

# **“Polish Women’s Adaptation Experience on the Norwegian Job Market”**

A Qualitative Study about Polish Women in The Norwegian Job Market

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY**

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SOC- Sense of Coherence

STC- Systematic text Condensation

Labor Immigrants- Immigrants that immigrate for work-related purposes.

## **FIGURES**

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Figure 1- Information power: Items and dimensions

## ABSTRACT

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Polish immigrants represent the largest group of labor immigrants in Norway. Currently, there are around 105 500 Polish immigrants residing in Norway. While the employment rate among Polish immigrants in Norway is relatively high, little research has been conducted, in the context of the Norwegian job market, on the work-related patterns, experiences, and behavior of Polish women who immigrate to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the adaptation experience of these women in the Norwegian job market. The study drew on Antonovsky's 'Sense of Coherence' and Bandura's 'Self-Efficacy' theories, along with a gender perspective, to interpret the findings. This qualitative study included nine individual semi-structured interviews. The results of this study revealed that these women actively participated in the decision-making process of their immigration to Norway and had a career-oriented mindset while holding traditional views on female gender roles. The study also highlights the challenges these women faced in the Norwegian job market while seeking employment, including discrimination, lack of language competency, lack of references, and lack of job experience from the local job market. The findings shed light on the strategies employed by these women to enter the job market and the crucial elements they deemed necessary for success. While the significance of work varied for each woman, most found it valuable for socialization, independence, language development, confidence, and feeling useful.

**Keywords:** Polish women, Norwegian job market, Labor immigrants, Family reunification, Self-Efficacy, Sense of Coherence, Love immigration

## SAMMENDRAG

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Polske immigranter utgjør den største gruppen av arbeidsinnvandrere i Norge. For øyeblikket er det rundt 105 500 polske innvandrere bosatt i Norge. Mens sysselsettingsraten er relativt høy, har det blitt gjort lite forskning på arbeidsrelaterte mønstre, erfaringer og atferd blant polske kvinner som innvandret for å bli gjenforent med sine ektemenn/samboer. Formålet med denne studien er å utforske tilpasningserfaringen til disse kvinnene i det norske arbeidsmarkedet. Studien bruker Antonovskys teori om "Sense of Coherence" og Banduras "Self-efficacy" teori, sammen med et kjønnsperspektiv, som midler for å tolke funnene. Ni individuelle halvstrukturerte intervjuer ble gjennomført i denne kvalitative studien. Studien fant at disse kvinnene deltok aktivt i beslutningsprosessen som ledet frem til immigrasjon til Norge og hadde en karriereorientert tankegang til tross for å ha tradisjonelle syn på kvinnelige kjønnsroller. Studien fremhever også utfordringene disse kvinnene møtte i det norske arbeidsmarkedet mens de søkte arbeid, inkludert diskriminering, manglende språkkompetanse, manglende referanser og manglende jobberfaring fra det lokale arbeidsmarkedet. Funnene ga innsikt i strategiene som denne gruppen brukte for å komme inn på det lokale arbeidsmarkedet og de viktigste elementene de oppfattet som nødvendige for å oppnå suksess. Selv om arbeid hadde ulik betydning for hver kvinne synes flertallet at det var viktig for sosialisering, uavhengighet, språkutvikling, selvtillit og nytteverdi.

**Nøkkelord:** Polske kvinner, norsk arbeidsmarked, Arbeidsinnvandrere, Familiegjenforening, Antonovsky, Sense of Coherence, Self-efficacy, Kjærlighetsinnvandring

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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According to the report to the Norwegian Parliament (Storting)- Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021) The Norwegian government has set a goal in the years to come, to focus on the inclusion of more members of the Norwegian society in its job market (Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021)). Primarily, it aims to increase the employment rates among immigrants residing in Norway (Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021)). Additionally, the government recognizes that the future of the Norwegian job market does not lie in the oil/petroleum industry but rather in the human workforce (Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021)). Labor immigration is a known phenomenon in Europe that is politically desired for its economic benefit (Eurostat, 2021b; OECD, 2014). The importance of labor immigrants in contributing to the European job market has been highlighted in a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published in 2014. The OECD report revealed that labor immigrants have been responsible for 70 % of the increase in the number of workers in the European job market. This rise has notably benefited the European job market. Firstly, by increasing the age of the working population (OECD, 2014). Secondly, by contributing with their skills to the pool of skills in a given EU country they resided in (OECD, 2014). With this in mind, the report to the Norwegian parliament (Storting) accentuated the idea that we, as a society, should strive to build a community that would be strong, inclusive of all its members, and nourishing of newcomers and immigrants. This will ensure a better quality of life and for all the participants of the Norwegian society, which will lead to generating equally enough opportunities for everyone. (Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021)).

As a group known for work-related migration, Polish labor immigrants are particularly interesting (Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Przybyszewska, 2021). There are large diasporas of Polish citizens all over Europe, i.e., Germany, The United Kingdom, France, and Ireland (Statistics Poland, 2021). After the 2004 enlargement of the European Union, Norway became a popular destination for labor immigrants, among which are immigrants from Poland. This group is the biggest group of labor immigrants in Norway which has been increasing more than other groups of immigrants in the past years (Steinkellner, 2022). There are 105 500 Polish immigrants that are residing in Norway in addition to their Norwegian-born children at a count of 15 929 (Steinkellner, 2022).



The Meld. St. 14 (2020-2021) Report to the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) indicated that among other immigrant groups, Polish immigrants had one of the highest employment rates in the Norwegian labor market. To specify, men had 73,6% representation; among women, there was a 68,5% employment rate (Meld.St. 14 (2020-2021)). Nevertheless, a study done in 2010 presented surprising data about the employment of Polish men and Polish women in jobs that were equivalent to those they had back home (Friberg, & Eldring, 2011; Przybyszewska, 2021). As little as 1 % of Polish women in their study, and 52% of Polish men worked at positions equivalent to what they had back in Poland (Friberg, & Eldring, 2011; Przybyszewska, 2021). Despite this, little research has been conducted on Polish women's work-related patterns, experiences, and behavior in the Norwegian job market, and especially on those who immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their partners/husbands (Main & Czerniejewska, 2017). This particular group has been mentioned briefly in Friberg's (2013) study, but has not been focused on (Friberg, 2013). Main and Czerniejewska (2017) attributed the lack of more research on this group's activity in the Norwegian job market, to Polish women's frequent employment in the cleaning sector without acquiring contracts (Main & Czerniejewska, 2017).

Skilled immigrants, who typically possess higher education, work experience, and various competencies, comprise one type of immigrant (Colakoglu et al., 2018; Mahroum, 2000). This thesis centers on this particular type of immigrants, namely, these with higher education or qualifications from their home country, in the case of this study, from Poland. Additionally, this study will focus on the female Polish immigrants who immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners. This exact concept of moving from one country to another to be reunited with a family member or a husband/partner has been given a name that, arguably is a good fit for such a notion, yet it is an excellent two-word description of this matter "love migration" (Aure, 2013; Colakoglu et al., 2018).

The research done on this group as a whole, in the Norwegian context, has been focusing mainly on the group as a whole (Przybyszewska, 2021) or its effect on the labor market and its social position in society (Dyrlid, 2018; Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Friberg, 2012a) as well as the work-related differences between Norway and Poland (Pawlak, 2021). Furthermore, the studies done in other European countries have focused either on women's immigration as a primary aspect or their experience with the host population and, again, the labor market. However, the work-related experiences of Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners seemed to be unseen as if almost ghostly

in the current body of research. Hence, it is important to shed light on this specific group to gain a better understanding of their reality in the Norwegian context.

## **1.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THIS THESIS**

This thesis consists of nine sections that contain several subsections. The ‘background research and the field of interest’ section of this thesis introduces the topic of interest, starting from a broader perspective and then narrowing it down to the specific matter of interest. The aim with this section is to facilitate an understanding of the group of interest and work-related aspects of their life as labor immigrants (i.e., in the Norwegian and EU job markets). Two key concepts will be introduced: the concept of work and the concept of immigration. These concepts will provide a foundation for exploring the specifics of labor immigrants and their societal impact on the Norwegian and European job markets. The thesis will then focus on the specific group of interest: Polish women and their history with labor.

The ‘Research Aim’ section will present the aim of this research project. The ‘Theoretical Background of this Thesis’ section will outline the theories that will be used to interpret the results of this thesis. A ‘Methodology’ and ‘Method’ section will follow to explain the nature of this study and the way it was conducted. These sections will be followed by the ‘Result’ section, where the study results will be laid out. A ‘Discussion’ section will then offer possible interpretations of the acquired results and discuss the study method and methodology. Finally, the ‘Conclusion’, this section will conclude the study by answering the research question(s).

## **2 BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND THE FIELD OF INTEREST**

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### **2.1 WORK**

Work is known to have importance on individual and societal levels (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014).

#### **2.1.1 Work on an Individual Level**

On an individual level, work is a multifaceted aspect that plays a vital role in one's life (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014). While it may have a religious connotation, such as a calling for some (Coutu et al., n.d.; Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Loisel et al., 2014), for others, it could offer a sense of purpose and meaning, self-actualization, self-achievement, and economic value (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014; Morin, 2008). Moreover, work could be

seen as a socializing agent that contributes to the feeling of being needed and useful (Castel, 1996; Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014). It also accentuates a person's feeling of self-worth (Castel, 1996; Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014). Work also has significant effects on a person's family life, particularly in terms of financial and social status, and can disrupt the balance between their work environment and their family commitments, leading to a lack of coherence (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014; Morin, 2008).

### 2.1.2 Work on the Societal Level

On a societal level, work has a say in the social position one will be associated with (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014), since it is also known to sort people not only into different societal classes, which depend on the type of jobs an individual has, but also according to her/his paid wage (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014). In addition, work is said to be an agent that stimulates the creation of identity inside a society. This role symbolizes belonging to a particular group, society, etc. (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014). This means that work brings forth in people the feeling of being an active part of society that is bringing something to the table or being useful, which in its turn is a motivating factor and a source of satisfaction (Baldry et al., 2007; Loisel et al., 2014).

## 2.2 IMMIGRATION

### 2.2.1 Immigration and Employment Rates: A Closer Look

Encyclopedia Britannica defined immigration as the “process through which individuals become permanent residents or citizens of another country. Historically, immigration has been of great social, economic, and cultural benefit to states.” (Parry, 2022). First and foremost, there are three groups of foreigners in Norway that the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) differentiate between; labor immigrants, refugees, and those who come to Norway to be reunified with their family members. The rates of employment among these three groups are as follows: there is 78% of labor immigrants employed in the Norwegian job market in comparison with the other two groups, among which are refugees that are at an employment rate of 54 %, and those who came to be reunified with their family members at the rate of 65% (IMDi, 2021; SSB, 2019). Concerning the gender distribution in the Norwegian job market, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) reported that although there are differences in the rate of female immigrant employment in the Norwegian

job market, this difference is not that significant among women labor immigrants if compared to the rates of refugee women (IMDi, 2021).

### 2.2.2 The Importance of Adaptation Experience for Successful Immigration and Integration in a New Country

Adaptation experience is an important term that should be defined and noted in the context of immigration and any related process to it (Phinney et al., 2001). The term adaptation has different definitions depending on which discipline one refers to. Nevertheless, this thesis used the anthropological definition of this term, as it is the best match to answer the research question of this thesis, which revolves around the understanding of a societal phenomenon. Adaptation is the process by which living things, or populations of living things, adapt biologically or behaviorally in order to ensure the success of their reproductive processes and, thus, their survival in their environment (Bates, 2005). Immigrants' adaptation and integration in a new country is a crucial element of their success equation in the host country, hence also their success in the job market of the given country (Kaldheim & Inkluderingsutvalget, 2011).

Interestingly, immigration influences the sense of coherence of an individual. According to Slootjes et al. (2017) study on women's immigration and integration narratives, it was noted that the experience of immigration itself has a threatening effect on whether a person experiences consistency or/ and good balance in the host country, disruption of the power of decision making of a person which is highly important and valued if seen in a social context (Slootjes et al., 2017). These women indicated through their narratives that the act of immigrating to a new country made it harder for them to shape their lives as they wanted since the situational factors were more powerful than them (Slootjes et al., 2017). Moreover, they have told the researchers about the disbalance they experienced in their new lives in the host country because of the posed challenges on the first and the second generation of immigrants faced (Slootjes et al., 2017). The authors concluded that different women handled their immigration adaptation process differently (Slootjes et al., 2017). For instance, they made a note of the fact that the women that had a high sense of coherence were better off in their journey through their immigration experience than those who had a lower sense of coherence (Slootjes et al., 2017). To clarify the relevance of Slootjes et al. (2017) study to this thesis, Slootjes et al. (2017) study pointed out an important remark about the perception of a particular group of female immigrants of their experience as labor immigrants and how some

had it less challenging than others depending on how manageable, comprehensible, or meaningful one perceived their existence in the new country. This idea is interesting to be seen in the context of this study's results.

### 2.2.3 The Importance of Language and Social Networks in the Integration Process of Immigrants

Being a newcomer in a new country hugely affects and slows down not only the adaptation process but also the integration process in the host country, adding to its complexity (Phinney et al., 2001; Salinero-Fort et al., 2011). Language is said to be of high importance in the process of integration (Kaldheim & Inkluderingsutvalget, 2011). By the same spoken language seems to be a crucial factor not only for integration but also for accessing a wider range of jobs in the Norwegian and British job markets (Støylen, 2019). Unlike refugees, labor immigrants do not get free language courses, making it challenging for them to combine long work hours (to be able to afford language courses and life expenses) and attend language courses simultaneously (Støylen, 2019). Furthermore, Czapka (2010) pointed out an important aspect stated by her participants in her research review: language limitations and cultural misunderstandings led to the lack of interaction with other locals, which resulted in the social isolation of Polish immigrants (Czapka, 2010). Not to mention the role the language plays in posing limitations in other aspects of an immigrant's life (Czapka, 2010). For instance, access to different types of governmental and social services, such as public healthcare facilities and other public services (Czapka, 2010).

Another essential aspect that the literature addressed was the interrelation between integration and social networks. From studies done on immigrants, it has been evident that social networks, including friends (native and non-native) and family members - in the host country- are important for integration and for reaching a state of life satisfaction (Kaldheim & Inkluderingsutvalget, 2011). The improvement of both, the process of adapting to the host country, and integrating into it, will improve the well-being of an immigrant in a host country, this was concluded by Salinero-Fort et al. (2011) through their statistical analysis done on the immigrant groups in Spain (Salinero-Fort et al., 2011). Similarly, a qualitative study examining the integration of Polish immigrants in the UK and Norway showed that social network is crucial for their integration (Støylen, 2019). Gmaj and Iglicka's (2018) conclusion was complementary to Støylen (2019); in their article, they mentioned the vital role the Polish community played in helping, especially women, to find work and access more opportunities (Friberg, 2012a; Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018) because the Norwegian job market is more favourable

to male workers that have more widespread demand for them (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). Another complementary study, to the three above took the social network idea a step further in the context of immigrants. This study was done in the US on Latinx immigrants, and it pointed toward the key role of social connectedness and sense of belonging, which are branches of social networks, play in the well-being of different majority immigrant groups in the US (Shelton et al., 2020). Hence social support seems to be a solid and important resource in the life of an immigrant (Salinero-Fort et al., 2011).

## **2.3 UNDERSTANDING POLISH LABOR IMMIGRATION**

To understand the group this thesis will focus on, namely, Polish women that followed their husbands/partners to Norway. One has to understand the Polish labor immigrant group as a whole and their interaction with and relation to the host country's job market. This group's notable influence on the European and Norwegian job markets will serve as one of the exemplification statements in this thesis's argument for the need to study the group of interest.

