the knowledge of the destination country’s language is the first step and main key to integrating and acceptance by the new society. But learning the language is not easy for adult newcomers. The immigrants who moved to Norway with family and children witnessed that their children have integrated into the new country faster and easier than them and the speed of learning language and making relationships is higher among them. So, they assert that learning the language and making social networking is much easier for children and very young immigrants.

One refugee who had immigrated with the family said that having children helped them to a large extent to stay in touch and communicate with other people, especially Norwegians. Some other immigrants agree that learning the Norwegian language and speaking Norwegian can have lots of effects on improving social networking and it causes the behavior of Norwegian change to them and they be more accepted in society.

While the importance of social capital in integrating newcomers is obvious to all, the limitation of the Norwegian government structures and measures can be understood from the interviewees’ responses. The participants express that they have made the social networks with

classmates and others through their self-efforts and there were no specific measures through the government to help in their social network making for them. Moreover, if they want to apply with their experienced and documents they will face some barriers like accreditation, validation, and a long-time process, and if they want to find a job easier, they need good social connections which in both cases the government measures play a significant role. So, it is a part that participants felt needs to be worked on. However, they believe that finding a job with related education or vocational school degrees has an effect on their salaries and they can benefit from a higher salary than people who have a job with only social connections and without relative education. As one of the refugees expressed, Norway is a country based on education and employers value those who have relative education, and the conditions for progress are better for these groups of people.

Besides the government's social network making help for labor integration of immigrants, some refugees needed this social networking to reduce the integration process difficulties like loneliness feelings. As one of the women refugees from Iran stated:

“Immigrating alone is very hard and has lots of negative psychological effects and the need to talk with others, especially those who understand you and come from the same culture is felt. I would like to could benefit from consultants with my mother tongue (Persian) here (in Norway) during the first years, but there was not his opportunity and when I experienced lots of pressure from courses and immigration challenges, I contacted consultants from my country.”

One refugee who works in a non-governmental organization regarding the government's strategies in integrating said: “State institutions are trying to integrate us into society by organizing various events and programs like language café and Red Cross, but I think that this is not enough. In my opinion, the number of people working on issues related to refugees, especially in NAV and in the municipality, should be increased. Since the number of refugees per employee is so high, employees cannot find time to deal with the problems of refugees.”

As most of the participants mentioned, their advisors had played a significant role in finding a job, so they believe that having a good advisor can increase the chance of finding a job. As one of the refugees from Turkey who works with refuses now states:

“There is a big difference between the work performances of the government employees who work with introduction programs or integrating refugees. While some are very successful in guiding refugees in the right direction and helping them reach their destination, some are not successful at all. So, if refugees are lucky and come across a good program advisor, finding a job will be easier for them.”

He continues:

“The shortest way for refugees to adapt to society is to provide them with work opportunities. When people find work, they see themselves as a part of society. Unemployment delays their adaptation process as many job postings have a good Norwegian speaking requirement. This delays people's employment process. I think that language development can be completed during the work. In addition, it is necessary to increase the activities that will bring people out of their homes and bring them face to face with society. There should be more activities, especially for refugee women”.

And at the end, he mentioned the importance of volunteer organizations for newcomers' integration into the society, so he believes these organizations should be supported more by the state.

Most immigrants believed the Introduction program had a major impact on their integration into the new society. They stated that when they arrived in Norway, they faced differences and found themselves alone, they panicked and were confused, but through the government programs such as the Introduction program, they could integrate and handle the immigration challenges much easier and faster.

4.4 Integration Barriers

Apart from all benefits of integration programs that were mentioned above, some research participants believe that some factors can affect the speed of the learning process and the efficiency of courses to a large extent. For example, one of the immigrants from Syria asserts that;

“The courses are very time-consuming and they are not practical for immigrants with educational backgrounds. I believe that having more intensive courses would be more efficient for educated people who want to go to university”.

On the same side, another immigrant from Russia stated that:

“The language course that I attended was not divided by participants education and skills and people with different educational backgrounds attend in the same class which as I experienced reduce the efficiency of the course and many hours of the class was wasting in repeating the lessons again and again for people with less educated but I wanted to move on to next levels faster.

Also, another immigrant said:

“Educated and non-educated students are in the same class and there is no testing to determine their language levels before joining the course. The programs could be much more useful if people with different educational backgrounds could be divided into separate classes.”

The other issue that participants faced during courses were the huge amount of homework, especially for those who have children. They said that they (wife and husband) both joined the courses every day and besides they had parental responsibilities and they did not have much time for the homework. This problem was the same for people who had a job besides courses and did not have enough time to do the homework.

Two immigrants pointed out that participants in the courses do not have much motivation to study well and finish the course as soon as they can. They expressed that if the courses could provide more information about the future job opportunities, Norwegian labor laws, the ways of entering the labor market, and searching for jobs, participants would find more motivation to finish the course and put more attention and time to learn the lectures. Meanwhile, one refugee stated that the vacancy for more information about the Norwegian job market and tax and labor laws is felt in the courses.

As the data from interviews show, one of the causes that prevent educated refugees and immigrants from entering the labor market is their previous social position. Immigrants with medical and teaching experiences refuse to work in a position lower than their position in their countries. For instance, a respondent immigrant from Turkey stated that while there are opportunities to find secondary level jobs which are introduced to them through the government during the courses, she does not want to work in restaurants and shops because she considers them low-level jobs and she has a goal to finish courses and then enter university and after graduating in master degree, find a job in a position of teaching.

The other barrier to integration is personality traits. since immigrants come from a wide variety of countries and cultures it is tough for them to adapt to new cultures and environments. Some immigrants may be very outspoken when they arrive in a new country and some may have difficulty making friends with people who they are unfamiliar with (Støren & Børing, 2018).

However, it is critical to keep our expectations for immigrants' capacity building within the timeframes of existing mechanisms, such as the Introduction Programs in Scandinavian countries, which includes a two-year language and civic education program. Except for a few,

the two-year period appears to be too short to either acquire new human capital or supplement current ones. It takes at least five years for refugees and their reunited family members to establish human capital, such as new schooling, equalizing past educational credentials, or a combination of the two, that meets market expectations in their host nations (Botoon, 2020).

Immigrants majorly get employment as a result of the ability to portray and possess different qualities, especially as their social capital (Martiny et al., 2020). So as portrayed by participants in this chapter, we found a general view of integration policies in Norway and how they could effect the newcomers' labor market entrance. Also, the main barriers to integration were described. The gathered data in this chapter would be discussed and analyzed in the following chapter and the final results will be presented in the last chapter.

