Frontline policy implementation in public organizations

A sociological analysis of the 'how and why' of implementation gaps

by

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Summary

Background and aims Innovation is promoted in politics and public service organizations as an essential factor for meeting the demands of society. How new policies or strategies can be implemented as intended in complex multi-level public organizations is a major practical and academic puzzle. We know from extensive research that there is often a gap between central policy formulations and their implementation in practice (Hill & Hupe, 2003; Hupe, 2014) created by frontline workers exercise of discretion and their outcomes (Lipsky, 1980, 2010). However, there is a need for empirical research on the 'how and why' of street-level implementation (Hupe, 2014) such as 'how the workers actually arrive at their decisions' (Goldman & Foldy, 2015 p.169), as well as the use of multi-leveled perspectives to investigate the problem of implementation gaps (Hupe, 2014). The thesis aims to investigate mismatches between centrally directed policy measures and their implementation on the operational level. Introducing the concept of 'resistance-driven innovation', the thesis challenges the normative tendency of viewing implementation gaps as implementation failures (Hupe & Hill, 2016). In order to realize the thesis' aim, a critical realist informed case study was used to explore the top-down implementation process of a specific work inclusion policy measure within the Norwegian Employment and Welfare Services (NAV). The thesis aim is operationalized into research questions and dealt with in three separate articles as well as summarized and elaborated on in chapters 5, 6 and 7 as follows:

a. What do the multi-level implementation context and process of the specific policy measure in NAV look like?

b. How did frontline staff at the case office of NAV perceive and respond to the implementation efforts of the policy measure in focus?

c. Why was the Facilitation Guarantee not implemented as intended at the case office?

d. What are the theoretical implications, mainly for the street-level policy implementation research field, but also for the fields of institutional logics and employee-based innovation?

e. What are the implications for the planning and management of implementation processes?

The PhD thesis comprises three individual articles:

I.   Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth (2016). *Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice.* Journal of Comparative Social Work, 2016(2), 1–29.

II. Høiland, Gry Cecilie & Klemsdal, Lars. *Institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions.* (Submitted 2018).

III. Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth. *Resistance-driven innovation? Frontline public welfare workers' coping with top-down implementation.* Nordic Journal of Work Life Studies, 8 (2).

Research design. The critical realist informed case study explores the top-down implementation process of the work inclusion policy measure called the Facilitation Guarantee within NAV, tracing it through all levels of NAV to a specific frontline case office. The case study included two successive and interacting main phases: first, the exploration of the implementation context, process and strategies of the policy measure at the various hierarchical levels of NAV, and then exploration and explanation of reactions to its implementation instructions among the frontline employees at the selected case office. The case study included in-depth semi-structured interviews, document studies and meeting observations. The case study included methods of in-depth semi-structured interviews, document studies and meeting observations. For the first phase, data material was collected during a 14 month period, December 2014 – January 2016 consisting of an exploratory document study of internal reports, guidelines, instructions etc. as well as 21 semi-structured interviews of 16 informants distributed at various levels of the organization, including managers and implementation coordinators. The

second phase of the study, focusing on the selected frontline case office during the 4 last months of 2015, included 11 one-to-two hour-long interviews with frontline employees, as well as interviews from three of the informants from the first phase. The interviews were supplemented with observations from 24 case and department meetings. Together, the two phases consisted of a total of 32 interviews with 27 informants. Drawing on a CR informed methodology (e.g. Edwards, O'Mahoney, & Vincent, 2014) the empirical findings from the interviews and observations were analyzed in the light of the wider contextual understanding that the full case study provided. The subsequent findings were continuously analyzed to explore mechanisms that could best contribute to an explanation of the way that the implementation instructions were met by the frontline employees (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017).

Findings The articles can be summarized as follows:

Article I, on implementation in complex public organizations, serves to map the contextual background and implementation process in focus for the rest of the study. It explores selected aspects of the case office's wider context, specifically the Facilitation Guarantee's characteristics, its history and implementation strategy. In addition it charts the multi-level context of the Facilitation Guarantee implementation process through the lens of the theoretical framework of multi-level implementation systems (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). The article traces the influence of one of several possible factors that can help explain the way the Facilitation Guarantee was used at that specific NAV office.