### **2.3.1 Incentives of Polish Immigrants to Emigrate to Work Outside of Poland**

According to statistical data gathered in 2010, Poland is a country with the lowest pay gap between men and women (Eurostat, 2013). However, it has one of the least contributing governments in Europe to the social protection system of its citizens (Eurostat, 2013; OECD, 2012). The Polish governmental contribution, in terms of the social protection recipes, was 17.1%, whereas the employer's contribution to the country's social protection system was notably higher than the government's (44.5 %) (Eurostat, 2013). Nevertheless, the Norwegian governmental contribution was 53.4%, and the Norwegian employee's social contribution was 32.1% (Eurostat, 2013). In a Polish study about Polish families' well-being and financial situation, participants were asked about their thought on fertility and future children. Participants reported that one of the main reasons for not having kids was economic instability and not knowing what was going to happen in the future (Sikorska, 2021). Moreover, a Polish family policy statement issued in 2021 stated that the country's population seems to be shrinking, from a 3,71% fertility rate in 1950 to 1,41% in 2020 (Sikorska, 2021). However, Polish (15.1 %) and Romanian (21.7 %) born children of migrants in Europe are considered the two most prominent groups of EU migrants residing outside their own countries in different corners of the EU (Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2021a). Economic incentives are one of the reasons Polish men and women, in their fertile years, decided to

leave the country to migrate as workers to other EU zones (Iglićka & Ziolk-Skrzypczak, 2010). An article written by Thorn (2009), had findings that highlighted other reasons besides those related to the economy, i.e., politics and government structure (e.g., job market, country structure) (Thorn, 2009). Friberg et al. (2012) added to these incentives the family reunification aspect that Polish immigrants expressed in Polonia Survey as a reason for emigration (Friberg et al., 2012).

### 2.3.2 Labor Immigration and Job Market Reconstruction in Norway

An increased rate of labor immigration in 2004 led to a reconstruction of the Norwegian job market (Friberg, 2012b). The reconstruction was partly driven by employers' behavior in the Norwegian job market (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017; Friberg, 2012b; Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). The existing literature on Polish labor immigrants attributes the abundant growth of the economy in Norway to sectors related to building and construction and the manufacturing sector (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). The "pull factor" can partly explain why these sectors benefitted the Norwegian job market the most (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017; Friberg, 2012b). The "pull factor" is explained through the way employers in specific sectors of the Norwegian job market were looking for specific skills, which created more demand for these skills (e.g., construction workers) (Friberg et al., 2012; Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). The demand for specific skills, in its turn, formed certain associations not only based on a person's skill set but also their nationality/ethnicity, which then resulted in what is referred to in the literature as "ethnic division" (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017; Friberg, 2012b). Therefore through previous research, it was evident that Polish labor immigrants were predominantly found working in specific sectors, such as industrial services (e.g., fish processing)(Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017; Ødegård & Andersen, 2021); agriculture (e.g., seasonal fruit/berry picking) (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017; Rye & O'Reilly, 2020); domestic services (e.g., cleaning, childcare, elderly care), and construction sites industry (Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Friberg, 2012b; Przybyszewska, 2021; Ødegård & Andersen, 2021). Among these, the construction sites industry is where Polish labor immigrants seem to dominate compared to other groups of immigrants (Kilskar et al., 2018). 44 % of the different groups of labor immigrants working in this sector were Polish (Kilskar et al., 2018).

This type of labor distribution that is seen above is not solely caused by the choice of immigrants to pursue those types of jobs or only by the "pull factor". According to IMDI (2008) report, Norwegian employers' discrimination against immigrants created obstacles for

them, preventing them from not only pursuing other types of jobs (e.g., cleaning, construction, fish, seasonal agriculture-related sectors) but also applying to them (IMDI, 2008). Polish immigrants reported, in a study, that the stereotypes attributed to their nationality by Norwegian employers prevented them from accessing a wider range of jobs in the Norwegian work market (Przybyszewska, 2021).

The report to the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021), stated that a strong covariation exists between the level of education and the rates of employment, the probability of a person getting a job is higher, the higher the education level she/he has (Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021)). Although, several other sources confirm the same idea about the relationship between higher education and the higher chances of becoming employed as an immigrant (Brekke & Mastekaasa, 2008). Based on the existing literature, this seems not entirely in line with the reality of Polish immigrants. Even though, Polish labor immigrants are considered to be the immigrant labor group that has the highest level of education in comparison to other labor immigrant groups here in Norway (Friberg et al., 2012), and has higher qualifications from their home country, they seem to be underrepresented in higher qualification jobs, such as management positions and academia in Norway (Dyrlid, 2018; Przybyszewska, 2021) as well as in the UK (Aziz, 2015). Brekke (2008) argued in her dissertation that the chances of immigrants and their children are lower than the native part of the population in finding a job, especially a full-time job (Brekke, 2008). In addition to that, despite them having degrees that are equivalent to those the natives have (Brekke, 2008; Czapka, 2010), it takes them, on average, longer time to get into desired positions than natives in the job market (Brekke, 2008).

### 2.3.3 Challenges Faced by Labor Immigrants in Finding Employment Opportunities

The previous body of research on this group shed light on their struggles and obstacles that were considered to be by-products of being a Labor immigrant. Immigrants often have lesser choices/alternatives than locals (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017), due to several factors, such as language barriers, cultural differences, narrow social networks (Czapka, 2010), and the structure of the job market (Friberg et al., 2012; Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). Therefore, immigrants, specifically Polish labor immigrants, tend to be less demanding and picky as they do not have as many options and alternatives when finding a job as an immigrant (Slettebak, 2021). Hence, they are more likely to end up in low-paid jobs (Brekke & Mastekaasa, 2008; Slettebak, 2021). In previous research, it has been shown that labor immigrants work in



lower-wage jobs compared to natives (easier acceptance of lower payment) (Brekke & Mastekaasa, 2008; Slettebak, 2021). Also, income inequality has often been mentioned in association with labor immigrants (Miech et al., 2003; Slettebak, 2021; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005). In the Norwegian job market context, labor immigrants earned less than Norwegians (Brekke & Mastekaasa, 2008). One factor that results in expanding gaps between immigrants and natives is the cumulative disadvantage effects, which have been mentioned in several studies (Miech et al., 2003; Slettebak, 2021; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005). Several US Studies conducted on the subject of "the cumulative disadvantage effects", suggested that certain minority communities faced a growing disadvantage throughout their occupational career-seeking lives (Miech et al., 2003; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005). This resulted in wage differences between natives of a given country and immigrants residing there (Brekke & Mastekaasa, 2008; Slettebak, 2021), as well as limited choice of occupations on the job market for immigrants (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017). Gesiarz et al. (2020) in their study indicated that inequality in terms of the economy, as well as gaps in opportunities, negatively affected a person's motivation, which in its turn tended to affect the productivity of a person and her/his well-being in life (Gesiarz et al., 2020).

#### 2.3.4 Gender Division in Job Market: The Polish Female Experience in the Norwegian Job Market

The previous paragraph discussed the favoritism of a particular ethnic group, which resulted in a stratified and segregated job market (Friberg, 2013; Ødegård & Andersen, 2021). The reconstruction of the job market also created a gender division in the job market, where specific sectors had a greater demand for workers of a specific gender (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). The building, construction, and manufacturing sectors, which were dominated by men, were some of the sectors creating this demand (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). Friberg and Eldring (2011) found that a high percentage of Polish men (84%) were working at construction sites, while 58% of Polish women were working as cleaners (Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Przybyszewska, 2021). As a matter of fact, Czapka (2010) stated that the majority of individuals that engaged in illegal employment, such as house cleaning and babysitting, were actually women (Czapka, 2010). Moreover, women often end up being deprived of their most basic rights in the Norwegian social system because they often begin their job journey in the 'unofficial' job market sector that offers domestic services (Friberg, 2013). This type of unofficial work sector is usually located outside the margins of the regulations applied to the

Norwegian job market to protect workers' rights (Friberg, 2013). As a result, these women often have poorly paid jobs and suboptimal working conditions (Friberg, 2013)

The literature on the Polish female experience in foreign (EU and Norwegian) job markets and their position in it, is not very rich. Nevertheless, a study from the UK showed that women were not only underrepresented in high-qualification jobs but also excluded from semi-skilled jobs such as manufacturing jobs (Aziz, 2015), which are 'man jobs.' In other words, the job market in the UK seems to be gender-divided (Aziz, 2015). In addition, Polish women seem more disadvantaged than men when climbing the career ladder in the UK job market (Aziz, 2015). A Norwegian study done in 2010 showed that as little as 1 % of Polish women in their study and 52% of Polish men worked at positions equivalent to what they had back in Poland (Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Przybyszewska, 2021). Hence, the Norwegian job market appears to have a similar phenomenon (i.e., gender division) (Sørensen, 2019). Gmaj and Iglicka (2018) explained that the unbalanced ratio of Polish men and women in the Norwegian job market (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018) could be partially explained by the "pull factor". For instance, male domination in some sectors can be attributed to the fact that males were more likely to take on a full-time job than women, and therefore, the bid(demand) on male workers was higher than on female workers (Friberg et al., 2012; Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). Nevertheless, the literature does not offer a comprehensive explanation of why such a low percentage of women end up working in jobs that are neither equivalent to those they had in their home country nor their education level.

## **2.4 THE LITERATURE ON POLISH WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE WITH LABOR**

### **2.4.1 Challenges for Women's Inclusion in the Polish Job Market**

To understand the experience of this group better. It is important to mirror their experience with labor from their home country. A report by OECD (2012) stated that more Polish women than Polish men hold higher educational degrees (OECD, 2012). The report also indicated the existence of an unexplained pattern of gender-based divisions in the academia sector and the Polish job market (OECD, 2012). The following policy paper, 'increasing female labor force participation in Poland,' pointed toward and talked about three significant factors that seemed to have women in a disadvantageous position causing such a division. The Policy paper focused on a specific group of women from the age of 25 to 49 (Magda, 2020). According to the policy paper, this group appears to be the most active in the

Polish job market (Magda, 2020) and, therefore, relevant to focus on. The paper broke women of working age into two categories: 'economically active women' that tend to have higher education 53% and were childless, whereas the second category was 'economically inactive women' (Magda, 2020). In Magda's (2020) opinion, the unattractive category of women in the Polish job market was those with kids. The problem with this matter that she addressed was connected to the way the social structure was built in Poland, more specifically, the education system (e.g., kids' daycare, preschool classes, etc.) and the work schedules that were not flexible (Magda, 2020). In addition to the cost of commuting and the time the road took from home and back, especially when talking about women that live far or in rural areas (Magda, 2020). Other important factors mentioned in this policy paper were low education and cultural element related to gender role distribution (Magda, 2020). Men had a lower engagement in household work and duties related to childcare than women. Hence it became harder for some women to enter the job market, as many domestic duties remained on their shoulders (Magda, 2020). Furthermore, Magda (2020) presented statistical data (from 2018) that compared the percentage of women working in the Polish job market with women in the EU and Sweden in specific (Magda, 2020). Sweden is considered an excellent example of countries with the highest inclusion rate of females in their job market, at a rate of more than 80%. Poland, in comparison, has a rate of little over 63% of women in the age range of 15- 64 years old involved in the Polish job market (Magda, 2020). However, Magda (2020) brought to attention an interesting thought about the fact that if compared to the women that were from the first category that was mentioned above, those who were childfree and had higher education, the percentage they were at in terms of employment was higher than this that Sweden had (Magda, 2020). All the elements mentioned above of the Polish women's reality point toward the significant obstacles these women face in being more involved in the Polish job market despite having families. These women were set in front of the choice to work or to have a family. The social structure of the country, as Magda (2020) mentioned in her Policy paper, is not helpful for women's participation in the Polish job market (Magda, 2020).

#### 2.4.2 Polish Women's Involvement in the Norwegian Job Market

If we look at Polish women's activity in the job market in Norway, we will see that women of this ethnic group have higher rates in terms of employment than other immigrant women groups in Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022). According to the SSB (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022), 73,9 % of Polish women are said to be employed in the Norwegian market

(Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022). This group, statistically speaking, is leading in terms of their activity on the Norwegian job market if compared to other groups of immigrant women (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022). For example, Syrian women with an employment rate of 23,4% or women from Somalia with a work rate of 37,0% (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022). To provide more precision, there are other immigrant women groups in Norway that show an equal or higher percentage compared to the Polish immigrant group (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022). However, when considering the proportion of each group's population, these groups do not have as high work rates as the Polish immigrant group. This is because the Polish immigrant group is the largest immigrant group in Norway (Steinkellner, 2022).

#### 2.4.3 Polish Women's Experience in the EU Job Market Including the Norwegian Job Market

A study done by Aziz (2015) wrote about female immigration as a game-changer, as a breakage of the usual scenario of the migration of Polish people out of Poland to pursue their careers in another EU country. She explained that the approach and experience of immigration appeared to differ from women to men (Aziz, 2015). She claimed that women were more decisive in taking their chances in getting better jobs in the host countries and brought drastic change into their lives (Aziz, 2015; Zalewska-Łunkiewicz & Zygmunt, 2018). Aziz attributes this to the history of Polish women's struggle with their rights, their status, and their position in the job market in Poland (Aziz, 2015). According to research done on the subject of gender in the Polish context, Poland has a somewhat traditional view of women and a conservative view of gender equality (Cichocka et al., 2013). Women were welcomed in the Polish Labor market. However, they were pushed into 'low-status jobs' (Cichocka et al., 2013). In addition, women are expected to fulfill the woman role, e.g., being sacrificial to benefit the family is highly welcomed (Cichocka et al., 2013). Zalewska-Łunkiewicz and Zygmunt (2018) in their study, they reported that many of their respondents (all female) took on tasks such as childcare, food preparation, and house cleaning (Zalewska-Łunkiewicz & Zygmunt, 2018), typically female-attributed-tasks. Interestingly, some said that they were satisfied with the distribution of roles, and some even thought that such tasks were part of their natural role as women (Zalewska-Łunkiewicz & Zygmunt, 2018). One can wonder if this kind of spin-off in the results could have something to do with Polish people being quite religious. In a study with 636 participants, it was found that 95% of Polish people living in Poland expressed their affiliation with the catholic Christian faith (Zarzycka & Rydz, 2014). According to Łobodzińska (1978), historically, Polish women were equal to men in terms of

work yet never did this equality cancel out the traditional role of women in Polish society (Łobodzińska, 1978). In many societies, including Polish society, the man's career is seen as a priority; therefore, it is perceived as very natural that a woman would follow her husband (Wagner et al., 2017). For instance, a lot of Polish labor immigrants that participated in Aziz's (2015) study reported 'Feeling stuck' as these women in this study, especially these that followed their partner to the UK were trying to combine work or being an active contributor to the family budget with their female cultural role, or duty towards the family- that is connected to the idea of 'Matka polka' the Polish mother that has to care for the family- (Aziz, 2015). Such a notion could be best understood by shedding light on the Polish cultural-historical context of the reality of the female population.

#### 2.4.4 Work and Gender-Related History Of Polish Women

Historically speaking, post-war Polish society had dragged along elements of, the so called, 'popular culture' that started to flourish in the Stalinism era. A particular propaganda that promoted a specific social structure that was followed by a particular set of values, traditions, and standards that shaped the Polish sense of belonging to the Polish community, their economy, and political structure (Kleinmann et al., 2017). In turn, this culture created a particular image of the concepts of femininity masculinity, traditions, and roles attributed to and exercised by the two genders (Kleinmann et al., 2017). This culture was reaffirmed through visual aids (i.e., posters) and means of mass information translation (i.e., radio, TV, and cinema at that time) (Kleinmann et al., 2017). This mass information targeted the public understanding of how, among other things, gender should be performed in everyday life (Kleinmann et al., 2017). Of course, this included the division of the job market into traditionally more masculine professions and more feminine ones (Kleinmann et al., 2017). With time, after the reconstruction of Polish society and its modernization, women were more emancipated and were given wider access to the job market, especially to the man-dominated professions, not only because of the equal rights movement but because of the shortage in the Polish job market (Kleinmann et al., 2017). However, this did not cancel the traditional gender role distribution and performed gender roles among men and women (Kleinmann et al., 2017).