Chapter five

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

As described in previous chapters, this study explores the effectiveness of national labor integration for newcomers in Norway. As literature illustrates, affluent host nations seek innovative ways to seal their borders or confine their admissions, revealing a tremendous deal of creativity in the policies that govern people's immigration. In governmental decisions to accept newcomers, the human capital approach is very effective. Also, it can be evident that some of the major skills that immigrants lack are related to the human capital approach such as training, language, and education (Badwi et al., 2018; Tronstad et al., 2018). The relative studies show many issues go into ensuring that immigrants and refugees are equipped with skills in the job market such as being able to read, write, and speak in the native language (Støren & Børing, 2018).

The literature and statistics illustrate the immigration influx and government policies to integrate immigrants and refugees into the new society and lead them to the labor market, especially in Norway. Concepts such as refugees' and immigrants' human and social capital as well as the unemployment rate of newcomers compared to natives and effectiveness factors integrating them are the main core of literature. What appears to be missing in the reviewed literature, was the absence of examination of the effectiveness of national integration policies from newcomers and profited people's perspectives.

In this chapter, the empirical finding from chapter four is analyzed through the combination of coding and thematic analysis method. The analysis will combine existing statistics, which tell a general story, with my qualitative interviews, which give us a deep understanding of the interviewees' experiences and integration strategies. The obtained findings are organized according to the main theories and concepts themes exuded from the data. The analysis of the findings and data is done by discussing the results. Through an analytical view of the findings, human capital, social capital, and integration limitations and barriers are the main focuses of this chapter. These frameworks lead to four main themes which are discussed in the following. The analysis chapter's main goal is to emphasize each theme's relation to a relevant research question and highlight their connection with the literature, to best address the research's problem statement. Each research question is addressed appropriately at the end of each relevant theme, following a thorough discussion of each theme and subthemes

results. Furthermore, at the end of each related discussion, the research questions would be answered, in the way that first we get help from the sub- answer to lead us to answer the main question of the research.

5.2 Human Capital of Refugees and Immigrants

The human capital theory can measure the effects of education across different levels and variables including income, human capital immigration status, educational achievement, and ability test scores (Vukovich et al., 2018). This theory operates on the level of individuals, household income, and states whereas the education variable can measure individuals' educational attainment across different levels. The theory can be applied to various categories including immigrants or refugees being covered under this research. Education has not only had an impact on the immigrant's participation in activities and their quality of life, but it also impacts their employment opportunities (Aliu & Aigbavboa, 2019). Employment is considered one of the most important factors affecting integration into a new country (Kuzminov, Sorokin & Froumin, 2019). The theme of human capital in this study according to the finding includes immigrants' and refugees' education, their Norwegian language fluency and knowledge, and their previous skills and experiences.

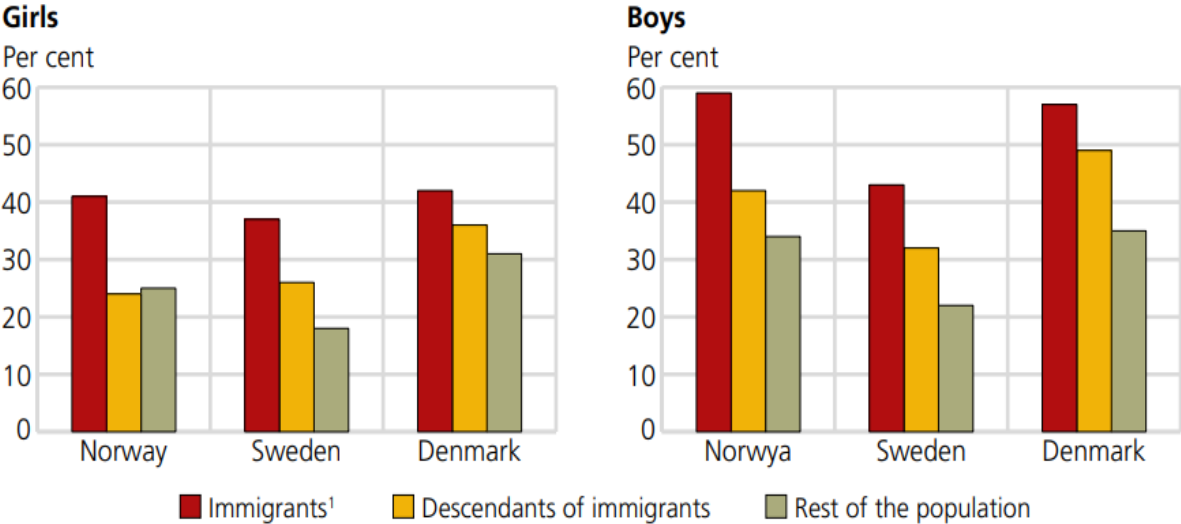
When conducting the research, the human capital factor was critical due to the various influences that it had on the labor market. The human capital theory usually applies to immigrants due to their voluntary migration but refugees can also be included as they become the main human capital of the host countries. Among human capital categories, the education factor was under special consideration as a very important aspect of refugees' and immigrants' capability to be productive and successful in the labor market (Marginson, 2019). Therefore, based on studies from the human capital theory it was determined that newcomers who have higher educational backgrounds are more successful in entering the primary labor market than those who do not have sufficient degrees. It was also determined that the immigrants with low levels of education are interested in going to advanced levels of education due to earning higher incomes in the job market. For foreigners, increased education has benefits such as increased wages and better social mobility (Le Van et al., 2018; Calmfors & Gassen, 2019).

According to research findings, educated people have more clear and specific job plans for their future and they have a more positive and hopeful perspective on their employment situation in the future. Although, some literature indicates a structural undervaluing of refugees' human capital which appears to have contributed to refugees' loss of motivation and, as a result,

their long-term unemployment, in this study the lack of knowledge about future careers and requirements for high and valid education and experiences are main obstacles of unemployment among newcomers.

5.3 Educational Background of Newcomers

From the literature, 40% of foreign-born people in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden are highly educated. However, the remaining part of insufficiently educated individuals forms a very critical lot of people who are still quite vulnerable on the job market. Norway's situation concerning education achievement is not exceptional though (Kindt, 2019). In other European countries, with considerable immigration such as France or Spain, the percentages of educated foreigners are also similar (26%), while Germany has only a slightly lower rate (23%) (council of Europe 2007). However, among the Nordic countries, Norway stands out with its unusually high education level for foreign-born persons (Orupabo, Drange, & Abrahamsen, 2020). Like in other European countries, the number of educated people declined from 2000 to 2005 in all five countries. The decline is sharpest in Iceland, less sharp in Finland and Sweden, and least sharp in Denmark and Norway. Figure 1 below illustrates the portion of immigrants with low education backgrounds in three Nordic countries where the rate of non-educated immigrants is higher in Norway than in other Nordic countries.