Article II, on institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions, serves to explore the wider institutional context as well as to explore how and why frontline employees tended to down-prioritize the use of the Facilitation Guarantee among a surplus of other work tasks. The article is positioned within a stream of literature on institutional logics concerned with how individual actors within organizations relate to institutional logics on the ground, conceptualized as the 'institutional logics as tool' perspective. The article identifies three prevalent institutional logics at multiple levels in the case: a logic of craft, a logic of industrial production and a logic of administrative accountability. The article shows how work tasks,

including the implementation instructions of the Facilitation Guarantee, were classified, valuated, and then prioritized by the frontline employees in the light of these logics. The logics thus became tools to give meaning and value to particular tasks for practical purposes and to suggest and justify prioritization or down-prioritization of tasks on the basis of an individual's 'constellations of concerns'.

Article III, on resistance and innovation, serves to explore the wider managerial context as well as giving a deeper insight into the frontline employees' actual handling of the devaluated implementation instructions of the Facilitation Guarantee and similar instructions. The article describes four coping strategies that frontline employees used to deal with the devaluated implementation instructions. These were strategies of 'adjusting', 'down-prioritizing', 'tricking' and 'rejecting' the instructions. The four coping strategies were further conceptualized into two categories: revision (adjusting the instructions) and resistance ('down-prioritizing', 'tricking' and 'rejecting' the instructions) and then connected to two types of employee-based innovation. The first category of revision was connected to the well-documented innovation type of 'bricolage' (Fuglsang, 2010), 'everyday innovation' (Lippke & Wegerner, 2015) etc. The second category of resistance was connected to a new type of innovation, termed 'resistance-driven innovation'.

Together, the articles and the elaborations in chapters 5–7 answer the research question in the following ways:

a. **What do the multi-level implementation context and process of the Facilitation Guarantee in NAV look like?** The contextual complexity of the case was traced through multiple levels of the implementation system. Three prevalent institutional logics were identified at multiple levels in the case, as well as various managerial principles and implementation intentions and strategies of the Facilitation Guarantee. These all combined and emerged through the work situation at the frontlines and thereby made up the situational contingencies which frontline employees maneuvered in and drew upon in their daily work and implementation practices. This included a need for harsh prioritizations among a surplus of work tasks, a continuous flow of implementation instructions and

documentation requirements. In addition, the thesis found that frontline employees most clearly identified with professional values of social work, related to two of the logics, those of craft and industrial production. The thesis also found that the prime policy intention behind the Facilitation Guarantee could be associated most closely to the logic of craft, but that implementation strategies and thereby implementation instructions manifested at the frontlines, could be more closely associated with the third logic, that of administrative accountability.

b. **How did frontline staff at the case office of NAV perceive and respond to the implementation efforts of the Facilitation Guarantee?** The thesis illustrates how a surplus of work tasks, including implementation instructions of the Facilitation Guarantee, were classified, valuated, and prioritized by the frontline employees in the light of the three identified institutional logics. The logics became tools to give meaning and value to particular tasks and to suggest and justify up or down prioritization of tasks on the basis of an individual's 'constellations of concerns', according to a value hierarchy based on how the logics matched frontline workers' professional standards and values. The work tasks demanded by the implementation instructions of the Facilitation Guarantee tended to be classified, ranked and related to the devaluated logic of administrative accountability. Strategies of revision and resistance were used to deal with these devaluated work tasks. Four such strategies were deployed by frontline employees to deal with devaluated implementation instructions. These were the strategies of 'adjusting', 'down-prioritizing', 'tricking' and 'rejecting' the instructions, representing two types of employee-based innovation: the well-documented innovation type of 'bricolage' (Fuglsang, 2010) etc., and 'resistance-driven innovation'. The thesis also discusses how the three institutional logics seemed to be used as tools to justify and sustain resistance strategies for the purpose of prioritizing services for the greater good of their recipients, in line with standards of professional values of social work and NAV's primary mission, 'to provide opportunities to people' (Arbeids og velferdsetaten, 2013).