### 3 RESEARCH AIM

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*The main question of this study:*

- *Exploring the adaptation experience, of Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners, in the Norwegian job market.*

*Sub-questions:*

- *Explore the reasons behind their choice to come to Norway and whether their gender role had something to do with that decision.*
- *How do the participants perceive their job opportunities in the Norwegian job market considering their qualifications and competencies, and what obstacles have they faced?*
- *What does work mean for them?*

### 4 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THIS THESIS

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Qualitative researchers often utilize "grand theories" during the research process to comprehensively understand a subject or situation (Malterud, 2011; Malterud, 2017). Grand theories are big and complex theories that function as an abstract umbrella for different concepts and aspects of our reality; they set a certain perspective and system of values through which one can see a situation or a topic and make certain assumptions as well as interpret them in a certain way based on that perspective (Mills, & Gitlin, 2000). According to Malterud, Grand theories such as Antonovsky's theory of Salutogenesis help the researcher to situate the knowledge that her/his study will produce. The study was inspired by the following two theories, Antonovsky's that is part of his Salutogenesis theory, 'Sense of Coherence' and Bandura's 'Self-Efficacy' theories which, in my opinion, mirrored different relevant aspects of this research subject. When merged, in Posadzki and Glass, (2009) article, those theories (Antonovsky's and Bandura's) were shown to be a good predictor of social well-being and strengthen the coping mechanisms (i.e., strategies to solve problems) used by

individuals' participants in their study (Posadzki, & Glass, 2009). Which is an interesting factor to see in the context of the subjects of this study. By using both theories, the study aimed to achieve a wholesome understanding of the adaptation experience of a specific group of female Polish immigrants in the Norwegian job market. The focus was on the motivation that drove them to seek employment, the strategies they used, and the obstacles they faced.

#### **4.1 ANTONOVSKY'S THEORY**

One of the main theories that will be used is Antonovsky's theory of Salutogenesis and the ability of people to use their general resistance resources (GRR), more specifically, one of its aspects of the 'sense of coherence theory,' which is widely used in previous researches (Eriksson & Lindström, 2007). This theory facilitates the understanding of the resources one has, to cope with challenging life events, or face hard life situations that are out of one's control, in other words, stressors (Eriksson & Lindström, 2007). The theory is centered around three main elements 'manageability, comprehensibility, and meaningfulness' (Antonovsky, 1987; Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986; Eriksson & Lindström, 2007). To understand this theory, each element will be individually explained. The comprehensibility element constitutes a person's experience of consistency throughout their daily life. To be comprehensible, a person's life should be explainable and predictable for a person to feel comprehensible (Antonovsky, 1987; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986; Eriksson & Lindström, 2007; Slootjes et al., 2017). Manageability is meant the balance in a person's life, the feeling of confidence in one's resources to manage any rising situations in their life (Antonovsky, 1987; Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986; Eriksson & Lindström, 2007; Slootjes et al., 2017). The last element is meaningfulness which revolves around the motivations in Antonovsky's theory. Antonovsky argues that motivation is the key element in a person's ability to make decisions on important life matters (Antonovsky, 1987; Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986; Eriksson & Lindström, 2007; Slootjes et al., 2017). This theory unfolds important components that explain the person's ability to cope with big life changes and stressful situations, which the construct of SOC revolves around. In other words, the way an individual processing ability of information, the goal of which is to deal with unavoidable everyday life conflicts that need to be resolved (Chu et al., 2016). The higher the degree of a person's SOC, the better their perception of everyday stressful life occurrences and the less they would see those stressful occurrences as a challenge and not a threat (Chu et al., 2016).

This thesis has a goal to use Antonovsky's SOC theory to try to mirror the elements of his theory on the obtained results of the research questions, namely, the adaptation experience of Polish women in the Norwegian job market that came to Norway to be reunited with their spouses. Zooming in on this matter will possibly facilitate a meaningful addition to the knowledge gap in the current body of research on the subject of this particular group.

## **4.2 BANDURA'S SELF-EFFICACY THEORY**

Bandura studied how people learn by observing other people's actions and the consequences that come from these actions (Bandura, 1986). Bandura was critical of the field of behaviorism as he did not totally believe the claim made by this field that people learn only by conditioning and that the environment around the person shaped her/his further actions (Bandura, 1986). On the contrary, he believed that human behavior is quite complex and cannot be simplified to this (to the behaviorist claim) extent (Bandura, 1986). Instead, he strongly believed that an individual's thoughts had the power to regulate their behavior and future actions (Bandura, 1986). These thoughts were the bases of the birth of 'The social cognitive theory.' This theory is based on three factors that Bandura (1986) argued were essential in a person's learning process and of decision-making in life: The Environmental factor, which consists of the following elements: social norms surrounding the individual, access to their community, and the influence this community has on the individuals, as well as his ability to change one own environment; The cognitive factor which embodies one's knowledge gained through life, expectations one makes for people and things in life, and lastly attitudes one has toward others or their environment (Bandura, 1986). The third and last factor of this theory is the behavioral factor which consists of individuals' skills, practices in life, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997). This psychological concept emphasizes the social environment's crucial role in an individual's self-regulation and learning (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 2001). Another important part of this theory accentuates the essential role of motivation in achievement and self-efficacy in an individual (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 2001). Bandura's 'Social cognitive theory' created the 'self-efficacy theory,' which has essential dynamic elements, i.e., self-regulatory and cognitive capabilities (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997). These elements constitute the sense of control over a situation a person is able to exert, in addition to the use of these elements in creating strategies as well as adjusting to the circumstance that one encounters in life to reach a set goal (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997). The self-efficacy element is a key element that I



want to focus on in the context of the studied group of interest (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997). Bandura's self-efficacy theory addressed the motivational aspect of an individual to achieve something, and it touched upon the anticipation of the capacity aspect one has to achieve, which is important for one's productivity and meaning in life (Bandura, 1991a, 1991b). Interestingly, Bandura described this motivational concept that a person experiences as being dynamic and constantly changing depending on the environment the person is living in, consequently affecting an individual's behavior (Bandura, 1986).

This theory would be interesting to implicate into this study's discussion of the results to fathom these women's perceived opportunities in the Norwegian job market, as a part of their adaptation experience.

### **4.3 GENDER PERSPECTIVES**

This study does not focus primarily on the gender aspect of this particular group. Therefore, the gender perspective taken in this study is to clarify and back up any results discussed and interpreted in the discussion section. In addition, the gender perspective element will serve firstly as a tool to underline its impacts on the overall picture of this thesis, when applicable. Secondly, to create a new path for further research on the gender factor in the context of this study's chosen group.

Butler's view on gender was partly a reaction to different theories that lean toward traditional views of gender (Butler, 2006). Butler's criticism of the Structural-functionalist theory of gender was one of the bases for the creation of her own theory about gender (Butler, 2006). The structural-functional theory of gender suggests that gender roles are based on biological sex and are necessary for the smooth functioning of society (Dousset & Malbrancke, 2018). This theory argues that men and women have different biological characteristics that make them suited for different societal roles (Dousset & Malbrancke, 2018). Butler (2006), on the other hand, argued that gender roles were constructs of a given society or culture and often played a key role in how we saw the world around us (Butler, 2006; Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018) as was portrayed in the background literature section (see 2.4.4) earlier, the historical context and its reinforcement, over time, in the Polish society have played a significant role in shaping particular gender views and ideas (Kleinmann et al., 2017). This phenomenon was noticed decades ago in a diverse body of research (Eagly & Steffen, 1984), including in the context of Poland and other countries (Kleinmann et al., 2017). With this being said, parts of Judith Butler's theory, specifically her trail of thoughts

and argumentation that birthed her theory, were described in her book 'Gender Trouble' (Butler, 2006). Part of her work focused more on questioning whether or not the way people acted was a natural phenomenon that should be attributed and directly linked to their female or male gender (Butler, 2006). She questioned the nature of the assumptions of how a person would act or the so-called 'gender behavior' should be expected of an individual based on what heterosexual societies believe is more masculine or more feminine to do (Butler, 2006). She went further and called it a performance or 'performing gender' (Butler, 2006).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

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### 5.1 THE CHOICE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory, as it addressed a topic that has not been researched widely in the context of the study's chosen group of immigrants (i.e., Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners). The lack of a rich or extensive body of research is one of the prerequisites to conducting an exploratory study (Stebbins, 2001). The question of this study was aiming to explore these women's adaptation experience in the Norwegian job market rather than explaining it. Given that the nature of this study's research question played a key role in the choice of the method to execute this study. Hence, a qualitative study methodology was chosen to answer the study question (Stebbins, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Explorative studies often seek qualitative methods to explore the matter at hand (Stebbins, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

This study was inspired by elements of anthropological and phenomenological perspectives. The anthropological element laid in the notion of attempting to explore and understand a societal phenomenon (Eriksen, 2017; Hacking, 1999) of the reality of these women. The Norwegian job market can be considered a social element because it is a system that is shaped by and has an impact on social structures and interactions (Buchowski, 2003). Whereas the Phenomenological element was encompassed in the first-person perspective (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Thornquist, 2018) that this thesis was aiming to acquire, namely, the understanding of this group's experience and perspectives on this societal aspect, which in the context of this study, is their adaptation experience in the Norwegian job market.

## **5.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH OF THIS STUDY**

The approach of this study was inductive, such approaches are used in qualitative studies and fall within the interpretive paradigm (Malterud, 2011; Malterud, 2017). Inductive study approaches tend to form an assumption of a phenomenon or/and its relation to another phenomenon based on a more general observation (Ryen, 2002). These observations are then tested through the collection of raw empirical data to explore a further understanding of the observations made in the beginning (Ryen, 2002). For example, developing a theory and not with the purpose of verifying or falsifying that observation (Ryen, 2002). This is in contrast to quantitative deductive studies, where a theory is tested against numerical data to form a generalization (Ryen, 2002).

The idea for this study arose from a broader interest in the population of Polish immigrants and the work-related aspect of their lives, a phenomenon (i.e., their work-related immigration) Polish immigrants are known for (Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Przybyszewska, 2021). As the focus of the study was narrowed down to a specific group of Polish immigrants – Polish women who immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands or partners – a research question was formulated, the goal of which was to explore their adaptation experience in the Norwegian job market.

## **5.3 THE CHOICE OF THE RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The positioning of this study is allocated in the pragmatic paradigm. Qualitative studies are often categorized as pragmatic when they are not based on a specific theoretical framework (e.g., phenomenology, anthropology, etc.) (Malterud, 2017). The pragmatic approach was chosen for this study because of its flexible nature, which is welcoming to the incorporation of different theories (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Moreover, pragmatic studies are known to have a degree of tolerance to uncertainty and complexity of a given setting, providing research flexibility and the ability to select the best possible methods to be able to answer to the set research question (Duram, 2010).

The interpretive paradigm is also central to this research because it underlies qualitative methodology (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Qualitative research has firm roots in the interpretivism paradigm that stems from hermeneutic philosophy, social constructionism, and phenomenology traditions (Andrews, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Malterud, 2017). Interpretivism believes that reality is constructed and created by individuals' subjective views of the world

(Collis & Hussey, 2014). With this in mind, both inductive approaches and the interpretive paradigm are in alliance with the fact that they rely on the subjective view of the informants and the active role the person performing the study plays in the research process and outcomes (Malterud, 2017).

## **6 METHOD**

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### **6.1 STUDY DESIGN**

There exist several instruments that could be implemented to perform a qualitative study, one of which is interviews (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). To execute this study, individual interviews were chosen to conduct it. Individual interviews, in turn, have various structures depending on the purpose of use (Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Semi-structured interviews were chosen to answer the research question. Firstly, semi-structured interviews are one of the types that are used in exploratory studies (Ellis, 2016). Secondly, semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility and improvisation during the interview (Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It gives room to explore the matter at hand and the opportunity to ask follow-up questions if needed (Ellis, 2016). This element is important in this study, as the topic in the study's context has not been widely researched. Therefore, a less constraining interview structure (e.g., semi-structured interview) (Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) was seen as more desirable for this study's success in answering the research question. Finally, semi-structured interviews are often used in studies with a pragmatic approach (Malterud, 2017).

### **6.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE**

To develop the interview guide, an intensive review of the existing literature was conducted to identify areas where further knowledge was needed. The aim was to create questions that would provide insights into the adaptation experiences, of Polish women who immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners, in the Norwegian job market. Various topics were studied to create the interview questions, including literature on Polish immigrants and their activities in the European and Norwegian job markets, as well as literature on Polish women in the context of work. The interview guide questions revolved around topics that are unclear in the existing body of research and the knowledge gaps identified in this thesis about the studied group in the current study. The following is an

example of general topic-oriented open-ended questions the interview guide was inspired by (see Appendix A & B for the extended version):

1. *How do Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their partners/husbands perceive their opportunities in the Norwegian job market with respect to their competencies and qualifications?*
2. *How do Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their partners/husband make their way into the job market? Moreover, what are the challenges they faced in getting into the Norwegian job market?*
3. *Their perception of their role as women and its effect on their decision to come to Norway.*
4. *The meaning of work carries for this group.*

The interview guide was created in two languages, Norwegian and English. To aid in comprehensive coverage of all relevant research areas during the interview. The guide was organized chronologically with questions designed to lead the conversation toward answering the research question, as recommended in literature on the creation and the use of interview guides (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Patton, 2002). Also, the interview guide served primarily as a tool to assist in navigating the interview (Patton, 2002). To ensure the functionality of the questions and their relevance to the purpose of the study, the interview guide was tested on two Polish women. The goal was to modify the questions as needed.

## **6.3 SAMPLE AND RECRUITMENT**

### **6.3.1 Sample**

This study used purposeful sampling to recruit participants. Qualitative study design often uses this strategy (Patton, 2002). Malterud (2017) noted that the sample and its criteria should be narrowed down and clearly defined to put the research on the right path and prevent acquiring irrelevant pieces of information that do not answer the research question (Malterud, 2017). Doing so would shed light on the right aspects of the phenomenon that will be explored (Malterud, 2017). The following inclusion criteria were strategically outlined to attract informants that are highly relevant to this thesis and its researched topic.

*The inclusion criteria for this study were:* Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their (Polish) partners or husbands, between the age of 22-45 years old,

living in Bergen for more than one year, currently working in Bergen, have a higher education degree, an apprenticeship, or a qualification of some sort from their homeland.

Power information (*Figure 1*) was used in this study to guide the number of participants needed. This method is known to be practical among qualitative studies with narrow topics and specific inclusion criteria (Malterud et al., 2016). Power information offers

several items and dimensions to consider in order to determine the sample size needed for a given study aim, as shown in *Figure 1* (Malterud et al., 2016). This guidance tool helped me in evaluating the approximate number of participants needed based on the dimensions and elements of this study (Malterud et al., 2016). Firstly, I worked on sculpting my study aim until I had a clearly formulated aim. Then, I narrowed down the inclusion criteria, to obtain the right sample. As the idea of this concept is enclosed in defining a concise study aim and finding the appropriate sample that has certain specificities that could give the researcher the needed information without the need to acquire a bigger sample (Malterud et al., 2016). Furthermore, this study chose two theories to interpret the outcomes, which according to the tool, required a smaller number of participants than if there were no theories included (Malterud et al., 2016). I used the dialogue item to understand how to evaluate the saturation of the material (i.e., based on the weakness and strength of the information), which is needed to answer the research question. The last item on the power information guide invites the researcher to look at their analysis method to take the final evaluation of the needed sample size for her/his study (Malterud et al., 2016). Given that Systematic text condensation (STC) was chosen to analyze this study's empirical data, this brought me the conclusion that I would need a smaller sample size, since it is known that this analysis method is used preferably with smaller samples (Malterud, 2012). Based on this step-by-step evaluation, I aimed to recruit from six to eight informants to ensure the richness of the material. The inclusion criteria did not attract a large number of informants. However, those who were interested were the ones that met all the characteristics needed to answer the study question. With this in mind, this

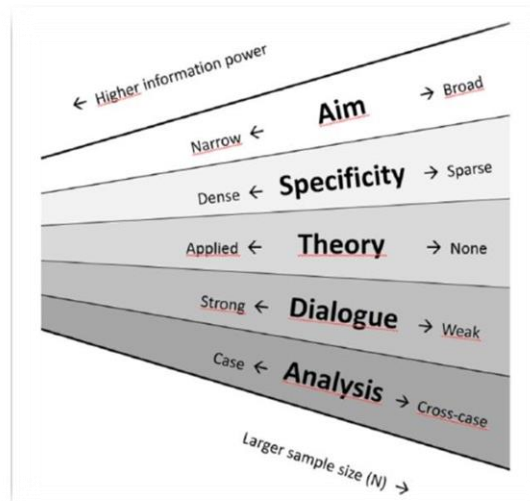


Figure 1 Information power: Items and dimensions (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016)

method guided me, as a novice, to find a good balance between the acquired information and its saturation.