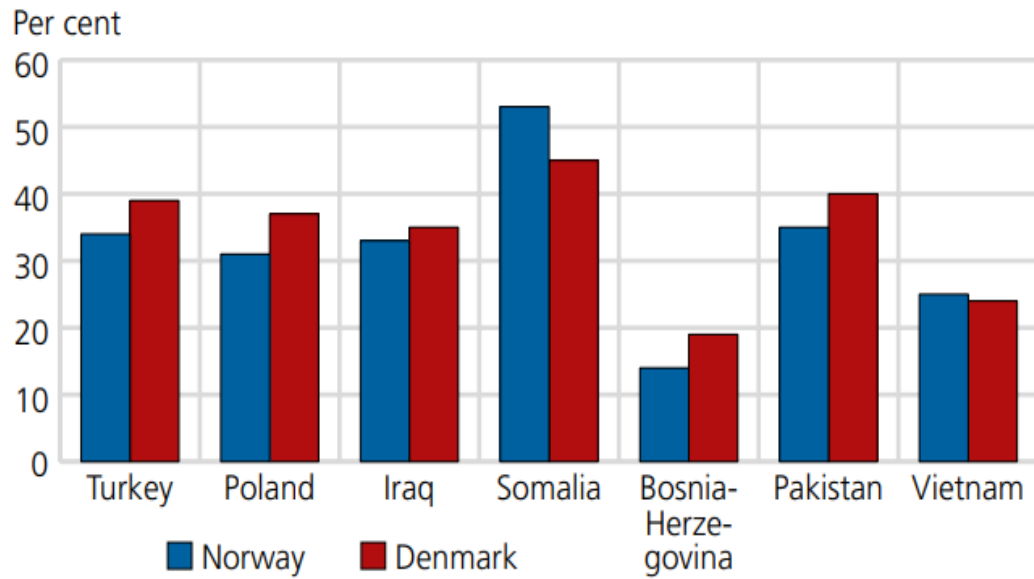
¹Foreign-born in Sweden.
 Source: Education statistics: Statistics Norway, Statistics Sweden, Statistics Denmark

Figure 1: Share who did not complete upper secondary school within five years by immigration background. Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. 2011. Percent

Besides these statics and literature, the research interviewees confirmed the significance of their education and job experience in their home countries which played an effective role in their human capital and let them integrate into the labor market faster. From the conducted interviews, it can be understood that immigrants and refugees with high educational degrees like doctors, nurses, managers, and teachers were more sure about their careers and could enter the labor market after accreditation and validation of their documents and attending complementary and compulsory courses.

However, the results also show that the process of finding a job after finishing the language courses is complicated for the educated group of immigrants due to degrees validation and not having the required experience. Botoon (2020) also examines the accreditation of refugees' educational credentials as one of the main barriers to refugees labor integration in Norway and explains that it is a time consuming and complicated process which undermines newcomers and causes a loss for both refugees and host countries

The importance of education factor in the labor integration of newcomers, as is explained in human capital theory, cannot be underestimated. As is shown in Figures 1 and 2, there are still some non-educated and unemployed refugees and immigrants who are the main concerns of policymakers. In this regard, the Norwegian government established integration policies such as the introduction programs and language courses for newcomers with the focus on increasing their human capital and helping to enter the labor market. The educational and language courses are mandatory for all refugees and their families regardless of their knowledge and background. As understood from interviews, the programs and courses were practical and useful for participants, especially those who did not have enough education or high university educational backgrounds.



Source: Labour market statistics: Statistics Norway, Statistics Denmark.

Figure 2: Immigrants who are neither in employment nor education by birth. 18-24 years. Norway and Denmark. 4th quarter 2010. Percent

Moreover the importance of gaining a high school (videregående skole) degree was one of the most emphasized points among the participant's responses. The compulsory education in high school or supplementary training in the host country for newcomers plays an essential role in their employment opportunities, although the effectiveness of these courses is different for different participants. However, as one of the refugees expressed too, the policies often put a lot of pressure on the immigrants to improve their skills and abilities.

Over the years, the Nordic countries have minimized the employment gap between immigrants and natives, allowing more immigrants to find jobs. Sweden is the most impressive of all in this respect, as it has been able to reduce the wage gap between immigrants and natives from more than 40% in 1980 to only 4% in 2004. Denmark and Finland have also made great improvements (Galloway & Gjefsen, 2020). However, it is interesting that in Iceland, Norway, Germany, and Switzerland where their education level is higher than average or even very high, they still experience relatively low unemployment rates. This suggests that there are other factors than education that influence the inflow of migrants into a labor market or there are some barriers in the way to obtaining effective education.

From the findings, most of the participants of this research could find work opportunities, thus more economic opportunities were being given to them. The Nordic countries minimize the wage gap between immigrants and natives, allowing more immigrants

to find jobs and provide job opportunities over the years (Friberg, 2019). The wage gap has been reduced in all five countries – Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway – but most of these changes occur after 2000.

5.4 Age of immigrants

The age of immigrants and refugees is one of the factors that can impact their efficiency and productivity. The human capital model's main feature is that the advantages of education decrease as people get older, while the opportunity costs of education rise. Because human capital has a shorter lifespan, elderly people have less time to reap the rewards of their educational expenditures. Individual productivity, on the other hand, rises with work experience (Economidou et al., 2020). These characteristics suggest that when people are young, the returns on education investments are higher. For immigrants, the age and productivity that they have largely determine their employability rates. Although the current age structure of foreign-born workers suggests that most foreign-born workers are young, their level of education and their skill levels differ considerably by country of birth (Næss, 2019). The degree to which immigrants are educated and/or skilled varies greatly according to the nationality of birth as well (see fig. 2 for education level cording nationality).

The participants of this research were in the group aged 24-55 years old. The age of interviewees has been considered a separate theme in this study but from the literature review and respondents of participants, it can be understood that it is an effective factor in the integration process. The effectiveness of courses varied depending on the age of attendants to the courses. For young participants and students, the courses were useful but it has a slow trend and it is time-consuming while older participants express that they need to extend courses and they need more training. This might be because the training programs benefit more young learners.