c. **Why was the Facilitation Guarantee not implemented as intended at the case office?** The thesis shows that the implementation system's

complexity, including a plurality of logics, managerial principles and a surplus of work tasks, influenced how implementation instructions were manifested and perceived at the operational level. It appears that the constellation of agentic concerns among the frontline workers including a need for professional dignity and performative achievement, in combination with a work situation of too many valuated and devaluated work tasks, activated three successive tendencies or mechanisms of: 1) categorization, valuation & prioritization; 2) strategizing by revision or resistance; and 3) justification. These may be seen as mechanisms triggered in the 'space before action', where the frontline workers actually arrive at their decisions in regard to their interactions with the service recipients (Goldman & Foldy, 2015). Revision and resistance strategies deployed in relation to devaluated implementation instructions led to an implementation gap between the policy measure's intended application and the actual non-application or deviance, that eventually influenced the implementation outcome of the Facilitation Guarantee and similar implementation instructions.

d. **The thesis contributes theoretically to the field of street-level policy implementation** by addressing the need for empirical studies focusing on the 'how and why' of street-level policy implementation in a multi-level context. This is carried out through the lenses of structure-agency interaction and institutional logics as tools. The thesis challenges the normative tendency of viewing implementation gaps as implementation failures, by discussing the findings through the lens of employee-based innovation theory and by introducing the concept of 'resistance-driven innovation'. The thesis contributes theoretically **to the field of institutional logics** by showing how incompatible logics, rather than contributing to the complexity in the work situation, come together as an integrated system of valuation and meaning to be used by the actors for prioritization and thus for ordering complex work situations, emphasizing the role of institutional logics as tools rather than constraints. Lastly, the thesis contributes theoretically **to the field of employee-based innovation** by establishing a link between what is seemingly counter-productive (e.g. Lipsky, 1980, 2010), and employee-based innovation (e.g. Fuglsang, 2010; Lippke and Wegener, 2014; Smith, 2017,) Specifically, frontline workers' practices to resist top-down

implementation were conceptualized as a new and alternative type of employee-based innovation. This alternative type of innovation is driven by the inherent need of frontline employees to follow professional ethics and values in their quest for professional autonomy and dignity while working under managerial principles countering this quest.

e. **Implications for planners and managers of implementation processes?** It is suggested that for top-down implementation efforts to be successful, planners and managers must have an extensive understanding of the organization and its operational lines. This includes understanding existing organizational pressures and implementation instructions in the frontline employees' complex work situations, as well as the frontline employees' 'ultimate concerns' at work. Moreover, the thesis questions the usefulness of existing managerial principles influencing planning and management of implementation processes in public welfare organizations, and discusses implications for planning and managing implementation processes while viewing implementation gaps through the lens of employee-based innovation.

List of Articles

This PhD thesis is a compilation of three individual articles

I.   Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth (2016). *Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice.* Journal of Comparative Social Work, (2), 1–29.

II.   Høiland, Gry Cecilie & Klemsdal, Lars. *Institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions.* (Submitted 2018).

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PART I

1 Introduction

Norway as a welfare state has as a major goal that everyone, including people who need special facilitation, is to be included in the labor market. There is a strong political mandate to support this goal, and the Norwegian Government is continually putting forward new ways of achieving it (e.g. St.meld. nr. 33, 2015-2016; St.meld. nr. 46, 2012-2013, St.meld. nr 9, 2006-2007). How such policies or strategies can be implemented as intended in complex multi-level public service organizations has long been a major puzzle in the academic field of policy implementation. The term 'implementation gap' indicates the common mismatch between the centrally directed intentions of policy measures and the implementation on the street-level of public service organizations (Hill & Hupe, 2003; Hupe, 2014). The term is often negatively associated with implementation failure or deficit (ibid). As an organizational sociologist, my natural take on contributing to the field of work inclusion is researching policy implementation through a focus on the processes that are happening within the implementing organization. Understanding implementation practices at the street-level of a complex organization is relevant for other public sector organizations, for example, because of growing demands for digitalization as well as for the adoption of evidence-based practices and polices in public services, such as health, education and social services (Roll, Moulton, & Sandfort, 2017).