### 6.3.2 Recruitment

The period of recruitment was stretched over two months, September and October, in the year 2022. Given the specific criteria for this study, the pool of potential informants was limited (Palinkas et al., 2015). To increase the likelihood of finding and recruiting suitable informants, a snowball strategy was used (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Participants were recruited through different places. My first recruitment attempt was through social media platforms, i.e., different Facebook groups for Polish people in Bergen. In these groups I laid out a post containing information about the study and my interest in talking to this specific group I wanted to explore. The second attempt was sending emails to different institutions and organizations that offered Norwegian language courses here in Bergen. One of the Norwegian language courses that answer my email was organized by a church. This church has been, for years, offering foreigners opportunities to learn the language for a symbolic cost and happened to have, at that time, an ongoing Norwegian language course, members of which were predominantly Polish. The person responsible for these courses at that church, helped me spread the word among the Polish member of that course and inform them about my study. A week later, I got several participants from those courses.

Simultaneously, I was reaching out to another church here in Bergen, which happened to have Polish parish meetings a few days a week. As well as different Polish community-related websites. Although I did not recruit anyone through the Catholic church or Websites of the Polish diaspora, I got many recommendations for other ways I could reach out to more possible informants. I also sent out an email to my fellow students asking them to spread the word about my study among their colleagues and friends; finally, I recruited several participants through one of the test participants that I had interviewed. This participant helped me with recruitment by posting in different Polish groups on Facebook, a translated version of my recruitment post, in Polish. In addition to a comment about her own positive experience in talking to me. After that, many Polish women got in contact with me to take part in this study through Facebook Messenger, email, and phone.

In total, 11 Polish women were screened, two of whom did not fit the inclusion criteria. Hence, they were excluded from the study. As a result, 9 participants were included in this study. All the participants were asked several questions before being admitted to the study to ensure that all the criteria for inclusion were met. The following questions are examples of pre-interview questions in the recruitment phase: the participants were asked if they were in the age range of 22 to 45 years old and if the purpose of their move was family reunification with their husband/partner. During the interview, they were asked about their educational background and occupation before coming to Norway.

Participants varied in age from 22 years old to 45 years old. All the participants had a degree(s) or competence from their homeland. All were currently working in Bergen and have been living in Norway for more than one year, the shortest period of stay was 5 years, and the longest was 15 years. Women with the following professions were among the nine participants that have been included in this study i.e., one was educated as a cook, one was a beautician with a degree from a polytechnic school, one had a degree in law and administration, one with a degree in journalism, one with two master degrees; one in pedagogy and one in social rehabilitation, two women with a background in accounting, however, one of them has a Bachelor degree in accounting and the other an accounting degree from Polytechnic school, a woman with a degree in Environmental Humanities, and one with a degree from a polytechnic school in sales and marketing.

## **6.4 CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS**

All the interviews were scheduled and conducted in November 2022. The participants were interviewed at places and times of their convenience. Six interviews were conducted in person, and three were conducted digitally. The duration of the interviews varied from a minimum length of 26 minutes to a maximum length of an hour and 10 minutes. I had a short conversation with all the participants, which was off record, before the official interview. In the off-record pre-interview conversations I went together with each participant through the consent form and the study objectives. I explained to the participants the following things: the confidentiality of their personal data, where the data is going to be saved, for how long, and who will have access to it, the anonymity of their identity, and their rights. They also got the opportunity to ask me questions, if there were any, before we started the interview on record. The consent forms were available in two languages, Norwegian and English (see Appendix C & D). The interviews in this study were done either in English or Norwegian, depending on



the participant's language of preference. All participants had good language skills, either in English or in Norwegian, except one participant that had low language competence in both English and Norwegian.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed, except the test interviews. The two test interviews were only recorded and used for the modification of the guide questions, when they served their purpose, they were deleted. The recordings and the transcripts of the nine main interviews were saved on 'UIB SAFE,' a secure desktop that is located on a (University of Bergen's) UIBs secure server, which only me and my supervisor had access to. All participants' real names were anonymized and given pseudonyms instead, as recommended in some literature on handling personal data of participants of a given study (Malterud, 2017). Accordingly, any data that would lead to recognition of the participants of this study were either changed or deleted from the transcripts, e.g., names of places, real names of relatives, friends or co-workers, or their own names (Malterud, 2017).

## 6.5 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

### 6.5.1 Systematic Text Condensation (STC)

When the material was obtained and transcribed, the analysis was carried out with the use of systematic text condensation analysis (STC), a method developed by Kirsti Malterud (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017). STC method is suitable for studies with fewer informants (Malterud, 2012), which is the case of this study. To execute this analysis method, the obtained data had to go through four stages (Malterud, 2012)

1. Total impression- from chaos to themes
2. Identifying and sorting meaning units – from themes to codes
3. Condensation – from code to meaning
4. Synthesizing – from condensation to descriptions and concepts

The *first step* Malterud (2012) introduced in her article 'Systematic text condensation: A strategy for qualitative analysis' was what she called 'total impression- from chaos to themes' (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017). In this step, I printed out all the transcripts and read them to gain an overall impression of each interview, taking a few notes on the margins. By the end of the first reading process, I already saw themes that were emerging that shed light on my research question. At the second reading of all the transcripts, 11 preliminary

themes were identified. However, I was able to bring it down to 8 by merging some preliminary themes together.

The *second step* that Malterud writes about in her article (2012) and book (2017) is 'Identifying and sorting meaning units – from themes to codes. At this step, I was doing the sortation part of this analysis. I went through all the transcripts with markers of different colors and sticky notes to do an old-school physical sortation of the data, the purpose of which was to find the meaning units that I thought gave voice to a specific preliminary theme and color code them under the corresponding to the themes. Then I carried on by creating a document to start digitally, gathering everything together in one place. After the sortation process was done, my supervisor and I worked together to refine my sortation process further by eliminating, merging, or renaming these themes to keep only the ones that answer or are relevant to the research question. At the end of this process 4 code groups were identified, some of these groups had subgroups. After I had landed on these 4 code groups, I transferred all the meaning units under the finals code group. By now, the number of pages and the amount data make it easier to have a clear overview of what is there to work with.

*The third step* was 'Condensation – from code to meaning' according to Malterud's recipe. This was the hardest and the most enjoyable part of the analysis to execute, in my opinion. Here, I encountered important decisions to make in terms of what meaning units to take to build the condensates, that in its turn, will shed light on a specific aspect of my research question. This step was crucial, I used some time choosing carefully meaning units that would, if put together, represent an aspect I wanted to elicit. However, at the same time, I had a constant awareness of the fact that I have to be careful to not change what the participants' messages were in the first place, what they were trying to convey with their words. After I was done with the condensates, my supervisor checked them and recommended change where it was needed. An example of a condensate and a golden quote would be:

**Condensate:** *I would say that I'm a family oriented person. I was raised with a certain idea of how a woman should be like and that family comes first. My whole life I was taught to be a proper Polish mother, that takes care of everything. She needs to do all the homework, including making dinner, taking care of the children, educate them, clean the house, wash clothes and plus she has to go to work to make some money. Although i grow up with a conservative view on a womens role, it was my decision to move to Norway. I wanted to be*

*with him and I didn't want to live in another country than the one he was living in. My partner (Husband) came to Norway first because he had a job here. His job was a good paid job, so from like a financial point of view, it made more sense for me to move to Norway than for him to Poland. I had an agreement with him that at some point we must decide that it's the time for me to move to Norway or time for him to move back to Poland.*

**Golden quote:** *“it was very hard to the to do this decision but but it's it was my decision, not my fiancé. (SPK\_1, Yeah) we talked together about this that we must decide where it will be better here or Norway. So then we decide that maybe we come here for example 2-3 years, save some money and then we come back and he doesn't push, press on me (SPK\_1, Yeah) Yes. No, no, no, it was not that, he told me that we must decide (SPK\_1, Yeah), we must decide because I cannot live alone there And you in Krakov, we must be together, you know, we because we are 25 years together” (Maja)*

The *fourth and last step* ‘Synthesizing – from condensation to descriptions and concepts’ (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017). In this step, I took the condensates and synthesized them into an analytical text. This process entailed going from the condensate that was in first-person format to an analytical text that would be in a third-person format, the function of which lay in presenting the phenomenon that is embedded in the collected data from the interviews that answer the research question. Despite being able to make my interpretations of the results, I was held in constant focus on the accuracy of these interpretations as I had to refer not only to the condensates but to the original text throughout the whole process.

## **6.6 REFLEXIVITY**

The inspiration for this study came from my own immigrant background and the three main focuses of the master's program I am enrolled in (i.e., social inequality, the elderly care sector, and work and health). When knowledge is produced, especially through qualitative research, the researcher tends to look at a matter through her/his own lens, or more precisely, from their own subjective perspective (Malterud, 2017). The reason behind this is due to the fact that researchers bring with their own expectations into research, followed by the subjective knowledge born from personal experience, biases, preconceptions, and opinions (Malterud, 2017). Accordingly, when data is interpreted, this data will be influenced by the preconceptions and biases the researcher had before entering a given research project

(Malterud, 2017). Malterud has a well-said metaphor for researchers' preconceptions and biases (Malterud, 2017). She called them the 'luggage' that one brings with them when entering a research project (Malterud, 2017). The acknowledgment of reflexivity is essential in a qualitative study (Malterud, 2017). Firstly, it creates transparency by encouraging the researcher to tell their audience about the so-called 'luggage', which makes the reader aware of the possible biases that might have affected the anchoring of this study and its angling (Malterud, 2017). Secondly, it gives the reader a pre-story of the research idea itself and the lens through which the results were interpreted (Malterud, 2017).

I have a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, with experience working in different departments of the health sector in Norway, i.e., I worked in an elderly care center with seniors suffering from Dementia and currently working within the immigration health sector. I am a person with a mixed ethnic background; I am half from Kazakhstan and from Lebanon. One of the cultures I grew up in was the Lebanese culture, in which I learned a certain idea of women's role in society, family, and marital relationships. Despite the fact that I lived in different countries and considered myself to be well-integrated into the Western/European culture. Through working on this thesis, I noticed that some of these ideas are so deeply embedded in me that they affected my view of the group I was researching, namely Polish women. I made general assumptions about Polish women based on my cultural knowledge from my Lebanese and Kazakh roots. For instance, I assumed that Polish women would be overly sacrificial for the benefit of the family and fairly submissive. Therefore, they would follow the lead of their men whom they supposedly belong TO and not WITH. These assumptions affected the formulation of my question and the search for literature in the beginning phase of planning this thesis. I had made up my mind about the Polish woman's role in the decision-making process to come to Norway following their husbands. The proof of this was the wording I chose to use for the research question, which reflected and projected the influence of my ethnic and cultural background on my choice of words. For instance, I chose to phrase my research question as follows "*Explore the adaptation experience of Polish women that followed their husbands/partners in the Norwegian job market with respect to their competencies and qualifications.*" using the word '**followed**' instead of for example **reunited**, the same goes for the formulation of the interview guide. During the initial stages of planning my master's thesis, I conducted two test interviews to refine my questions before proceeding to the main interviews. These test interviews involved two informants who helped

me confront my own preconceptions and biases. As a result, I was able to revise and adjust my questions to gain a better understanding of Polish women and their culture. Through this process, I gained a more realistic perspective of the intersection between work and family in the lives of Polish women. Moreover, I was brought to the realization that I was looking at this topic from the wrong angle; that I projected preconceptions and biases that I dragged subconsciously from my cultural background into this study.

This study has been a great learning experience for me. Through this collision with my own preconceptions and biases based, in my case, on my cultural background, I acknowledged my role as a subject that can influence the process of outlining the idea of interest. In addition to the aspects of the matter of interest that would be shed light on, the interview procedure and my role in the interpretation of the results (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Malterud, 2011; Malterud, 2017). Finally, I acknowledged that when I was met with my preconceptions and biases, I was given a chance to correct the line of thinking, detach from my own 'luggage' to see the bigger picture, and hear these women and not simply hear what I wanted to hear in their words based on my false preliminary assumptions. I documented my initial assumptions in a research journal, which served as my guide throughout the study. From planning to executing phases, I relied on this journal to keep track of my progress and thought processes. By putting my assumptions into writing, I became aware of my flawed beliefs and was able to acknowledge them. This, in turn, allowed me to shift my focus and align my thoughts in the right direction.

## **6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical rules set by Helseforskningsloven and Helsinki Declaration. The author of this study made sure to respect and preserve the rights of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Malterud, 2011). All participants signed a consent form before participating in this study (see Appendix C & D). The consent form was adopted from UIB's standard consent form database that my supervisor provided; however, it was modified to fit the purpose of this thesis. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights. Furthermore, the participants were ensured that they could withdraw from the study whenever they wanted and would face no consequences. The study procedure was explained, including the fact that the interviews will be recorded (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Malterud, 2011). No pressure was exerted on the participants, and they were

treated fairly. They were debriefed at the end of the interview. The study was registered at RETTE, UiB's (University of Bergen) system for controlling personal data in research and student projects. It is there to ensure that all the personal data is processed appropriately (UIB, 2022). All the collected data and the participant's list were saved on UIB's secure desktop, SAFE. Where it was anonymized and coded to make sure it would not be linked directly to the participants' factual information or their words. Only my supervisor and I had access to this server.

## 7 RESULTS

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The conducted systematic text condensation (STC) analysis resulted in 4 categories that addressed several aspects of the research question “exploring the adaptation experience of Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners, in the Norwegian job market”, and the following sub-questions: “Explore the reasons behind their choice to come to Norway and whether their gender role had something to do with that decision”, “How do the participants perceive their job opportunities in the Norwegian job market considering their qualifications and competencies, and what obstacles have they faced?”, and “What does work mean for them?”

The first category is ‘*Polish women's cultural view on gender and their decision to immigrate to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners*’ This category addresses the nature of their perception and ideas of the gender role that is rooted in their cultural upbringing and whether this cultural understanding of a woman's role had an influence on their decision to immigrate to Norway to be reunited with their partners. The second category: ‘*The experience of Polish women on the Norwegian job market*’, which has the following subcategories: ‘*The Strategies used to get onto the Norwegian job market and the rationale behind it*’ and ‘*Experience as a newcomer with employment and employers in the Norwegian job market*’ This category addresses the different aspects of the Polish women's adaptation experience in the Norwegian job market, as a newcomer. The subcategories of this category exemplify the complexity of their experience that cannot be seen from a simplified perspective or given a simple answer. The third category: ‘*Polish women's perception of the meaning of work*’ This category gives an overview of the perception these women have of work and what it entails for them. Last but not least, the fourth category is ‘*The way Polish*

women found their success in the Norwegian job market and its key elements.' This category talks about how these women found success and what drove them to it.