5.5 Language Fluency and Knowledge

The language knowledge was also very critical in assessing the suitability of the newcomers to get into employment opportunities in the study and thus it was studied with several issues being pointed out regarding how the labor relations favored or went contrary to this aspect. The ability of immigrants to have proficient language skills within the country is critical in securing a job opportunity (Mbanya et al., 2019). This is especially true in countries that historically value immigrants and their contributions to their societies. Learning another

language can be difficult because people may find it difficult to pick up on the vocabulary. This is where naturalization comes into play (Beiler, 2020).

Language fluency was, obviously, the only concept in my findings that outlined the must-learn skill in labor integration, as all research participants agreed. Similarly, the importance of acquiring the host country's language for labor integration is strongly emphasized in the literature (Botoon,2020; Krueger, 2018; Mbanya et al., 2019; Slettebak, 2021). The findings of this study indicate that knowledge and fluency in the Norwegian language are vital factors for becoming acquainted with Norwegian society, as some of the participants called it “ the key to labor integration”. Through language fluency, newcomers find the ability to complete daily tasks, become self-sufficient, build trust and a sense of belonging, find a job, continuing education and make a good life. In Norway, having a good language proficiency is critical for immigrants due to the possible language barriers to employment (Krueger, 2018). To help immigrants and refugees with employment and naturalization in Norway, the government provided courses on how to learn Norwegian.

Most adult immigrant students have some knowledge of English, but this is not always the case. Adult students may use their native language as a substitute for their lack of English skills; however, their lack of basic skills results in profound difficulties coping with everyday situations such as reading or communicating at work or other social settings. Immigrants who also opt to get absorbed in the job market tend to get back and sharpen their skills required for the market (Tschirhart, Diaz & Ottersen, 2019).

Students are taught the necessary skills to live and work independently once they leave the adult education system. Much of the research on adult immigrant students has focused on one of two approaches: helping learners maintain native language skills while acquiring literacy in the local language or helping learners develop language skills in both their native languages and English (Straiton, Aambø & Johansen, 2019). These two approaches are also true in the Norwegian integration system according to the findings while they try to make newcomers familiar with the host civil rules and culture in their native language besides teaching them the Norwegian language skills through the language courses. Also, in some courses such as some educated participants expressed they needed to learn both Norwegian and English language due to continue their education. In this term, two refugees from Turkey said that because they wanted to continue in master's education, their education is only available in the English language so they need to become fluent in both languages, which increases the pressure on them.

Applying the language courses to all refugees and family reunion immigrants is one of the Norwegian policies to increase the refugees' and immigrants' human capital. Besides the importance of learning the language of the host country and having this key to enter the labor market, especially the high level of jobs, the way of implementation of language programs has a great impact on its effectiveness and efficiency. While most of the participants were satisfied with the language courses and lectures, some educated believed that the combination of students with different backgrounds and education in the same class affected their learning and time of courses.

5.6 Newcomers' skills and experiences

The level of immigrant skills in the labor market largely defines the economic opportunities that are available for them to take advantage of and thus get into meaningful employment. The influx of immigrants has shifted the workforce. As native-born workers leave these industries, immigrant workers take their place and increase their share of the labor force (Orupabo, Drange, & Abrahamsen, 2020). The findings of this study show that the majority of newcomers, especially non-educated ones, are employed in blue-collar occupations, which are jobs in construction, production, installation, and repairs fields. The low wages earned by these immigrant workers are notable because they do not match up with the higher skill levels that many bring to Norway.

From the results, it can be evident that some of the major skills that immigrants lack to enter the labor market include training and education. Immigrants tend not to have the necessary skills to enter the job market (Badwi et al., 2018; Tronstad et al., 2018). Many issues go into ensuring that immigrant and refugee workers are equipped with skills in the job market such as being able to read, write, and speak in the native language. The high immigration rates along with a low interest in training purposes among immigrants and refugees have made it difficult for many immigrants to get job training before going into the labor market. Additionally, personality traits have a significant impact on newcomers' training and education trends. Since immigrants come from a wide variety of countries and cultures it is tough for them to adapt to new cultures and environments. Some immigrants may be very outspoken when they arrive in a new country and some may have difficulty making friends with people who they are unfamiliar with (Støren & Børing, 2018). However, the main factor in the employment process is hiring. The hiring process may be varied in different fields in the different regions and countries compared to the original country that newcomers left. So is necessary they become

familiar with the hiring process in Norway and its requirements and equip themselves to enter the labor market.

All the above-mentioned factors are effective in the training and educating trends of newcomers, but as statistics and findings show some refugees and immigrants immigrate with obtained skills and experience from their home countries, which can be considered as their main human capital. According to the findings of this study, educated people without work experience or practical skills could find a job later than people who come with less educated but with more practical skills and work experiences. Some refugees with university degrees expressed that after accreditation of their documents and degrees, they needed to attend complementary courses and one or two language courses (depending on their education) to can enter the labor market. Also, they said that they do not have the interest to work in low-level jobs such as blue-collar occupations. Controversy, refugees and immigrants without high education could enter the job market easier as they did not have this perspective to avoid secondary labor market jobs.

5.7 Sub-Question 1: *How do the national labor integration policies increase employment opportunities for newcomers?*

According to the findings of this research, there are some main elements in newcomers' human capital which have considerable impacts on their employment and labor integration. Some primary and principal human capital of newcomers is their education, their language skills, and their work skills and experience. Lack of these factors or low degree of them can reduce immigrants' and refugees' opportunities to enter the labor market. Based on my findings, the host countries' policies, especially Norway, persist in educational and linguistic skills of newcomers to equip them for labor market. Conducting the two and half years introduction courses in Norway is a good example of these policies which according to this research results have been successful to a large degree. The collected data in this study together with related literature prove the importance and effectiveness of refugees' and immigrants' human capital in integration into the new society. Norway is a country with high rate of education level which shows that finding a job and entering the work system need education and professional skills and if the newcomers' human capital improve, the opportunity and security of their employment will increase as well. However, the importance of human capital is emphasized by much literature, some other external factors than human capital such as social relations, age,

nationality and cultural backgrounds, which can affect the integration trend, should not be underestimated.

5.8 Social Capital of Refugees and Immigrants

Social capital has been seen to be one of the critical skills that newcomers should possess to successfully be absorbed into the job market. This factor is also seen to largely influence the entire labor market relations in the country (Sanchez et al., 2019; Uekusa, 2020). Once they have obtained this skill, they are more likely to successfully integrate into society and be able to establish themselves. This might happen by gaining a job and earning an income as well as being able to find like-minded people that can act as a support system. Social Capital is also seen to be essential for those who wish to send their children overseas on exchange programs and it is seen as one of the most important aspects of helping them adjust back in their home country (Fuglerud & Engebriksen, 2006). It is pretty clear why social capital is so important in life as it shapes both the personal relationships, which are essential for mental health, but also impact where immigrants end up on the economic spectrum (Woolcock, 2001).