Theoretical developments and research on implementation at the street-levels of public agencies show that the so-called street-level bureaucrats respond to top-down implementation efforts by 'making policy' in their day-to-day dealings with their clients (Lipsky, 1980, 2010). In order to plan and lead implementation processes, it is therefore necessary to understand why and how frontline workers react to top-down implementation efforts in the way they do. Because implementation of such policies at the frontlines is also contingent upon processes taking place at the organizational and policy levels, exploring the policy's multi-level implementation system is important (Sandfort, 2015). Having worked in and having been a recipient of services from the Norwegian Employment and Welfare Administration (NAV), which is the public service organization responsible for delivering mandated polices and strategies for work inclusion in Norway, I have experienced firsthand that

it is at the frontline offices, where service professionals and recipients meet, that the policies and strategies are put to the test. As such, my experience is that the final impact of policy implementation on existing practices (and thus at last reaching the target group) rests on the multi-level context and the resulting immediate conditions laid forth for frontline employees and their reactions to these in their day-to-day activities with the public services. In the research field of policy implementation there is a call for empirical studies that generate a deeper understanding of 'how and why' there is often a mismatch between the centrally directed intentions of public sector innovation policies and their implementation on the operational levels (Hupe, 2014, Hupe & Hill 2016). In addition, there has been a call to include the multi-leveled implantation context in the analysis (ibid).

The overall purpose of the thesis is to generate knowledge about and discuss possible explanations for the well-known implementation gap that is often found in policy implementation processes in public sector organizations. Using a critical realist informed organizational case study approach to investigate a specific work inclusion implementation effort in Norway, called the Facilitation Guarantee, and its street-level reactions in a frontline NAV office, the thesis answers the call for studying the 'how' and the 'why' in a multilevel perspective. In addition, the thesis challenges the normative tendency of equating implementation gaps with implementation failure and discusses the implications of the findings to the planning and management of implementation processes. Lastly, it contributes to debates in the field of institutional logics and employee-based innovation.

The thesis, then, is based on an empirical case of an implementation gap between the intended use of a policy measure (the Facilitation Guarantee) and its actual use at the frontlines of a public welfare organization (NAV). The gap was there despite elevated managerial efforts to implement the measure for an extended period of time. Street-level theory would hold that the implementation gap could be explained by the policy-making of street-level bureaucrats in their dealings with clients. However, how the street-level bureaucrats arrive at their decisions and why, seen in a multi level perspective needs more empirical elaboration. By investigating these questions in a specific policy implementation process, the thesis aims at moving closer to

uncovering the whys of policy implementation at the street-level. In order to do this, the thesis is structured in the following way.

1.1   Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of two parts.

Part 1 is organized as follows: The remainder of the introductory chapter is devoted to presenting the thesis aim and research questions. Chapter 2 presents the background for the thesis, starting with the empirical background, a positioning of the thesis through a review of the research frontier of street-level policy implementation and a presentation of the research paradigm of critical realism. Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical landscape that informs the thesis. Chapter 4 describes and discusses the research methodology and design, whereas chapter 5 presents the findings of the case study. In chapter 6, a summary and presentation of results and contributions are given for the three articles. Chapter 7 elaborates on the findings through discussing possible explanations for the case findings, implications for implementation theory and implications for the planning and management of implementation processes. Chapter 8 offers a concluding summary and remarks as well as deliberations on the limitations of the study and possible directions for further research.

Part 2 contains the three articles that are included in the thesis:

Article I:
Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth (2016). *Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice.* Journal of Comparative Social Work, 2016 (2), 1–29.

Article II:
Høiland, Gry Cecilie & Klemsdal, Lars. *Institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions*. (Submitted 2018).