## **7.1 POLISH WOMEN'S CULTURAL VIEW ON GENDER AND THEIR DECISION TO IMMIGRATE TO NORWAY TO BE REUNITED WITH THEIR HUSBANDS/PARTNERS.**

### **The decision to come to Norway and Polish women's view on gender**

The majority of the participants described an idea of a role that a Polish woman represented. This idea was stemming from their cultural understanding of the representation of the female gender role. They described specifically a mother role, a 'Polish mother'. A woman takes care of the children, tends to the needs of the family, cleans the house, and makes food. In addition to that, she works. The participants of this study expressed, in different words, their dedication to their families and, simultaneously, a determination to get into the Norwegian job market as fast as possible. These two notions said a lot about their shared characteristics, in the context of this study, as being family-oriented, yet at the same time, they were career-oriented women. Almost all the participants, except one, made it clear that the decision to come to Norway was their conscious decision, and that gender was not a factor that influenced their decision to immigrate to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partner. The majority said that their move was made through dialogs they had between themselves and their partner. They further explained that this decision was motivated by either a financial factor or not wanting to be separated as a family, or by both factors simultaneously.

*"it was very hard to the to do this decision but but it's it was my decision, not my fiancé. (SPK\_1,Yeah) we talked together about this that we must decide where it will be better here or Norway. So then we decide that maybe we come here for example 2-3 years, save some money and then we come back and he doesn't push, press on me (SPK\_1,Yeah) Yes. No, no, no, it was not that, he told me that we must decide (SPK\_1,Yeah), we must decide because I cannot live alone there And you in Krakov, we must be together, you know, we because we are 25 years together. so we are a very". (Maja)*

## **7.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF POLISH WOMEN IN THE NORWEGIAN JOB MARKET**

### **The Strategies used to get onto the Norwegian job market and the rationale behind it**

The participants disclosed different strategies they used to search for work on the Norwegian job market, such as: searching on Finn.no, sending CVs in response to different announcements, googling places, and going physically there to distribute their CVs in the hope that some of these places have open vacancies; surfing the internet for Polish or International groups that have job offers on social platforms (e.g., Facebook). The majority said they looked up Polish groups that had many offers, the possibility to ask for a job, or get informed if anyone from that group heard about an open vacancy. In fact, one of the most common statements made in the interviews was the mention of spreading the word through the Polish community here in Bergen/Norway about the need for a job. This method was considered very effective by the majority of the participants of this study.

*“actually what I know and what I've said to you because I found those jobs on the groups and the people that I I began to know, The best thing to the best way to find a job in Norway is to have connections.” (filipa)*

The majority explained their motivation to work to be economy related, an act of their financial contribution to the family. They did not want to stay at home and do nothing. Many told the author that they knew, either from their own experience or from the experience of their Polish friends and acquaintances, that certain jobs were typical for Polish men and women to start with when Polish people come to Norway to work (i.e., construction sites for men and cleaning jobs for women). Due to this, they had a general idea that it is the easiest way to get into the Norwegian job market, as a Polish woman, through, for example, the cleaning sector. As a result, many of the participants said that they thought straight away that they would have to work in the cleaning sector first. All the participants seemed to be very reflected on this matter; some explained this phenomenon by the fact that Norway is an expensive country to live in, and one has to prioritize accordingly. This means they were met with a crossroads, to take any job just to secure the financial stability of the family and then move on to something else, i.e., another job, or have no income and try to find a job where they use their competence. The latter was not an option for any of the participants in this study.



*“exactly reference, exactly. So you have to starting from something and always you starting from cleaning because it's easier. Yeah. But without Norwegian its difficult (to find other jobs)” (zofia)*

### **Experience as a newcomer with employment and employers in the Norwegian job market**

The majority of the participants described the process of moving to Norway as not especially challenging in terms of getting documents in place, other bureaucratic matters, and understanding how things work in Norway. This was accredited by the participants to the fact that they already had their partners living here, and they got introduced to the Polish community here in Norway, including Polish groups on Facebook and individuals from their homeland living here that were seen as helpful for their adoption experience. Moreover, through their stories, they got to understand how things work in Norway in terms of the Norwegian job market, the bureaucratic system, and different institutions that they would eventually have to deal with as labor immigrants, such as Nav and Skatteetaten. Unlike their immigration process, their descriptions of the difficulties of finding jobs were seemingly greater. Most of the participants had the impression that they would find a job easily. Although only a few of them did find a job fast through their Polish connections here, e.g., partners in the Polish community. The majority did not feel it was as easy as they anticipated. The participants attributed this difficulty in finding a job to several factors: For instance, prejudice of the employers in the Norwegian job market towards the participants' ethnic Polish background. Some of the participants were under the impression that their Polish family name, when seen on the CV by employers on the job market, dropped their chances drastically of getting a job. Others explained this difficulty in finding a job as the notion of the prioritization of Norwegians over Polish workers as well as other immigrants. This explanation was exemplified by the fact that Polish people, in the opinion of many participants, did not get invited to job interviews as much by employers in the Norwegian job market. Accordingly, they did not get the chance to prove themselves and their competence.

*“It's actually difficult for us foreigners, right, because of course Norwegians are prioritized first, right yeah, and but if I had experience now, it wasn't so difficult” (joanna)*

Moreover, many participants were either working in the cleaning sector or generally knew someone that worked or was working in this sector, which pointed toward the overrepresentation of Polish women in cleaning-related jobs. Furthermore, most of the participants told me about one particular type of contract that they encountered on the Norwegian job market, which was an on-call substitute (“ringe vikar” in Norwegian) contract. They explained that this type of contract was unstable in terms of the absence of a permanent position and the probability of getting one. In addition to the predictability of working hours, therefore, many participants perceived this type of contract as being not satisfactory. Several participants reported having unpleasant experiences at work, such as mobbing and being terminated from a job without notice. Whereas others had a rather pleasant experience with employers in the Norwegian job market. The majority of the participants concluded from their experience working in the Norwegian job market that, most likely, the main difficulty is related to the lack of job experience in Norway and the lack of language competence. So if one has job experience from Norway, references from employers from Norway, or language competence, it is not that difficult to find work here in Norway.

### **7.3 POLISH WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF THE MEANING OF WORK**

#### **Meaning of work and job satisfaction.**

It was evident from the interviews, that for these women, work meant more than just financial advantage. Many of the participants expressed the importance of different qualities in performing their tasks at work that they expect, in the first place, from themselves, such as dedication, loyalty, and determination. To elaborate on this, several explained that even when they didn't like the job they were working at, they had to do their best and get the job done. All the participants expressed satisfaction with their current jobs. They describe the manifestation of their satisfaction differently as they are individuals with different types of needs and expectations of a workplace. Some of them mentioned the feeling of appreciation and being seen at work or having a good collective atmosphere at work because of good colleagues, or the possibility of professional and personal growth. Some others stated that the social aspect of the job for them was important, as it made them feel that their day was interesting. They gained new knowledge about the people, learned from their stories, and acquired more language competence in the course of their interaction at work. Moreover, all of the participants seem to encompass different meanings of what work signifies for them personally. Some said it gives them room to see their own development in different spheres of

their life, some mentioned feeling more confident as they learned new things and had the opportunity to hone their skills. Several of the participants linked work with independence.

*“ I feel appreciated (work). And I feel seen and I feel needed. So it's it's really nice to feel that way” (filipa)*

## **7.4 THE WAY POLISH WOMEN FOUND THEIR SUCCESS IN THE NORWEGIAN JOB MARKET AND ITS KEY ELEMENTS**

### **Finding success and it's driving elements**

All the participants reflected on the importance of language in the Norwegian job market and that it is the solution to getting a better job. Several even said that they experienced that some of the cleaning jobs they looked at required Norwegian language competencies. As a result, all the participants Started looking for jobs not related to their competence. The majority of the participants contemplated the fact that they had to make certain prioritizations in their new lives here in Norway, and language had to go down on the priority list. They mentioned an element that influenced this prioritization, which was the high cost of the language courses and the high cost of living here in Norway. Only one of the participants prioritized the language and went to a language course before getting out on the Norwegian job market. Many explained that they were always intending to go to language courses after saving up some money, but they described certain obstacles that they faced in the years they lived and worked here, such as combining work and language courses. The schedules of the courses and their work schedules weren't compatible at times, so they couldn't pursue the courses. In addition to that, the available free language courses, as some of the participants said, have limited places. A very interesting connection was made by several participants between confidence and the level of language knowledge. Most of the participants wished that the language courses would have been more available for Polish people, either for free as it available for other immigrant groups, for a lower cost, or even for a shared cost with Nav or other institutions. All the participants, in their own words, came to the conclusion that if one has language, then one has more opportunities in the Norwegian job market. However, when the language is limited, then the chances one has are limited as well.

*“if I would have that knowledge of the language for those many years ago, I think that I would begin straight ahead with the being a nail designer.” (izabel)*

During the interviews, several participants mentioned that, apart from language skills, they encountered difficulty in finding employment due to the lack of work experience in Norway and references from local employers. These two factors appeared in the majority of the interviews in different contexts, highlighting the need for them to develop their profile in the Norwegian job market. Although all the participants initially sought employment for income, they had a long-term goal in mind to transition to a more suitable job related to their competence once they had accumulated work experience and references from local employers.

## 8 DISCUSSION

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### 8.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

**Recap of the findings:** The study explored the adaptation experience of Polish women who migrated to Norway to reunite with their husbands/partners in the Norwegian job market. It also explored the reasons behind their choice to come to Norway, whether their gender role had something to do with that decision, their perceived opportunities in the Norwegian job market with respect to their competencies, and the difficulties they faced. In addition to the meaningful work held for them.

The findings revealed that the women interviewed actively participated in the decision-making process to move to Norway and were motivated to seek employment by financial independence and personal fulfillment. Gender roles did not appear to be a significant factor in their decision to migrate to Norway. The women were determined to pursue a career in Norway regardless of their initial competencies. The study also highlighted that these women typically start in low-skilled sectors such as cleaning due to the pre-division of the Norwegian job market. They faced challenges in finding employment, including discrimination, prioritization of locals over immigrant workers, lack of language competency, lack of references, and lack of job experience. The women used various strategies to find employment, including online platforms and networking within the local Polish community. Work carried different meanings for each of these women, including socialization, independence, language development, confidence, and usefulness. Language competence, work experience, and references from local employers were identified as the essential factors for achieving success in the Norwegian job market.

#### 8.1.1 Discussion of the First Category of the Results, “Polish women's cultural view on gender and their decision to immigrate to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners”

**The choice and the incentive to move to Norway:** This element of the findings of the current study expands the knowledge that is already gathered on this group of immigrants. As it gives us insight into the family dynamics in Polish families by acquiring data on the decision-making process of these Polish women in the context of gender. The participants of this study expressed their active part in making the decision to come to Norway not just to follow their husbands/partners but to be reunited with them. All the participants accentuated through their stories the fact that this decision was built on an ongoing dialogue that they had

with their significant other over a period of time until they came to the consensus that it was the best option for their family. The reasons behind the choices of these women, as they expressed it, were connected to firstly, the fact that, at that time, their husbands/partners had better-paid jobs and could offer financial stability to their families. The second reason was to gather their family in one place. The family reunification aspect has been mentioned earlier in the literature on this group (Friberg et al., 2012). In addition to the financial incentive that the current study noted was in line with previous research on the emigration of Polish people to foreign countries, which was mainly economic (Friberg et al., 2012; Iglicka & Ziolek-Skrzypczak, 2010; Thorn, 2009). Nevertheless, there is, in my opinion, another factor that could be seen as an incentive that is not directly mentioned in the previous body of research on this immigrant group and that is worth discussing. According to some literature on Polish emigration, economic incentives may not be the sole reason for Polish couples to move abroad (Sikorska, 2021). Instead, it could be linked to their desire to have children, which they cannot afford in their home country (Sikorska, 2021). Pustułka's et al. (2018) findings marked in their study that Polish couples who reunite in Norway, for example, tend to have more children within 2-3 years and express a wish to have even more children in the future (Pustułka et al., 2018). This phenomenon could be further explained by Magda's policy paper (2020), which highlights the challenges faced by women in Poland, especially those with families, due to inadequate support from the country's social structure (Magda, 2020). Childcare facilities in Poland, such as daycare and school schedules, do not align with standard working hours, making it difficult for women with children to enter the job market (Magda, 2020). As a result, these women are deemed "unattractive" in the Polish job market (Magda, 2020). Consequently, this could be a significant factor influencing their decision to move to countries like Norway or other European countries with different social structures that offer opportunities for both parents to work and raise children. For instance, the Norwegian government prioritizes supporting parents by creating accessible daycare facilities that allow parents to balance work and childcare (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2023), unlike in Poland (Magda, 2020).

**The researched group's view on gender roles:** This study discovered that the interviewed Polish women held an ideological and abstract idea of the role of a Polish woman, which was ingrained in their minds but not necessarily implemented in practice by all the participants. For instance, the participants of this study describe the "Polish mother" as the

person that takes care of the children, tends to the needs of the family, cleans the house, and makes food. Interestingly, when the participants were asked about the effect of their gender role as a woman/female on the decision to come to Norway, the majority ended up describing a "Polish mother" figure, which was used interchangeably with the role of a "Polish woman" by the participants. If I had to apply Butler's theory of performativity to the gender role description these women in the current study gave, the argument would have its focus on the traditionality of the gender values of a given society (Butler, 2006). According to Butler (2006), societal and cultural history contributes to how people perceive gender roles and act on them (Butler, 2006). According to previous literature, the roles of the two genders were firmly established in Polish society due to a patriarchal society focus and a conservative Catholicism (Zarzycka & Rydz, 2014). Hence, the idea of the "Polish mother" described by the participants is unsurprising. The description of the term "Polish mother" was mentioned in previous research, holding similar characteristics as the study participants reported (Aziz, 2015; Cichocka et al., 2013). The idea itself about women and their domestic duties, which the participants of this study mentioned, is confirmed in several studies (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2020; Zalewska-Łunkiewicz & Zygmunt, 2018). One such study noticed that the female Polish part of their study took over domestic homework tasks (i.e., cleaning the house, preparing food, etc.). In contrast, men reported less participation in domestic work (Zalewska-Łunkiewicz & Zygmunt, 2018).

Moreover, another study by Kosakowska-Berezecka et al. (2020) that examined the perceptions of gender roles in the division of housework duties of men and women in Norway and Poland found that in Norway, men were more lenient in the notion of sharing household responsibilities than Polish men had shown (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2020). They attributed the difference in the perception of Polish and Norwegian men of their part in household duties to the different meanings of masculinity and femininity roles in the two countries (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2020). Magda (2020) brings to attention and confirms the persistent division in domestic work among males and females, which, in turn, she argues, affects their activities and chances in the Polish job market (Magda, 2020). In my opinion, the gender factor, after all, indirectly affects these women's motivation to seek employment and pursue a career here in Norway, given that this study revealed that Polish women sought to play a more active economic role in their families. This was evident through their motivation to find work in the Norwegian job market regardless of whether that job

matched their qualifications or not. Traditional gender roles were deeply embedded in them on a cultural level. However, these women were actively shaping their roles and identities to adapt to the new society they were living in, namely Norway, by balancing their commitments to both family and career.

### 8.1.2 Discussion of the Second Category of the Results, “The Experience of Polish Women in the Norwegian Job Market”

The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of research on the "pull factor" (Friberg et al., 2012; Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018) and its functionality in terms of gender. Gmaj and Iglicka (2018) suggested that the uneven ratio of Polish men to women in the Norwegian job market could be attributed to the "pull factor" (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). This was due to male dominance in certain sectors, a higher likelihood of men taking on full-time jobs compared to women, and, subsequently, higher demand for male workers than female workers (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). In addition to that, as the women of this study reported, they got many not optimal deals with bad contracts in the beginning, such as substitute contracts that are not long-period contracts that increased instability as well as the feeling of being insecure in one's employment (Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Friberg, 2012a).