5.8.1 Social networking and connections

The results show that having the proper social network in the country is very critical for newcomers to take advantage of the labor market. Having a proper social network can help immigrants to get the most favorable jobs also who have high social capital are more likely to be in stable, full-time, and well-paid jobs (Mishra, 2020; Fladmoe & Steen-Johnsen, 2018). Although social capital includes all forms of social relations and social networking among people, the social capital in terms of newcomers' labor integration mostly refers to the social networking and relations which lead them to enter the labor market. However, working on this kind of social capital and making good social networking to benefit from is a complex and multifaceted process, because to use and invest in social networking to enter the labor market need the language skill, but learning the language skills is a time-consuming process which can not happen right after arrival to the new society. Moreover, to benefit from this capital, making relations with natives is very important as they are familiar with the labor market rules and requirements. But to make a connection and relation with natives need the language skill. As it can be understood from interviews, most of immigrants and refugees, especially those who immigrate recently, could not make good social networking or relationships with natives. Also, most of them could find their first jobs through their social network with their countrymen.

As is mentioned in different literature and can be observed in this study's results, there are some barriers to making good and efficient social networking. These factors consist of the language barriers, different cultural and backgrounds of new arrivals, demographic barriers (Botoon, 2020) and lack of governmental policies in this capital.

5.9 Language Skills

The language skills are the factor that can be considered in both human capital and social capital. In language fluency and knowledge part related to human capital we explained how the language knowledge can help newcomers to enter the labor market, which in this part, we discuss the importance of language skills in social capital and how it helps in social networking.

Despite the critical nature of having a good social capital, it is still very hard for immigrants to have the necessary social capital that is needed. This is also part of the findings that were obtained from the interviews. There are many different factors that play into achieving social capital. One of them is the language barrier. This especially affects those who live in a city that does not have a large immigrants and refugees population (Veum, Siljan & Maagerø, 2021). Not only absence of social networks, but also lack of linguistic fluency makes it hard for newcomers to find people with similar experiences and or make friendships. Based on literature and findings, social capital is seen to be an important factor in determining the success of immigrants in the job market. It was found that those who had high social capital were more likely to be in stable, full-time and well-paid jobs (Fladmoe & Steen-Johnsen, 2018). Also in some literature this is supported by a study done on skilled migrants, who were assessed on several criteria including native language abilities, education levels and previous experience. The results showed that in addition to social capital, adding diversity and skills to the workplace is also had a positive effect on earnings for new migrants as well as providing them with work experience.

Most adult immigrants have some knowledge of English, but this is not enough to can work in the host country and handle all aspects of their everyday lives. Also some may use their native language as a substitute for their lack of English skills; however, their lack of basic skills results in serious difficulties coping with everyday situations such as reading or communicating at work or other social settings (Tschirhart, Diaz & Ottersen, 2019).

According to the findings of this research and participants' responses, obtaining language skills had a significant impact on their finding job process, especially for those looking for temporary and blue-collar occupations. Among participants, refugees and immigrants

mostly could find a job faster and easier through their social networks. Although most of interviewees were not satisfied with their social networking and believed that they need to work on it, they could find some people and friends from their home countries through courses and introduction programs.

5.10 Sub-question 2: *What is the role of social capital in securing employment opportunities for newcomers?*

As described above, my findings and relative studies highlight the importance of the social capital of newcomers in securing and increasing their employment opportunities. Investing in social capital per se makes this opportunity for newcomers to express their abilities and skills. Based on the findings, the social capital plays the main role in entering newcomers to the labor market in most cases, so the role of social networking in labor integration in some cases especially for not-highly educated people is very noticeable. In most situations, the participants could make good social networking with other people from their home country or those who speak the same language. These kinds of networks and relations played the most important role in entering the labor market for the first time in his study.

The way of using this capital for immigrants and refugees is complicated because they need to learn language and attend courses to improve their skills and enter the labor market to make good social networking, but at the same time, having strong social networking can be a bridge to enter the labor market easier and faster especially blue-collar occupations. So we can conclude that making social networking and learning language skill are two inseparable components. This capital can be improved by passing a time in the host country as our findings show who had been longer time in Norway could make a friendships and networks with natives and others.

5.11 Main Research Question: *To what extent do the current national labor integration policies meet non-western immigrants' and refugees' needs to enter the labor market?*

To answer the main research question, the steps of national labor integration policies in Norway are designed in figure 3 to illustrate the labor integration process according to the findings and participants' statements. As described during the study, the main policy of Norway

for refugees is the introduction Act which includes language courses, social studies, and education courses and attendance in these courses is mandatory for refugees. In some cases, the language courses can be available for family reunion immigrants or refugee families who attend them later. This policy together with other complementary policies had a positive and important impact on many of the participants' work preparation and entering the labor market. The main goal of these policies is to integrate newcomers to the destination country in the best and fast way. As all participants expressed and relative literature emphasized for achieving this goal, investing in refugees' and immigrants' human capital has been in priority, especially investing and planning for the educational and language skills which were successful in it to a high degree.

While the target group of this study is non-western newcomers, they mostly have poor language skills and education. National integration policies have been a very effective and important stage in helping them to enter the labor market. Almost all of the interviewees were satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of the courses and they found them very useful.

However, besides the high positive effectiveness of national policies, as it can be observed in figure 3, lack of policies to make social networks and relations can be felt. As the literature emphasized and gathered data in this study show, the social capital of immigrants and refugees is one of the effective factors in their labor integration and many of the participants found their first jobs through their social networks, although most of these jobs were temporary and blue-collar occupations. In summary, the results of the study show the high effectiveness of labor integration policies and many newcomers could find the job with the acquired knowledge and skills of the national integration courses, but if the social capital of newcomers has been in more attention of policies, their job-seeking process could be faster and easier.