Article III:
Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth (2018). *Resistance-driven innovation? Frontline public welfare workers' coping with top-down implementation.* Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies, 8 (2).

1.2   Thesis aim and research questions

The overall aim of the thesis is to improve our understanding of mismatches between centrally directed policy measures and implementation on the operational level of public service organizations. The intention is to contribute to research on street-level policy implementation as well as to the planning and management of implementation processes. In order to answer the thesis aim, a critical realist informed organizational case study investigating a specific implementation effort in NAV, called the Facilitation Guarantee, is deployed.

The thesis aim is operationalized into research questions in the following way:

a. What do the multi-level implementation context and process of the Facilitation Guarantee in NAV look like? (Article I, II and III, chapter 5.1)

b. How did frontline staff at the case office of NAV perceive and respond to the implementation efforts of the Facilitation Guarantee? (Article II and III, chapter 5.2

c. Why was the Facilitation Guarantee not implemented as intended at the case office? (Article II and III, chapter 7.1)

d. What are the theoretical implications, mainly for the street-level policy implementation research field (Chapter 7.2), but also for the fields of institutional logics (Article II) and employee-based innovation (Article III)?

e. What are the implications for the planning and management of implementation processes? (Chapter Article I, II, III and 7.3)

These specific research questions are dealt with empirically and theoretically in the three articles and summarized as well as elaborated on in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Research question a) is dealt with in the articles and in section 5.1. Article I serves as a contextual background to the thesis. The focus is on the Facilitation Guarantee itself as a public service innovation, its history and the implementation strategy used, as well as its multi-level context. This is analyzed through the lens of multi-level implementation systems (Sandfort,

2015), tracing the implementation process through the policy field, the organizational field and then focusing on a frontline agency of NAV. Article II elaborates on the institutional landscape that the implementation process was taking place in. In Article III, the managerial principles surrounding the process are discussed. Section 5.1 brings the findings from the three articles together.

Research question b) is mainly dealt with in articles II and III and section 5.2. Article II explores how frontline staff perceived and responded to the implementation instructions through the theoretical perspective of institutional logics in action. Article III explores how frontline staff reacted to the constant flow of implementation instructions by identifying types of coping strategies they used. Section 5.2 brings the findings from the articles together.

Research question c) is discussed in articles II and III and in section 7.1. Article II discusses explanations for how the Facilitation Guarantee was implemented by giving an insight into the need of frontline workers to create order and legitimacy in a workday with too many important work tasks, and how it appeared that they deployed institutional logics as tools to do so. Article III discusses explanations for the findings by analyzing the resistance strategies as a response to a lack of autonomy and dignity at work. Section 7.1 elaborates on a possible explanation for why the Facilitation Guarantee was not implemented as intended at the case office, by drawing on a critical realist approach to explaining social phenomena.

The first part of research question d), discussing theoretical implications for the field of street-level policy implementation research, is dealt with in section 7.2. First, implications of using theoretical lenses on the role of agency in social change are discussed. Second, theoretical implications from the findings through the lens of institutional logics as tools are discussed. Lastly, the implications of using a lens of employee-based innovation on street-level implementation research are deliberated on.

The last part of research question d), discussing theoretical contributions to fields other than policy implementation research, are dealt with in the articles and summarized in chapter 6. The contribution to debates in the field of institutional logics, adding new insight into the use of institutional logics as tools for action, is discussed in article II and its summary in chapter 6. The

contribution to the debate on employee-based innovation in the field of innovation theory, suggesting 'resistance-driven innovation' as a complementary type of innovation, is discussed in article III and in the summary in chapter 6.

Research question e) regarding implications for the planning and management of implementation processes, is dealt with in the articles and elaborated on in section 7.3. First, the thesis emphasizes the importance of considering the wider context as well as the work situation and constellation of concerns of the frontline workers when planning implementation processes. This includes the implication that logics of the policy intent should match the logics of the implementation instructions as well as the professional values of the frontline workers. Second, it discusses implications for planning and management of implementation processes in relation to a normative and possibly emancipatory contribution of the study; as well as implications for the planning and management of implementation processes if viewing implementation gaps through the lens of resistance-driven innovation.