The findings of this study pointed towards the fact that the women of this study noticed certain segregation in the Norwegian job market in connection to certain professions and Polish people, such as the cleaning sector and Polish women, or in other words, an association between a skill/sector and an ethnic group. This phenomenon aligns with previous research on Polish labor immigrants (Friberg & Eldring, 2011; Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017; Friberg, 2012a; Friberg, 2012b; Kilskar et al., 2018; Przybyszewska, 2021; Ødegård & Andersen, 2021), and has been referred to as the immigrant "niche" (Friberg, 2012b) or specifically, the Polish "niche" (Friberg, 2012a). Nevertheless, the participants perceived this phenomenon as being, on the one hand, positive, as it gives them easier access to the Norwegian job market (i.e., jobs in the cleaning sector). On the other hand, many participants believed that they had to start with jobs in the cleaning sector and work their way up. Previous literature made notice of this aspect of immigrants' realities, that they tend to follow predetermined paths of employment based on the sectors where others before them have found success (Dai et al., 2011; Friberg, 2012a). For instance, a study about Chinese immigrants who were living in Australia and opened their own businesses, found that their social environment influenced their job-related choices (Dai et al., 2011). I see two explanations to be relevant in this case to



discuss; the first one is offered by previous research on immigrants that points to the connection between the confidence levels of immigrants in foreign job markets (Brekke et al., 2020; Huseby & Garvik, 2022). Immigrants often face numerous obstacles that may diminish their confidence in their chances and opportunities on the job market (Brekke et al., 2020; Huseby & Garvik, 2022). These obstacles occur due to various reasons, among which are insufficient language, cultural and financial barriers, as well as working - in some cases - illegally (Czapka, 2010). The second explanation could be seen through Bandura's Social cognitive and self-efficacy theories, where he accentuates the importance of the environmental factor (i.e., in the case of both, this study and Dai et al. (2011) study's community accounts for the environmental factor) on the motivation of the individual to pursue and achieve a goal (Bandura, 1991a, 1991b). Thus, the case of both, the current study, and Dai et al. (2011) study, the participants learned and evaluated their capacities in achieving their goal through reflecting upon the successful path that was already created by others in the community and decided to follow it as a strategy to begin with. The community of these Chinese immigrants helped them learn the ways one could open and manage one's own business in the marketing and sales sector in the Australian job market (Dai et al., 2011). The same seems to be true, in my opinion, in the current study where many of the participants were resorting to preexisting immigrant niches on the job market under the indirect influence of their community, that has proven these niches to be a way to success. In other words, they learn from their community, which in turn helps the manageability of their life to increase, as Antonovsky's theory would have propagated.

The mention of the Polish community as a strategy for these Polish women to find employment in this study seemed to play a significant role. This finding is not new, as it has been indirectly referred to in previous literature on Polish immigrants (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018) as well as in the context of other immigrant groups (Dai et al., 2011). The collectivistic history of Polish society under communism (Delvecchio et al., 2020) may have played a role in their connectivity to their community in a foreign country. Moreover, the notion of collectivism was portrayed in the previous research as the eagerness of the Polish people to support each other's family members in scouting for jobs in Poland or outside of Poland (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). The interviewed women of this study made mention of the community as a strategy to find work. Accordingly, implying their ongoing collective view on social networks when living abroad. The community serves not only for the sense of

belonging (Shelton et al., 2020) but also for helping one another with employment. The Polish community was found to be critical in helping Polish women access more opportunities in the Norwegian job market, which is more favorable to male workers (Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018). This is because there is higher demand for male workers, making it more challenging for female immigrants to find work (Friberg, et al., 2012; Gmaj & Iglicka, 2018).

The participants of this study all had some kind of qualification that they didn't use in the beginning of their job journey. Rather they went to look for jobs or take jobs that they were overqualified for. Although, this type of discrepancy between the level of education and the job equivalency of immigrant employees has been discussed in other studies (Brekke, 2008; Czapka, 2010). Antonovsky's theory of "Sense of Coherence" (SoC) may provide an explanation for why the majority of these women choose to work in the cleaning sector despite having qualifications and competencies. Antonovsky claimed that we as individuals internalize the effective tools we once used to deal with stress, which helps in shaping an individual's ability to handle upcoming stressors in their (Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986). As individuals manage stress effectively, their Sense of Coherence is strengthened, providing greater coping strategies for future stressful situations (Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996a; Chu et al., 2016). Hence, in the case of the participants of this study, they were trying to cope with being new in a country and encountering difficulties in finding a job as an immigrant. Which is a stressor in itself (Adil, et al., 2021). To minimize that stress and cope with it, they tried to keep their life more manageable, comprehensible, and meaningful (Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996); by taking on jobs that are lower than their competence but cover their life necessities. In addition, to taking predetermined paths, in some job sector (e.g., 'Polish niche') as it was already secured, tested by others in their community and resulted in success.

The participants discussed how they were not given many opportunities to showcase their language skills and competence during interviews because they were not invited very often to interviews. Markova et al. (2013) conducted a study on Russian students applying for jobs in Norway, to investigate cultural differences in perception of what is important to mention in an interview, and where the accent should be made on the competence-related information or personal characteristics one has (Markova et al., 2013). The study concludes that discrepancies in the cultural understanding of what to accentuate in an interview would eventually minimize the chances of foreigners, in their case Russians, getting hired in jobs

that are in accordance with their competence (Markova et al., 2013). Markova et al. (2013) recommended that foreigners would have better success in interviews in Norway if they had the opportunity to practice with the questions beforehand (Markova et al., 2013). This idea is relevant to the current study. Polish women who reported not being called for interviews were losing the chance to secure a job in their field of competence and missing out on opportunities to understand the values and key elements that Norwegian employers seek in the hiring process. This, in turn, hinders their journey to success.

Furthermore, during interviews, Polish women attributed some of the difficulties getting a job due to bias from employers or, in other words, discrimination against Polish labor immigrants. To better understand this issue, the literature identifies different types of work-related discrimination that could be relevant to this study's findings. Three types of discrimination are worth discussing:

- 1) Preference-based discrimination is when an employer chooses to hire a less qualified candidate from their own country or someone with shared acquaintances instead of a more competent applicant from another country, even though the latter would bring greater economic benefits to the company (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2009).
- 2) Discrimination that is based on prejudice that is formed in a society where the population is divided into 'us' and 'them', which affects the hiring process of people based on this division, where the employer has certain prejudices against a certain majority group and based on these filtered applicants. This kind of phenomenon is often experienced by immigrants on the job market (Merton, 1948; Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2009), which could explain the experience of the group of immigrants that participated in this study with job applications. Rogstad and Midtbøen (2009) claimed that such type of discrimination still happens but on a structural level and on a minimal scale in the job market, namely the Norwegian job market.
- 3) Discrimination based on stereotypes attributed to a specific group of the minority that blinds the employer and shies them away from considering the qualification of an applicant that is of another ethnical background than the one the employer is from (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2009).

These types of discrimination may explain why the interviewed Polish women faced difficulties while applying for jobs in the Norwegian job market.

Lastly, this study's participants noted an opportunity gap, in my opinion, this opportunity gap could have a negative or positive effect on this immigrant group. Gesiarz et al. (2020) stated that the gap could have a negative impact (Gesiarz et al., 2020), whereas Dai et al. (2011) found that the Chinese immigrants they studied in Australia were motivated to develop alternative strategies to find employment, despite difficulties finding work in the local job market (Dai et al., 2011). Bandura's 'Social Cognitive Theory' provides a reasonable explanation of this phenomenon, emphasizing motivation as a key factor in pursuing success (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (1986) suggested that individuals learn not only from conditioning and reinforcement of successful experiences in their environment but also from reflections on outcomes observed in their social environment (Bandura, 1986; Bandura & Walters, 1963). The difficulties that this group of immigrants met in the Australian job market made them adapt to the situation and learn from their own experience as well as from the experience of others in their community (Dai et al., 2011). This observation is in line with Bandura's description of what the element of self-efficacy serves in his theory since it makes one evaluate the capacities one has with the available external resource and act accordingly (Bandura, 1991a, 1991b). This, in my opinion, could also be applied to the group researched in this study, as the difficulties they faced did not stop them from achieving success and satisfaction with their current jobs.

### 8.1.3 Discussion of the Third Category of the Results, “Polish Women's Perception of the Meaning of Work”

This category's results were complementary to the literature existing on the ability of work to grant a kind of meaning to individuals (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014; Morin, 2008). One of the three key elements of Antonovsky's theory of 'Sense of Coherence' is meaningfulness. The participants of this study expressed having a job as something essential in their lives not only to benefit financially but also because it brought them intrinsic benefit (i.e., professional and personal growth). This notion is understandable since previous research shows that work is said to have an influence on a person's ability to maintain their sense of coherence since it has the power to bring in meaning or take away that meaning from an individual's life (Loisel & Côté, n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014).

Moreover, the idea that Antonovsky was promoting, through his theory, is that when individuals experience positive and optimal events, it can foster personal growth and enhancement in an individual's available resources (Antonovsky, 1979; Antonovsky, 1987;

Antonovsky, 1987). In line with this, participants in this study indicated that finding fulfilling employment triggered their satisfaction and motivated them to aspire for future growth. In other words, their satisfaction with work served as a catalyst for their motivation to develop themselves further. Work, according to previous research, has a motivating factor and could be a source of satisfaction (Baldry et al., 2007; Loisel et al., 2014). Although the relationship between Sense of Coherence and work had not been widely studied, a study by Grødal et al. (2019) found a correlation between Sense of Coherence and work engagement (Grødal et al., 2019). In the same time Sense of Coherence has been shown to impact work engagement (Vogt et al., 2016). Engagement encompasses both motivational and meaningful aspects, which are related to both Sense of Coherence (Grødal et al., 2019) and Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Both theories emphasize the importance of motivation, which is shaped by an individual's reflections on life situations and goal orientation (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997). In addition to meaningfulness, that is a fundamental component of Sense of Coherence.

Furthermore, the participants' descriptions of their job satisfaction reflect different aspects emphasized by Antonovsky's sense of coherence theory. Some participants mentioned feeling appreciated, seen, and valued at work, which can contribute to their perception of work as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful. This sense of appreciation and recognition at work aligns with Antonovsky's notion of comprehensibility. Where individuals perceive their life experiences as understandable and (Antonovsky, 1987; Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986; Eriksson & Lindström, 2007). Additionally, some participants mentioned the importance of social aspects at work, such as good colleagues, professional and personal growth, and gaining new knowledge. This aligns with Antonovsky's idea of meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986), where work provides opportunities for social interaction, learning, and personal development (Coutu et al., n.d.; Loisel et al., 2014; Morin, 2008).

Drawing on Bandura's self-efficacy theory and Antonovsky's sense of coherence theory, the results of the interviews highlight the multifaceted nature of work for the participants. It is evident that work holds more significance beyond just financial advantages for these women. Many participants expressed a sense of dedication, loyalty, and determination in performing their tasks at work, regardless of their job satisfaction. This aligns with Bandura's theory of 'self-efficacy' (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997), as the belief of, the women of this study, in their own capabilities to perform their tasks effectively likely

motivated them to give their best and get the job done, even when they didn't particularly enjoy their work.

#### 8.1.4 Discussion of the fourth category of the Results, “The Way Polish Women Found Their Success in the Norwegian Job Market and its Key Elements”

This study contributes to the existing body of research in revealing the following element that these women perceived as the factors that contributed to their success in the Norwegian job market. For instance, language, which is something that was addressed in previous research (Czapka, 2010; Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017; Friberg et al., 2012), in addition to, two other elements that weren't addressed directly in the existing body of research, namely, references from local employers and work experience from the Norwegian job market. That this study, contributes with, to the body of research on this group.

In this study, the participants' reflections on the importance of language in the Norwegian job market indicate that they recognized the need for language skills to secure better job opportunities. However, several obstacles, such as the high costs of language courses, limited availability of free courses, and scheduling conflicts between work and language courses, hindered their ability to prioritize language learning. This suggests a possible explanation; that the participants' self-efficacy beliefs in their language learning abilities may have been low, leading them to deprioritize language learning and instead seek jobs unrelated to their competence. Furthermore, if the same matter is seen through Antonovsky's theory of ‘sense of coherence’ which underscores the importance of individuals' perceptions of their life experiences as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful, which can impact their ability to cope with stressors and maintain overall well-being (Antonovsky, 1987; Antonovsky, 1993; Antonovsky, 1996; Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986; Eriksson & Lindström, 2007). The participants' comments regarding the difficulty of prioritizing language learning due to the high costs of courses and living expenses in Norway suggest that they may have found these challenges to be overwhelming and hard to handle. For instance, the participants mentioned that their work schedule was incompatible with the language course one, which was conflicting with the perception of manageability in their life that Antonovsky talks about. Hence leading to low comprehensibility in one's life. This perception of low comprehensibility and manageability of the situation may have influenced their decision to deprioritize language learning and focus on finding employment for income in the short term, despite their long-term goal of transitioning to a job related to their competence.

By the same token, the participants' mention of the connection between confidence and language knowledge highlights the interplay between 'self-efficacy' and 'sense of coherence'. Limited language skills may have lowered their confidence in their ability to find suitable employment in Norway, thereby affecting their sense of coherence and motivation to prioritize language learning.

## 8.2 DISCUSSION OF THE METHODOLOGY AND METHOD OF THIS STUDY

The validity of this study will be addressed through two elements, internal and external validity. Internal validity demonstrates the extent to which research results align with the research topic through the use of appropriate methods and interview questions that are suitable to shed light on the research questions (Malterud, 2017). In contrast, external validity is encompassed in transferability, which constitutes the notion of the ability to use the findings in a different context (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Malterud, 2017).

### 8.2.1 Internal Validity

**Discussion of the Methodology of this Study:** This study, as any other study, has strengths and limitations that will be discussed in the coming paragraphs. This study's strengths were enclosed in many of its aspects, that also promotes this study's internal validity. The study's internal validity depends on various factors, including the study design, methodology, and data analysis techniques (Malterud, 2017; Patton, 2002; Ryen, 2002).

This study's choice of methodology was affected and guided by the nature of the study question, which was "Exploring the adaptation experience of Polish women that immigrated to be reunited with their husbands/partners in the Norwegian job market". Due to the fact that this particular group has not been looked at thoroughly, especially in the context of their adaptation experience on the Norwegian job market; An exploratory study was seen as appropriate in this case since one of the preconditions for this type of study is the lack of insights on a given subject in the previous body of research (Stebbins, 2001). The question of this study aimed to bring forth perceptions and experiences of a certain phenomenon happening in these women's lives, or their interpretation of a given phenomenon. Hence this study was based on the interpretive paradigm because of the interpretive nature of the question (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). With this being said, if a research question revolves around a dynamic subject, it is constantly changing and developing (Creswell, 2013; Malterud, 2017). It is best to approach such a subject through a qualitative approach because

it could help unfold the matter better than a quantitative study design which looks mostly at cause and effect (Creswell, 2013; Malterud, 2017). The exploratory nature of this study gave me room to explore the matter of interest as well as confirm the findings of other studies done in a similar context but on different groups of immigrants. Moreover, this study opened a door for new possibilities to conduct future research (see 8.3). These notions are often noticed in the explorative type of studies (Stebbins, 2001)

To clarify the use of the inductive study approach, firstly, the nature of the study implied this approach. As this study is an explorative study with a qualitative approach, this type of combination is often witnessed in combination with inductive study approaches (Stebbins, 2001). Secondly, the study began with a broad interest in the population of Polish immigrants and then narrowed down to focus on a specific group of Polish women who immigrated to be reunited with their husbands/partners in Norway. This process of starting with specific observations and data and then developing a general conclusion or theory is a characteristic of inductive reasoning (Ryen, 2002), suggesting that the subject of the current study is inductive.