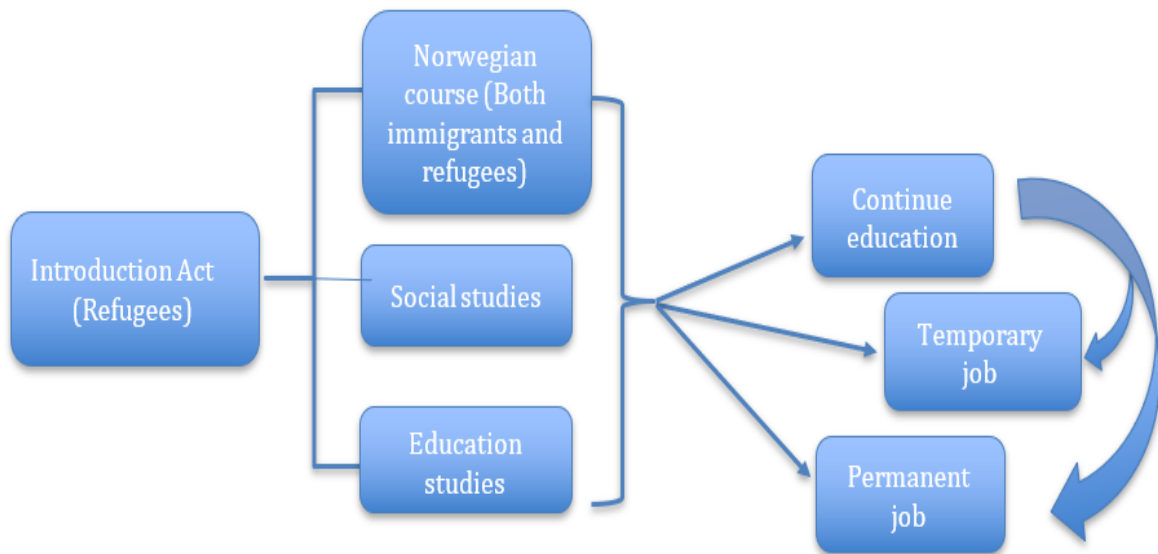


Figure 3: Norway labor integration process regarding the findings

Chapter six

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the first chapter, this study is a qualitative master thesis to explore the effectiveness of national labor integration policies and strategies for non-western refugees and immigrants in Norway. This research tried to answer the research questions by analyzing the gathered data from other relevant studies and collecting information from interviews. The research questions, data collection, and analysis emerged under the two main human capital and social capital theories. Twelve participants were chosen by a combination of convenience and snowball sampling methods, and they were interviewed in a semi-structured setting. All twelve interviews were transcribed and evaluated by using a combination of coding and thematic analysis. The results of findings and discussions regarding the effectiveness of labor integration strategies were categorized into four main themes and several sub-themes to make a complete perspective of the theme.

As the results of findings and discussions show, the effectiveness of labor integration strategies and policies to a large degree is dependant on working on newcomers' human capital and social capital. As discussed, the Norway' policies and strategies well covered the human capital elements through conducting courses such as language and education courses. Also, based on participants' responses, they have been successful in helping and guiding newcomers to enter the labor market through organizations like NAV and personal consultants. Although there were some barriers and limitations in applying for the courses, the main results illustrate the positive impacts of Introduction programs and other integration courses.

Additionally, one effective factor that helped most of the participants to find their first jobs was their social networks. As explained in the previous chapter, social capital is considered one of the main factors in integrating newcomers into the new society, and in many cases, it can help them to enter the labor market easier and faster than following a systematic process.

6.2 Summary of Conclusion

In summary, this research has discussed the main factors in evaluating the effectiveness of Norway labor integration policies and strategies and has argued that the effectiveness of national policies is largely dependent on newcomers' human capital and social capital. The labor integration policies are less effective for those who immigrate with education and job

experiences while it plays a vital role in labor integration of people with no education or less education and experience. However, in general, the quality and effectiveness of labor integration policies are agreed with all participants. The findings of this study also confirm the importance of social capital and its role in entering newcomers to the labor market. It is therefore recommended that more policies and strategies needs to be established to improve newcomers' social networking and ensure of their knowledge of language as a key factor in labor integration. In the following part, the conclusion of discussions and results are provided.

6.3 Results of Discussions

This study aimed that to explore the effectiveness and efficiency of the national labor integration policies and strategies for refugees and immigrants in Norway. As it was discussed in the chapter five, there are some factors interfere in productivity of integration policies. The main factors are related to the human capital and social capital of newcomers; such as their knowledge and education, their language fluency, their work skills and experiences and their skills in making social networks.

When conducting this research, the human capital theory was very critical to look at due to the various influences that it has on the labor market. Additionally, social capital was a very significant and effective factor which has been seen to be one of the critical skills that immigrants should possess to successfully be absorbed into the job market (Sanchez et al., 2019; Uekusa, 2020). The discussions show that the human capital theory usually applies to refugees in principle due to their necessity for integration into society. Among the human capital factors, education backgrounds, linguistic knowledge and job experiences and skills are the main capital and invests of refugees and immigrants.

These main factors of human capital theory have been very effective in making national labor integration policies in Norway and special emphasized and attention has been paid to them. According to the findings, the effectiveness of labor integration policies and programs to a large degree is dependent on participants human capital. To be more precise, the level of newcomers's knowledge and education determine the effectiveness of integration policies and strategies for them. For instance, the Introduction courses were very helpful and effective for who did not have education or any job experience. They could gain education and required work skills during the national labor integration programs and then enter the labor market. But for those who immigrate with a university education or enough job experience, the programs were not enough and they were seeking more professional courses and knowledge.

Based on the result of this thesis, it can be determined that the labor integration for high-educated refugees and immigrants is more complicated and challenging. Although there is a chance for them to enter the labor market, the necessary conditions are not well provided. As discussed in the previous chapters, it can be a time-consuming process for educated people when they want to get educational qualifications accredited, taking new or supplementary courses and language courses. This is important to note that, this situation for educated people whose credentials are not verifiable is more difficult as they need to repeat their education in a new country again. As Botoon (2020) indicates in his study, the accreditation process is lengthy and unreasonably stringent, and most refugees will be unable to complete it. Taking supplemental courses in Norway is reliant on the status of refugees' verified qualifications, and starting over with a new education is not feasible for everyone, especially for those who must repeat high school or university (Botoon, 2020).

Besides the important role of newcomers' human capital in entering the labor market, their social capital has also been an effective factor in their labor integration. The results show that the social capital of newcomers could help them to find their first jobs in Norway. Both groups of educated and non-educated immigrants and refugees benefit from making good social networking. Although, it is challenging for new foreigners to make a proper social network with others, especially with natives, having good social networking and connections with others can be very effective in entering the labor market as many of the participants of this research found their first jobs in Norway through their social networks. It is necessary to mention that most of the jobs that non-educated newcomers found after arrival were blue-collar occupations, which means that to enter the primary labor market and find a permanent job, gaining related education and skills are still the most effective and important factors.