2   Background

In the following, the background for the thesis is presented: first, a brief description of the empirical background in the field of work inclusion and the work inclusion measure in focus; second, a positioning of the thesis through a review of the research frontier of street-level policy implementation; and third, a presentation of the research paradigm of critical realism that informs the thesis.

2.1   Empirical background

Norway has among the highest rates of employment in the OECD-countries and a strong political focus on work-first and work inclusion (OECD, 2013; Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2014). However, Norway also has a high health related unemployment gap compared to other OECD-countries, and an increasing rate of young people on disability benefits (OECD, 2013). A major political focus in Norway on work as the foundation of welfare for individuals and society has resulted in reforms, strategies, agreements and policies that aim to improve the quality and effectiveness of work inclusion services. The Norwegian Employment and Welfare Services (called NAV from now) is responsible for implementing work inclusion policies and strategies prescribed by the government, and for serving the target population, which consists of both (potential) employees and employers, who are in need of work inclusion measures to establish and maintain an employer - employee relationship. NAV's core mission is 'to provide opportunities to people', specifically thorough delivering welfare and work inclusion services to citizens (Arbeids og velferdsetaten, 2013).

The thesis investigates the implementation process of a specific work inclusion strategy, the Facilitation Guarantee[1] (called FG from now) as its empirical case. The FG, described in more detail in Article I, was introduced nationally in NAV in 2008 as a new work inclusion method for better collaboration between the NAV counselor, (potential) employer and the (potential) employee/service recipient. An evaluation of the implementation

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[1] 'Tilretteleggingsgarantien' in Norwegian.

of the FG in NAV in the period from its introduction and through 2012 by the governmental Audit Commission (Riksrevisjonen, 2013) found that the FG was not implemented as intended. The extent of use was substantially lower; its content sometimes differed from the intent; and management at different levels of NAV had not followed up the implementation process as planned. As a consequence of the audit report published in early 2013, a strengthened focus was set on implementing the FG in the organization. NAV's own result-measures show that the FG was increasingly being used, but the usage varied among the many NAV employment offices. In the employment office in focus in this case study, despite the fact that the office was counted among the most successful offices in Norway in using the FG between 2013-2015, the usage of the FG dropped drastically in 2015, indicating that the FG was not implemented as expected. These findings of a messy implementation process and outcomes are in line with a vast body of research on the challenge of successfully implementing policies in the frontlines of public service organizations (Hupe, 2010; e.g. Lipsky, 1980; Zang, 2016), and makes for a relevant case to study.

2.2 Research frontiers in policy and street-level implementation

Traditionally, scholarly efforts focusing on policy implementation in public affairs have their roots in the social sciences and particularly in the field of public administration and management (Hill & Hupe, 2014; Roll et al., 2017). According to literature searches and subsequent study of current literature on implementation research[2], the traditional field of policy implementation studies the relationship between planned and actual policy interventions as well as administrative processes between policy adaption, delivery level behavior and effects (Winter, 2012, p. 255). Scholars of the implementation of public affairs policy have been divided between downwards approaches, studying the influence of policy design on the effects of the interventions, such as Pressman & Wildavsky (1973) and Mazmanian & Sabatier (1981);

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[2] I preformed two major literature searches during the course of the study, one in 2015 and one in the end of 2017, focusing on policy implementation and narrowing down to street-level bureaucracy literature, review articles and empirical studies, looking for the status and gaps in the field.

and upwards approaches, focusing on implementation variables and outcomes at the local level, such as Lipsky (1980, 2010) and Hull and Hjern (1987) (Hill & Hupe, 2014; Meyers & Nielsen, 2013; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015; Winter, 2012). Subsequently, the two broad perspectives are seen to complement each other, and efforts to synthesize them and their findings have been undertaken by scholars such as Sabatier (1986), Matland (1995), and Winter (1990). Hupe (2016, p 104) argues, however, that despite the efforts to synthesize downwards and upwards approaches within traditional policy implementation research, the normatively attractive stance both in practice and in academia, that 'implementation follows policy', illustrates a downward view on implementation 'as applying instructions'. This view, Hupe (2016) argues, still has a strong abode in the field, even in research where the locus of attention is on the street level, implying that non-application or deviance of policy intent, the so-called implementation gap, often is seen as implementation failure. Thus an important aim of policy implementation research then, even when presumably using upwards approaches, is to inform management how to fix this problem.