Limitations: This exploratory study had created a lot of material, interpretation of which was subjective and biased. In addition to that, the results of this study did not possess a practical use for solving a specific problem. These are some of the aspects that were mentioned and discussed in the literature as limitations of this study type i.e., exploratory (Stebbins, 2001). Furthermore, qualitative research also has its limitations that had been mentioned by several authors (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For instance, this study was time intensive. Moreover, this study's reflexivity could be counted as a limitation, as this particular aspect is known to address the credibility issue in qualitative studies (Patton, 2002) such as this one. My initial assumptions about this group of women, which were shaped by my own preconceived notions about gender from my cultural background. These preconceptions formed the direction and angling of this study. However, these biases and preconceptions were challenged at two different stages of my study. The first instance was during the preliminary interviews (test interviews) I conducted prior to the main interviews, where I confronted my biases and had the opportunity to correct my perspective on this group. The second point was when I analyzed the findings, which revealed that the gender of these women did not play a role in their decision to come to Norway. It was evident that for them it was more of an act of reunification with their significant other because it was rationally more



beneficial to the whole family including themselves. Given that, I experienced first-hand, as mentioned earlier in literature, how the role of the researcher is encompassed in the process of data gathering, observations, and interpretation of the data (Malterud, 2001). Not to mention the effect I, as a researcher, had exerted on the structuring and the choice of tool to execute this study with the aim of answering a question that is also angled by my preconceptions. This study's whole structure is based on my subjective view of a given subject, that I tried to argue for. As a researcher, my involvement was inevitable, which in itself presents a limitation. This was also something that was addressed by other authors regarding qualitative studies (Malterud, 2001). Hence, the acknowledgment of my involvement and being aware of its implications is crucial in qualitative studies. On one hand, this awareness promotes stronger internal validity by recognizing biases and considering them while selecting methods for the study and justifying their rationale (Malterud, 2001). On the other hand, it enhances transparency which also promotes internal validity, by me, as a researcher, admitting and reporting information about my background, as well as the conditions the idea of this study was developed under, in addition to its effect on the whole study (Malterud, 2001; Patton, 2002). This will nurture the establishment of transparency with the audience, which would then give the reader the ability to evaluate and judge the result in the right context, ensuring intersubjectivity (Malterud, 2001; Malterud, 2017).

In order to elucidate the rationale for incorporating elements of both anthropological and phenomenological perspectives in this study, as well as to provide an explanation for the decision not to conduct a study solely from one of these perspectives, a middle ground was chosen due to the following considerations: a full anthropological study would have shifted the focus away from the participants' personal adaptation experiences, or the first-person perspective, towards the observed interactions of the group with the Norwegian job market as a societal aspect. Conversely, a phenomenological study would not have adequately addressed the societal dimension of the participants' experiences; but rather would have provided an in-depth understanding of their adaptation process solely through their subjective experiences, with no consideration for the societal context. This led to the choice of the pragmatic paradigm, which seeks to understand human experiences in tangible situations and view problems in their full context (Duram, 2010). Pragmatic studies investigate complex interrelated elements to better understand problematic situations and present alternatives, with the goal of improving society (Duram, 2010). These aspects are well-suited to this study in

my opinion, because collecting data on the adaptation experience of this group could give us, on a societal level, the ability to optimize their lives and maximize their opportunities on the Norwegian job market.

In conclusion, overall, the study's methodological approach was appropriate and well-suited for the research question and was useful in generating new insights and understanding. Therefore, the internal validity of this qualitative study can be considered strong.

**Discussion of the Study Design:** Semi-interviews were chosen to be used for data collection for the following advantageous reasons, which contributed to the study's internal validity as this type of interview (i.e., semi-structured interviews) was deemed suited for answering the question of this study:

Firstly, the topic of interest has not been widely researched in the context of the Norwegian job market. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argued for the usefulness and the practicality of semi-structured interviews in exploring matters that are new, loosely defined, or matters that the literature is not rich on (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002).

Secondly, Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility and unpredictability in extracting insight from participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Patton, 2002; Wengraf, 2001), which is particularly useful in exploring complex aspects of the chosen group. As I didn't know what to expect and which new information would come forth. Hence this type of interview left room for me to improvise and come up with follow-up questions, depending on the response and context of the situation the informant and I are in.

Thirdly, semi-structured interviews have a topic-guided nature (Wengraf, 2001). All these aspects I have marked through the little experience I gathered from this study. I saw the positive effect of semi-structured interviews firsthand. For instance, it gave me the flexibility to adapt to each participant depending on the flow of the interview, our connection, and their willingness to share their experiences. Some participants gave answers to questions I was going to ask a bit later in the interview. In such a situation, the topic-oriented nature of this tool came in handy, as I had the freedom to jump back and forth from one question to the other, switching between the topics I was interested in hearing their take on. Lastly, semi-structured interviews are said to be suitable for studies with not a big sample size (Braun & Clarke, 2013) which this study had.

However, I encountered several limitations linked to the use of a semi-structured interview format, which was discussed earlier in different literature (Bloor et al., 2001; Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Wengraf, 2001). These limitations could be considered as factors that had shaken the strength of the internal validity of this study:

Firstly, as noted by Wengraf (2001) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), my biases as the person interviewing had most likely affected the data collection process by unintentionally directing the interview towards topics that align with my beliefs and preconceptions.

Secondly, the scope of data collected may have been limited as participants may have held information outside the preset topics of the interview guide that I have predetermined. This type of limitation has been marked by literature on such interview methods (Bloor et al., 2001).

Thirdly, the conducted interviews took a long time to be transcribed and made ready for the analysis process. This is another well-known disadvantage that is often associated with semi-structured (i.e., time-consuming, not only to conduct but also to analyze) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Fourth, because semi-structured interviews are often used in studies with smaller samples, which is true for the current study, this affects the generalizability of the conclusions drawn from a given study because of the small representability of the sample to a bigger group (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Finally, semi-structured interviews can result in big loads of data that might pose difficulties in interpretation (Patton, 2002). This was true for this study, as I encountered difficulty in dealing with data, which made it challenging to analyze and extract meaningful insights.

**Discussion of the Interview Guide and Conduction of the Interviews:** The fact that I am a novice in qualitative study design and have never before used qualitative study instruments to obtain data can be both a limitation and a benefit to the study's internal validity. The biggest limitation was my inexperience in this field.

On the one hand, Patton (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2014) discussed in their publications the impact that the inexperience of the researcher has on potential data. They argue that this inexperience could affect the degree of the clarity of the questions and their

conciseness (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Patton, 2002). Leading to the risk of firstly, missing out on potentially useful information for the research question, secondly, risk that the participant would not understand the questions and how to answer them, and thirdly, the effectiveness and the quality of the interviews could be compromised (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Patton, 2002).

On the other hand, two-test interviews were conducted to control for these potential issues since I am a novice in this area. The test subjects were Polish women that reached out to me, one after I posted my recruitment post on Facebook and the other woman who reached out to me after I advertised for my study through a fellow student. Although they were informed that they did not fit the criteria, they were eager to help me practice and test my questions on them. One of the test interviews that was digitally executed went for approximately 30 mins, and the other was a face-to-face interview, which went for approximately 40 mins. After these interviews, I was able to modify my questions and make them fitter for the targeted group and the research topic. Although, the interview questions were tested, and the interview guide was created in a way that was chronological to make it easier for me to navigate and keep the conversation on track. The conversation did not always go the way it was intended to go during the interviews. However, I gained more experience with each interview and attempted to keep the conversation topic related. When participants answered off-topic, I tried to rephrase the questions and asked these questions again at a later time during the interview. I only faced some language difficulties with one participant, who spoke broken English and no Norwegian. The rest of the women spoke either satisfactory English and Norwegian or were more or less fluent in one of these languages.

Overall, my inexperience in this study design was mitigated by conducting test interviews and modifying the interview guide. Despite the limitations faced, I gained valuable experience from the study and was able to obtain data that answered the research question with the use of the interview guide developed for this study, which strengthens the study's internal validity.

**Discussion of Data Analysis Method:** another argument for the internal validity of this study is enclosed in the analysis method itself, or in other words in its advantages. As internal validity is maintained and preserved through the suitability and transparency of the method used to execute a given qualitative study (Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Malterud, 2017). Among the main reasons this analysis method was deemed suitable for this study was;

me being a novice, as this particular type of data analysis is suitable for inexperienced researchers as well as for the experienced ones Malterud (2012) argues. Aside from that, this method works well when the number of informants is limited (Malterud, 2012) which is true for this study.

The strengths of this approach lie in its steps. The first step instructs the researcher to distance themselves from the material, to detach from preconceptions and concentrate on the informant's voices. (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017). This step was very important for the realization of my preconceptions that were brought with me at the beginning of the study and that was already starting to surface in the pre-interviewing phase of this study. STC helps remind the researcher to keep their “luggage,” as Malterud calls it (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017), along the way in check. The second step involves decontextualizing the data and letting the meaning units speak for themselves without being influenced by the researcher's preconceptions (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017). This step held my focus on ensuring that the participants' voices are represented accurately and, at the same time, that the meaning units sheds light on the research question. The third step involves creating a short text (condensate from the decontextualized data) in the first-person format that describes or illuminates a phenomenon relevant to the research question. The fourth step includes two processes decontextualizing the data and then abstraction the data (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017). Two processes that aim to test and ensure that the essence of the meaning is not lost even if this data is taken out of its original context, processed, and put again in a context (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2017) where it represents both my answer to the study question and the participant's point of view. One of the biggest strengths of this analytical method (STC) is enclosed in its final step, where the findings of the study and the interpretations made by the researcher are compared with the original transcripts (Malterud, 2012). The last two steps of this analysis method were challenging for me as I had to distance myself from my own thoughts and interpretations. These steps, in my opinion, contribute to internal validity since by making me follow a recipe, this ensures transparency of the analysis done on the collected data.

The limitation of the STC method is that it is not as effective if the sample is bigger and the information load is bigger (Malterud, 2012). Moreover, there could be a risk of losing the meaning of the information the participants voiced in the process of decontextualizing the given data (Malterud, 2012).

## 8.2.2 External Validity

External validity is interrelated and relies on the selection of the sample and used strategies (Malterud, 2017), which is directly connected with the ability to transfer or generalize the findings of a given study to another group in a similar context (Malterud, 2017; Patton, 2002).

**Discussion of Sample:** Finding a suitable sample is crucial in qualitative study designs (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kvale, 1996; Malterud, 2017; Patton, 2002). Given that the recruited sample would decide the relevancy of the material and its diversity. It also plays a vital role in what side of the research matter and its questions this sample will shed light on (Malterud, 2017). With this in mind, as was recommended in the literature written by Malterud (2017) and Creswell and Poth (2018) on the matter (i.e., sample, sample strategy, research question, etc.), the research question guided my choice of the sampling strategy, that would help attract the proper sample. Purposeful and snowball strategies were used in this study for the following reasons: Purposeful sampling helps find suitable informants with the information needed to answer the research question (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Malterud, 2017; Patton, 2002). In addition to that, it helps create a homogenous sample (Patton, 2002). This strategy allowed my pool of informants to be narrowed down to those that exactly fit the specific inclusion criteria. However, it is known that this strategy could backfire by deflating the pool of informants (Patton, 2002). Therefore, a snowball strategy was used to increase the chances of recruiting enough participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2002). Some of the participants I interviewed helped with the recruitment process by spreading the word among themselves, which benefited the sample recruitment process of this study by increasing the richness and relevancy of my sample. These sampling strategies helped reach the exact group of people I needed to recruit to answer the research question. As known, a well-chosen sample will increase the possibility of the transferability of the acquired knowledge from a given sample, which then decides whether or not it will be representative of a given population or group of people (Malterud, 2017). This, in turn, contributes to the external validity of this study by strengthening it.

As a newcomer in this field, I needed a strategy to determine the appropriate number of participants for addressing my research question. Fortunately, Malterud et al. (2016) introduced the Power information guiding tool, which they argued is suitable for novice researchers (Malterud et al., 2016) like me. They also highlighted the practicality and

usefulness of this method for studies with narrow research topics (Malterud et al., 2016), such as the one I am conducting. To determine the appropriate number of participants for this study, I used the Fan chart from Malterud et al. (2016) study (see Figure 1). Initially, I had a broad aim for my master's thesis, but I had to narrow down the aim and criteria due to the limited timeframe. Although the criteria were specific and the aim was narrow, I was unsure if the dialogue would be rich enough. To address this, my supervisor suggested starting with interviews and then determining if more participants were needed to strengthen the dialogue. This is how I concluded that I needed six to eight participants. It is better to have fewer participants with relevant experiences than many participants without specific experiences, as this would increase the amount of information but decrease its relevance to the topic (Malterud et al., 2016). As I began to interview, some dialogues were stronger than others, and in this phase, I was looking for the saturation of the material. I interviewed nine participants and concluded that I had enough information to answer the research question. The Power information guiding tool helped increase the external validity of my study as it ensured that I am evaluating the right number of informants needed for this study sample by following a well-established method (Malterud et al., 2016).

Creswell and Poth (2018) noted the importance of outlining, in qualitative research, clearly defined inclusion criteria, i.e., informants' age, ethnicity, gender, as well as other specific factors; On the one hand, to ensure the appropriation of the sample to the study question. On the other hand, this increases the possibility of the transferability or/and the extent to which the findings could be generalized to a similar context or another group or population (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Malterud, 2017; Patton, 2002). The inclusion criteria for this study were set with the intention to create a homogeneous sample, which would help with the aspect of transferability/ generalization of the findings (Malterud, 2001; Patton, 2002).

To discuss the choice of the inclusion criteria, the age range was chosen based on the age-related inclusion criteria used in other studies researching this group of labor immigrants in work-related topics (Przybyszewska, 2021). Moreover, the diversity of the educational background of the chosen sample of this study, in my opinion, created strengths and limitations simultaneously. This diversity constitutes for one of the strengths that highlights the potential contributions of immigrants' skills to Norwegian society and the economy, which is going unnoticed. As was reported by The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2014), the pool of immigrants and their skills contributed to the

increase of labor power that was found as a supportive force for the overall European economy (OECD, 2014).

However, this posed limitations as this study excluded other types of skilled people that could have shed light on a different aspect of the same subject. For instance, men with higher education/competencies/qualifications would likely have other types of experiences that might have been interesting to explore. In addition, the inclusion criteria might have excluded other women, for example, single women that came to Norway on their own, women that immigrated to be reunited with their partner/husbands but are currently not working but planning to, and women that are here to study. The same goes for other groups of Polish people that fell outside the age range or have no qualifications but are working. Furthermore, the criteria might have excluded those who lived here less than one year, etc. While the limitations of the inclusion criteria used in this qualitative study could potentially be considered as factors that decreased the external validity because the results cannot be generalized to a broader range of the Polish labor immigrant group, it has been argued that knowledge resulting from qualitative studies can still be generalized (Malterud, 2001; Patton, 2002). This is possible if the inclusion criteria establish some unity in the researched sample and generate information that could be applicable to another group of people who share the same conditions, making the findings transferable (Patton, 2002). Although the current study had specific inclusion criteria that attracted a specific type of Polish woman, the results could still be applicable to other female labor immigrants in Norway who are reuniting with their partners/husbands and hold similar characteristics to the group researched in this study. Therefore, the findings of this study could also be useful in understanding the adaptation experience of other groups of labor immigrants similar to the studied group in the current study and how they make their way into the Norwegian job market.

In conclusion, the use of clear inclusion criteria in this qualitative study supports its external validity and increases the possibility of transferability or generalization of the findings to other groups of female labor immigrants holding similar characteristics and having similar contexts. While there are limitations to the inclusion criteria used in this study, such as excluding other groups of skilled people, the other gender, etc., the sample's homogeneity provides credibility to the findings and supports their potential generalizability.