It is also worthy to mention that in gaining both human and social capital as the results indicate, knowledge and fluency in the Norwegian language is the key factor for becoming acquainted with Norwegian society, continuing education, and entering the labor market. In Norway, having a good language proficiency is very critical for immigrants due to the possible language barriers to employment (Krueger, 2018).

All in all, newcomers who had attended the introduction or language courses were satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of the training on their labor integration, although they faced some personal or systematic barriers and difficulties in their integration process. The labor integration policies in Norway are well designed to improve the human capital of new arrivals and prepare them for the labor market. But the lack of two main policies can be felt through the findings. First lack of attention to the social capital of newcomers which as it is

shown is an effective factor in entering newcomers to the labor market. Second, there is a complicated and time-consuming process of qualification and validation of educated people's credentials which many newcomers fail to succeed in these process.

6.4 Reflection on the Contribution of the Research

As explained before, this study is conducted as a master thesis to examine the effectiveness of national labor integration strategies on entering newcomers into Norway's labor market. To achieve this aim, conducting semi-structured interviews with both male and female refugees and immigrants from six different nationalities of non-western countries could well cover the required information about the labor integration policies and their impacts on the job-seeking process and labor integration. I believe that the results of this study have the potential to consider the effectiveness of integration programs and labor integration newcomers and can help to understand the impacts of integration policies on a wider group of refugees and immigrants, especially in Norway.

The study's problem emerged under the literature review with the focus on immigration influx in Norway and integration policies to control the population and integrate newcomers. The problem statement was derived from the three research questions to a better understanding of research objective. The research questions were the proper guidelines to conduct interviews and lead to acquire required information and data. Regarding the findings, we explore the main effective factors in labor integration that are related to the human capital and social capital of newcomers.

Though some of the effective factors in labor integration of immigrants and refugees, such as the importance of learning host countries' language, have already been known, some other factors like the relation between newcomer's education and the efficiency of Norway's labor integration strategies can be considered as new findings that do not exist in literature. Likewise, some recommendations and policy suggestions regarding the findings, such as improving newcomers' social networking and allocating special and professional policies for educated people education can be seen as unique features of this study. They are new due to there being no specific considerations in examining the Norwegian labor integration policies on integrating non-western newcomers as the major groups of arrivals.

This study will also add to the research area and help to inspire further research in the field. It will also support and fill the research gap that exists in the field and in addition inspire more research on the matter. Consequently, this study should be published to aid in

learning and inspiring researchers who would need information on the research question to develop further studies on and around the research question stated above.

At the end of this study recommendations and conclusions will be provided. These recommendations and the conclusion of the findings will be an asset to all the stakeholders who are tasked to run the integration programs. With this among other studies, the stakeholders will obtain the right information on how to act and what measures to put in place to ensure the integration programs are run effectively. Finally, the study attempted to answer the research questions and express the effective factors in the labor integration of refugees and immigrants in Norway. There is a hope that the results of this study be considered by policymakers and help newcomers to enter the labor market easier and faster. Moreover, the new findings of this research can be a guideline and starting point for further academic and scientific researchers.

6.5 Policy Recommendations

As we can discuss the effectiveness of national labor integration during this study, the current labor integration policies do not seem to have the same effect on all refugees and immigrants. To improve the productivity and effectiveness of labor integration programs for refugees and immigrants some points have been derived from research participants' responses. Some of the major recommendations that can be provided to address the policy issues are provided as follows:

- Entering the educated and experienced newcomers to the labor market is a challenging process so measures with the focus on facilitating the credentials qualification process for educated refugees and immigrants can help to enter the labor market easier and faster.
- Despite the challenging nature of having good social capital, it is one of the effective factors in the labor integration process. As was mentioned by all participants, it is still very hard for newcomers to have the necessary social capital that is needed, and no specific measures have been done by the government to improve their social networks. Thus measures to improve newcomers' social capital and establish events for newcomers to build their networks and move closer to work opportunities are strongly recommended.
- Based on literature and findings, having language knowledge is important factor in determining the success of immigrants in the job

market (Fladmoe & Steen-Johnsen, 2018), while lack of it become one of the main barriers of integration. Therefore, ensuring that the immigrants get access to a acceptable and proper level of Norwegian language is very critical for newcomers' success and empowering them to get into the employment scene.

- As it was mentioned by several participants, one the barriers that reduced the productivity of integration programs was the mixed classes of students from different educational levels. Illiterate or low-educated people made the trend of courses slow and lectures were repeated several times, which caused educated students consider the courses useless or time-wasting. While Newcomers' level of education and skills differ considerably by country of birth (Næss, 2019), it can increase the productivity of programs if the government strive to ensure that courses are categorized by students' level of education and background and make more professional strategies and courses for educated people.

6.6 Summary of Research Limitations

This study is conducted in form of master thesis as scientific requirement of University of Agder and I as a researcher lacked the prior experience in scientific research and had a time limitations. Likewise, the coincide of Covid-19 pandemic in the Norway with my research process faced me with some limitations mostly related to conducting interviews and data collection.

This research aimed to examine the effectiveness of national labor integration on newcomers' labor integration in Norway and the sample participants have been chosen from different regions of Norway and they had passed their Introduction programs in different municipalities. Though the obtained results provide the detail information on refugees' and immigrants' labor integration, still it is limited to considering labor integration policies' impacts on newcomers' labor integration in Norway and it cannot be generalized to other states and countries.

In terms of the sample group, refugees and immigrants from non-western countries have been chosen for this study. The refugees and immigrants from these nations form the main group of immigrants and the unemployment rate among this group is higher than other arrivals

from other countries. So the study is limited to the effectiveness of labor integration policies on newcomers from non-western countries and as the conditions greatly vary for newcomers from different nations, the research might have different outcomes with target groups from other countries.

Furthermore, the study focused on two major theories including the human capital and social capital as the main frameworks of the research. While the human capital theory can measure the different levels and variables of newcomers' capital including their education background, job experiences and linguistic skills, and social capital theory considers the social networks of newcomers as an important integration factor, other elements and capital of newcomers have not been considered and leave the place to consider same objective and subjective in different aspects. However, it can be complementary research to previous research or the basis for further studies.

The lack of existing studies in the field of the effectiveness of labor integration programs in Norway was another issue that we faced in conducting the research. Moreover, some participants' lack of English limited the collected data reliability that with more effort and spending more time for an explanation it is tried to increase the understandings between interviewer and participants.

6.7 Recommendations for Further Research

As indicated in previous chapters, immigration has a growing trend in the contemporary world due to various reasons such as war, conflicts, and violations against people. Also, people have always sought for better life and situation which pushes them to immigrate from developing to developed countries or move within countries. This grabbed the states' attention and caused new strategies and policies to be established to manage immigration and reduce its challenges in recent years. Based on the findings of this study, I recommend more qualitative research, as qualitative research enquires into and provides more information about real-world issues, it assists in the development of hypotheses and the investigation and comprehension of quantitative data among other reasons makes it the best method to be used. on immigrants' and refugees' labor integration and some suggestions include the following:

Firstly, it is important to note that this study applies only to the non-western refugees and immigrants in Norway, therefore the results cannot be generalized to populations from other nations and there is a need to do more research for other groups of immigrants and

refugees in Norway to consider the effectiveness of labor integration policies in other groups of newcomers too.

Secondly, the geography of the research is limited to the Norway and Norwegian labor integration policies and strategies, therefore further research can be conducted to examine the success of other countries' integration policies and provide a global view of the effectiveness of these policies.

Thirdly, the sample size needs to be increased to get a wider perspective of refugees coming to Norway. In this study, the sample size was twelve (seven male and five females), which is too small to represent the Norway refugees who are a fifth of Norway population (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022).

Lastly, the data collection method which semi-structured interviews can be with restrictions, especially where the participant is willing to give more explanations. In addition, interviews make some participants nervous and may opt to avoid disclosing their true opinions about the matter at hand. Therefore, using an alternative method of data collection is vital in comparing the findings and making meaningful findings and comparing those outlined in this study. Though my research explains the effectiveness of Norwegian labor integration policies on non-western refugees and immigrants and underlies main facilitators and inhibitors factors of labor integration, it is not enough to portray a big picture of a successful labor integration and justify the need for further research.

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Appendix 1: Consent form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

“Labor integration policies in Norway”?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to consider which human capital or social capital is more effective in integrating immigrants into the Norwegian labor market? In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and invite you to an interview. If you would like to take part, please read this information form carefully. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

Purpose of the project

Different reasons, such as war and violence, political and civil unrest, poverty, work, study, visiting or reuniting with family members lead to increased immigration. People immigrate because they believe that changing their environment will improve their situation. Norway has recently become a popular destination for immigrants, with immigrants accounting for 18.9 percent of the Norwegian population in March 2022. As a result, integrating immigrants becomes a crucial issue in government discussions. There are various debates about how to integrate immigrants into the labor market more efficiently. Some believe human capital is the most essential factor in access to the labor market, while some find it impossible to find a job without a social network. In this Master’s thesis in the Global Development field, I will examine the efficiency of both human capital and social capital in the labor integration of immigrants through immigrants’ perceptions of national labor integration. Conducting interviews is our main data collection method.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Agder is the responsible institution for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

We are inviting Non-EU immigrants (who benefited from national labor integration) from different backgrounds to take part in our study, with the hope that their answers will help us consider our research in different aspects.

What does participation involve for you?

By conducting interviews, we will examine the participants’ perceptions of to what extent the national labor integration and government strategies have been helpful for them to enter the labor market. The interviews information would be gathered by taking notes and recording voices. All information regarding you will be stored anonymously and destroyed after the study’s completion.

Because there is still a risk of COVID-19 infection, the interviews are being conducted digitally; however, if the restrictions are lifted, there will be no risk to participants or interviewers, and the interviews will be conducted physically as well. The interview will take approximately 20 minutes.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in this research is voluntary and even after you decide to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason and all of your information will be deleted. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your data

We will only use your interview information for the purposes specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act) and any reference to the interview in the published study (master's thesis) will be anonymous.

Only the interviewer (the master student: Helia Sadeghianfar) and the advisor of the research, Dr. Morgan Storm Scoville-Simonds, will have access to the collected information from the interviews.

Your name and contact details will be replaced with a code and the list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored on a research server or in a safe place.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end on June 1, 2022. After finishing the research and writing the master thesis, all personal data and digital recordings will be destroyed and removed.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- Access the personal data that is being processed about you
- Request that your personal data be deleted
- Request that incorrect personal data about you be corrected/rectified
- Receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- Send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with the University of Agder, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- University of Agder: +47 970 546 200
- Dr. Morgan Storm Scoville-Simonds
- Helia Sadeghianfar (HeliaS@uia.no)
- UiA Data Protection Officer: Ina Danielsen (personvernombud@uia.no)
- Data Protection Services, email: (personvertjenester@sikt.no) or telephone: +47532115 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader

Student

Morgan Storm Scoville-Simonds

Helia Sadeghianfar

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project on “Human capital or Social capital” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in the interview

I give consent for my data to be processed until the end date of the project, which is approximately 01.06.2022.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Thank you in advance for participating in this interview. My name is Helia Sadeghianfar and I am a Master's student at the University of Agder. I am working on my thesis regarding the effectiveness of Norway's labor integration strategies in the frame of human capital and social capital. I am very interested to interview you who can help to answer the research questions better. I really appreciate the time to respond to the following questions.

In this interview, I want to focus on your experience with the Introduction program/Norwegian courses and social networking and their impacts on your job-seeking process. So, of course, there are no right or wrong answers. It also means you are more than welcome to tell us if there is something that needs to be improved.

Before starting the interview, I kindly ask you to read the consent form carefully and sign it.

Good luck

Helia Sadeghianfar

Interview Questions

Age:

Gender:

Contact:

Warm-up questions

- 1- Where do you come from?
- 2- Who do you immigrate with? And which category were you? (refugee/immigrant,...)
- 3- Can you tell me which governmental courses and for how long have you participated? (Introduction program/Language course/ or any other government compulsory courses)

Background

- 4- Can you tell me about your educational background before immigration?
- 5- What job experiences had you had before immigrating?
- 6- Could you find a job in Norway with your knowledge and skill from your home country?

- 7- (If yes) Can you tell me how did you find your first job? and How long did it take to find it?
- 8- Which government courses (educational/skills/language/....) helped you to enter the labor market? How?
- 9- (If no) what is your job-seeking plan? which field/industry you like to work in?

Social part

- 10-To what extent are you in touch with other immigrants?
- 11-What was the role of government to put you in touch with others and the social environment?
- 12-How effectively do you think your social relationships are in entering the job market?

Final questions

- 13-All in all, what do you think about the role and quality of the Norway integration programs on the job-seeking process?
- 14-If you were an integration policymaker, what would you do to improve the integration process for refugees and immigrants? (how do you perceive shortcomings which need to be improved)
- 15-You are welcome to add anything else you think can be helpful?

Thank you for your participation