### 8.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has highlighted the need for further research on the opportunities available to Polish women and men in the Norwegian job market, as well as their respective contract qualities. Building on the findings of this study, it would be valuable to explore the gender roles and decision-making patterns of Polish women in other labor groups, including single women who come to work in Norway or stay-at-home wives/mothers.

One potential avenue for further research is to examine the influence of community on the experiences of Polish women and men in the Norwegian job market. It would be interesting to investigate how social networks and support systems impact the success and quality of employment for Polish immigrants in Norway. This research could involve analyzing the role of community organizations, Polish expat groups, and other forms of social support in facilitating access to job opportunities.

Additionally, it would be valuable to explore family dynamics in Polish families through acquiring data on the decision-making process of Polish women in the context of gender. This research could shed light on the factors that influence Polish women's decisions to immigrate, their choice of job sector, and their overall job satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics could help to identify potential barriers to equal opportunity and inform policy decisions to promote more equitable employment opportunities for Polish immigrants in Norway.

Also, it is important to consider the potential impact of stereotypes on the employment experiences of Polish immigrants in Norway. As noted in the current study, gender stereotypes may contribute to unequal access to job opportunities for Polish women. Further research could explore the development and perpetuation of stereotypes, as well as their impact on the labor market outcomes for Polish immigrants in Norway. This research could also identify strategies to combat negative stereotypes and promote more inclusive and equitable employment practices.

Finally, their self-efficacy beliefs, as well as their perception of comprehensibility and manageability of the situation, influenced their decisions regarding language learning and job-seeking behavior in the Norwegian job market. These results align with Bandura's self-efficacy theory and Antonovsky's sense of coherence theory, highlighting the importance of

considering these theories in understanding the participants' experiences and behaviors in the context of language learning and employment-seeking.

### 8.3.1 8.3.1 Future Possible Implementation of the Gained Knowledge

As a society, it is essential to take action towards facilitating change for immigrant groups like the Polish women in Norway. The report to the Norwegian parliament (Storting) accentuated the idea that we, as a society, should strive to build a community that would be strong, inclusive of all its members, and nourishing of new-comers and immigrants, which will ensure a better quality of life and for all the participants of the Norwegian society, which will lead to generating equally enough opportunities for everyone. (Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021)).

To build on the findings of this study, there are several potential implementation strategies that can be considered to facilitate the integration of Polish women into the Norwegian job market. The Norwegian government could take action to provide free language courses to Polish women, enabling them to use their competencies and skills more effectively and quickly, rather than downgrading their qualifications to survive. Additionally, offering occupational training courses to help them understand the job market and avoid being limited to niche sectors such as cleaning, construction, and services would greatly benefit both the immigrants and Norwegian society.

It is crucial to ensure that Polish women have access to adequate job-related resources and a growth-conducive environment to increase their Sense of Coherence, leading to greater engagement in work-related growth and the realization of their full potential (Vogt et al., 2016). Providing language skills and training opportunities in various professions will help Polish women in Norway contribute their skills and competencies to society, instead of burying them for extended periods and losing confidence in their abilities.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Norwegian government considers these suggestions and implements policies and programs to assist Polish women in Norway in finding suitable jobs that match their qualifications and skills. By doing so, we can create a more inclusive and diverse society, where every individual is valued and provided with equal opportunities to achieve their full potential.

## 9 CONCLUSION

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This study reached several conclusions through exploring the adaptation experience of Polish women that immigrated to Norway to be reunited with their husbands/partners in the Norwegian job market. Firstly, the findings of this study suggest that participants' adaptation experience in living in Norway as an immigrant was perceived as smooth and easy, however, their adaptation experience on the job market, in term of employment was challenging because of several factors, such as lack of language competence, lack of work experience and work references from the local job market, discrimination, and the pre-division of the Norwegian job market, that created Polish Niches, e.g., cleaning sectors, construction etc. With this in mind, as they overcame these obstacles, they concluded that, some of these obstacles (i.e., language competence, work experience and work references from the local job market) if fixed would-be nurturing factors in the pursuit of success in the Norwegian job market.

*“... if you are having the master degree and you are moving to another country that you don't speak the language you are, you don't know the culture, you are thinking like OK, I am the master degree in my country but here I am nobody, I have to begin from bottom” (izabel)*

Moreover, with regard to their choice to come to Norway, the study concluded that Polish women immigrated to Norway to reunite with their husbands/partners rather than to follow them, they were actively involved in the decision making. Gender roles did not appear to have a significant impact on their decision to migrate to Norway. Despite holding traditional views on the role of the Polish mother/women, these women were determined to work and pursue a career in Norway.

To sum up the meaning work held for these women, which was different for each of them; the majority considered socialization, independence, language development, confidence, and usefulness as the essence of what work meant to them. Most of the participants had reached stages in their careers where they had acquired some kind of satisfaction with the positions they have.

Lastly, it is important to mention that the notion of finding their place in the Norwegian job market was equally important for this group of women.

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# 11 APPENDIX

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## 11.1 APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ENGLISH

«Polish womens' adaptation experience on the norwegian job-market»

Inclusion criteria for this study are: Polish women that followed their partners or husbands to Norway (will ensure the homogeneity of the sample and its transferability); between the age of 22-45 years old, living in Bergen (for more than 1 year). The study will include women that are currently working in Bergen or not working but that have a higher educational degree or a qualification of some sort from their homeland.

### **Background information :**

- Where are you from
- Reason for stay in Norway (following spouse to Norway)
- Age of the participant (between 22-45 years)
- Residence in Norway
- Educational background?

### **Topic-related questions**

What did you do before you came to Norway in terms of education, skills, previous work, Can you tell us about your professional history in Poland and Norway, What kind of occupations have you had in which countries and which positions.

- a. Follow-up question: what does work mean to you personally (aside from the financial benefit)?
- b. What motivated you to work here in Norway?
- c. How did you end up in the job you have now?
- d. Was it difficult to get a job here?
- e. How do you see your opportunities on the Norwegian labor market?
- f. Would you be able to use your skills/education here in Norway?



2. How did you decide to come to Norway? Did the decision to come here to Norway have anything to do with your role as a women?
3. Can you say a little about the migration process itself, how did you adapt to your new life? what did you do to adapt to it?

Did you feel that you have enough information to adapt to life here in Norway?

(example: contacts, knowledge of the social security system, school system,  
labor market, social network)

4. Why, do you think many Polish women who get a job here in Norway is usually lower than what they are qualified for?
5. What do you think, how can Norwegian society help and contribute to make the chances and possibilities not only better but also easier and quicker for Polish women to get a job that is relevant to their education.
6. Where do you see yourself in the near future? Where would you like to work in an ideal scenario

## 11.2 APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW GUIDE IN NORWEGIAN

### Interview guide in norwegian

«Polish womens' adaptation experience on the norwegian job-market»

Inclusion criteria for this study are: Polish women that followed their partners or husbands to Norway (will ensure the homogeneity of the sample and its transferability); between the age of 22-45 years old, living in Bergen (for more than 1 year). The study will include women that are currently working in Bergen or not working but that have a higher educational degree or a qualification of some sort from their homeland.

### Bakgrunnsinformasjon :

**Hvor kommer du fra**

**Årsaken til opphold i Norge (følger ektefelle til norge)**

**Deltakerens alder (mellom 22-45 år)**

**Botid i Norge**

**Utdanningsbakgrunn ?**

### Tema Relaterte spørsmål

1. Hva gjorde du før du kom til Norge når det gjelder utdanning, kompetanse, tidligere arbeid, Kan du fortelle om yrkeshistorien din i Polen og Norge, Hva slags yrker har du hatt i hvilke land og hvilke stillinger.
  - a. Oppfølgingsspørsmål: hva betyr jobb for deg personlig (bortsett fra den økonomiske fordel)?
  - b. hva er det som motiverte deg til å jobbe her i Norge?
  - c. Hvordan endte du opp på job du har nå?
  - d. Var det vanskelig å få seg en jobb her?
  - e. Hvordan ser du på mulighetene dine på det norske arbeidsmarkedet?
  - f. Ville du kunne bruke din kompetanse/utdanning her i Norge?

2. Hvordan bestemte du deg for å komme til Norge? Hadde den avgjørelse å komme hit til Norge noe å gjøre med din rolle som en kvinne?
3. kan du si litt om selve migrasjons prosessen, Hvordan tilpasset du deg ditt nye liv? Hva gjorde du for å tilpasse deg det?
  - a. Følte du at du har nok informasjon til å tilpasse deg livet her i Norge  
(eksempel: kontakter, kunnskap om trygdesystemet, skolesystem, arbeidsmarked, sosialt nettverk)
4. Hva tror du, Hvorfor det er sånn at mange polske kvinner som får jobb her i Norge er tilvanlige lavere enn det de er kvalifisert for?
5. Hvordan kan det norske samfunnet hjelpe og bidra til at polske kvinner kunne få seg jobb som er relevant til utdanningen sin fortere og lettere.
6. Hvor ser du deg selv i nær fremtid? Hvor ønsker du å jobbe i et idealt scenario

## 11.3 APPENDIX C. CONSENT FORM IN NORWEGIAN

Informasjon om forskningsprosjektet

### *«Polske kvinners tilpasning erfaring på det norske arbeidsmarkedet»*

I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for dette forskningsprosjektet og hva prosjektet innebærer for deg.

#### Formål

Du inviteres til å delta i et forskningsprosjekt der hovedformålet er å undersøke polske kvinners tilpasningserfaring og deres oppfatning av deres muligheter på det norske arbeidsmarkedet. For å undersøke dette temaet vil intervjuer bli gjennomført og analysert.

#### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Studien er en del av en masteroppgave ved Det medisinske fakultet, Institutt for global helse ved Universitetet i Bergen.

#### **Hvorfor er du inkludert i studien?**

Utvalget av denne studien består av kvinnelige deltakere med polsk bakgrunn i aldersgruppen 22 til 45. Denne studien har som mål å inkludere 4-6 deltakere.

#### Hva innebærer prosjektet for deg?

Som deltaker i studien vil du delta i et intervju, hvor du først blir spurt om bakgrunnsinformasjon for å sikre at studiens inklusjonskriterier er oppfylt. For det andre vil du bli stilt noen spørsmål som er direkte relatert til det undersøkte emnet, i tillegg til oppfølgingsspørsmål dersom det vil være behov for avklaring av informasjon. Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp og deretter slettet når prosjektet er ferdig.

#### **Du kan protestere**

Du kan når som helst protestere mot at du inkluderes i dette forskningsprosjektet, og du trenger ikke å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du velger å protestere.

#### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- De innsamlede dataene vil kun få tilgang til forfatteren av denne oppgaven, hennes veileder.
- For å sikre at ingen uautoriserte personer får tilgang til personopplysningene, vil deltakernavnet og eventuelle kontaktdetaljer erstattes med en kode.
- All personlig informasjon om hver deltaker vil bli holdt adskilt fra intervjudataene for å sikre anonymitet og at personopplysningene ikke vil være direkte knyttet til noen av intervjuene.
- Intervjudataene vil bli lagret på SAFE (Secure Access to Research Data and E-infrastructure)

### **Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?**

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er Planlagt sluttdato for prosjektet er juni 2023. Et år etter at studien er fullført i juni (2024), vil innsamlet data og eventuell informasjon om deltakerne bli slettet. Innsamlingen av data vil starte i november 2022 og avsluttes i desember 2022, og masteroppgaven skal leveres i mai 2023.

Dette masterprosjektet vil bli registrert på System for Risk and compliance- Behandling av personopplysninger i forsknings- og studentprosjekter ved UiB (RETTE) og SAFE (Secure Access to Research Data and E-infrastructure).

All informasjon som vil bli samlet inn i denne studien om personer som deltar i den, vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og anonymisert.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg fordi forskningsprosjektet er vurdert å være i allmennhetens interesse, men du har anledning til å protestere dersom du ikke ønsker å bli inkludert i prosjektet.

På oppdrag fra *Institutt for global helse ved Universitetet i Bergen* har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

### **Dine rettigheter**

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

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

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer eller å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Institutt for global helse ved Universitetet i Bergen via prosjektleder Silje Mæland.  
Kontaktinformasjon til prosjektveileder: Silje Mæland, E-post: [Silje.Maeland@uib.no](mailto:Silje.Maeland@uib.no), og kontaktinformasjonen til masterstudenten som gjennomfører dette studiet: Mariam Stava, E-post: [mkh038@uib.no](mailto:mkh038@uib.no)

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

- Databeskyttelsestjenester, vår personvernombud: Janecke Helene Veim, e-post: [Janecke.Veim@uib.no](mailto:Janecke.Veim@uib.no), og tlf.nr: +47 55 58 20 29; +47 930 30 721.

Med vennlig hilsen

(Forsker/veileder)

(Student)

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## Samtykkeskjema

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet ``polske kvinners tilpasningserfaring på det norske arbeidsmarkedet`` og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

Jeg gir samtykke:

- å delta i et intervju

Jeg gir samtykke til at mine personopplysninger kan behandles frem til slutten av prosjektet.

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(Signert av deltaker, dato)

## 11.4 APPENDIX D. CONSENT FORM IN ENGLISH

Are you interested in taking part in the research project on

“Polish women’s adaptation experience on the Norwegian Job- market”

### **Purpose of the project**

You are invited to participate in a research project where the main purpose is to examine the adaptation experience of Polish women and their perception of their opportunities on the Norwegian job-market. To examine this topic, interviews will be conducted and analysed.

### **Which institution is responsible for the research project?**

The investigation is part of a master's thesis at the Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Global health of the University of Bergen.

### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

The sample of this study consists of female participants with Polish background in the age range of 22 to 45. This study aims to include 4-6 participants.

What does participation involve for you?

As a participant in the study, you will take part in an interview, in which you will be first asked about background information to ensure that the study inclusion criteria are met. Second you will be asked some questions that are directly related to the researched subject, in addition to follow up questions if there will be need for clarification of any information. The interview will be recorded and then deleted when the project is finished

### **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

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

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified here and we will process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation (the GDPR).

- The collected data will be accessed only by the author of this thesis her supervisor.



- To ensure that no unauthorized persons can access the personal data, the participants name and any contact details will be replaced with a code.
- All the personal information about each participant will be kept separately from the interview data to ensure anonymity and that the personal information would not be directly linked to any of the interviews.
- The interview data will be stored on SAFE (Secure Access to Research Data and E-infrastructure)

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

The planned end date of the project is *June 2023*. A Year after the study is completed in June (2024), the collected data and any information about the participants will be deleted. The collection of data will start in November 2022 and end in December 2022, and the master's thesis will be delivered in May 2023.

This Master project will be registered at System for Risk and compliance- Processing of personal data in research and student projects at UiB (RETTE) and SAFE (Secure Access to Research Data and E-infrastructure).

All the information that will be collected in this study about individuals participating in it will be processed in a confidential manner and anonymised.

### **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 is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to 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 Institute of Global health of the University of Bergen, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

**Where can I find out more?**

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

Institute of Global health of the University of Bergen via the project leader Silje Mæland.  
Contact information of the project supervisor: Silje Mæland, E-mail: [Silje.Maeland@uib.no](mailto:Silje.Maeland@uib.no),  
and the contact information of the Master student conducting this study: Mariam Stava,  
E-mail: [mkh038@uib.no](mailto:mkh038@uib.no)

If you have questions about how data protection has been assessed in this project, contact:

- Data Protection Services, Our Data Protection Officer: Janecke Helene Veim, E-mail: [Janecke.Veim@uib.no](mailto:Janecke.Veim@uib.no), and Phone Nr: +47 55 58 20 29; +47 930 30 721

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader

Student

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## Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project `` *Polish women's adaptation experience on the Norwegian Job-market* `` and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in *an interview*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end of the project.

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(Signed by participant, date)