Despite the persistent need for 'valid knowledge of policy implementation' in the practice field (O'Toole, 2000), the relevance and status of the topic of policy implementation among public administration scholars have been debated during the last decades (e.g. Sætre, 2005). In their review article on implementation research, Roll, Moulton and Sandfort (2017, p. 18) identified two streams of research in the field of implementation; that of traditional public administration research on policy implementation in public affairs and that of implementation science spread across specific empirical fields e.g. health, education, environment and social welfare. This string of implementation research, termed implementation science, appears to be on the rise this last decade (Sætre, 2014; Roll et al., 2017). Mainly rooted in the health sciences, its purpose is that of 'unpacking factors that lead to the successful implementation of evidence-based programs and practices' (Roll et al., 2017, p. 3). Roll et al (2017) argue that 'both streams make important contributions to an understanding of implementation dynamics in the pursuit of addressing messy public problems.' But where 'the literature in the implementation science stream often emphasizes programmatic elements without regard for the broader implementation system' making it 'not

generalizable outside of a particular context', they hold that 'the literature in the public affairs research stream may be criticized for being too broad and without applicability for improving specific practices' (Roll et al, 2017, p. 18).

In his review of persistent issues of implementation research, Hupe (2014) argues that a synthesis is still to be reached and that research dealing with the how and the why of implementation through a multiple-leveled view is still needed. Advocating for the necessity to 'looking at what happens and why' at the street level (Hupe, 2014, p 177), he holds that research focusing on street-level implementation usually still 'remains limited to one layer' at the time. This argument is also supported by Roll et al. (2017) in their recent review article where they point out that 'a very small proportion of empirical studies are conducting implementation research that crosses multiple levels of analysis'.

Summarized so far, then, it appears that an important aim of policy implementation research is to inform management how to 'fix' implementation gaps, but that contributions to the wider field of implementation research from the emerging field of implementation science tend to be too narrow so that it cannot be generalized outside the specific contexts, whereas the contributions from the traditional field of policy implementation tend to be too broad not relevant to advising specific practices (Roll et al., 2017). In addition, research specifically focusing on the street-level of implementation needs more empirical attention to how things actually happen at the street-level and why, taking in the multi-leveled implementation contexts in order to find explanations for the implementation outcomes (Hupe 2014, 2016).

In the thesis, the terms frontline or street-level workers, employees and staff are used interchangeably, and refer to the much-theorized street-level bureaucrats in public service sectors (Lipsky, 1980, 2010). According to Lipsky (ibid) street-level bureaucrats are employees at the operational level of public service organizations, such as welfare workers in public employment agencies, who interact directly with the public they serve and use their discretion in decisions regarding issues of providing services. Lipsky's (ibid) work is about the cross-pressures between service recipients' demands and the

limited resources that street-level bureaucrats experience in their daily work, as well as how the street-level bureaucrats act to ease these pressures. According to Lipsky (ibid) they develop coping strategies to accomplish their tasks and he theorizes that the coping strategies effect the way that street-level bureaucrats use their discretion, influencing the services provided, and therefore eventually also influencing the final implementation outcomes of the intended policies. Because of the major influence that street-level bureaucrats may exert on policy directives, Lipsky argues that the street-level bureaucrats are the actual policymakers in their respective areas. As a result, scholars in the Lipskyan tradition have explored an array of strategies that street-level bureaucrats use for coping with restraining factors in their work environment (Kørnøv, Zhang, & Christensen, 2014). Coping strategies in classic street-level research center around the services and how they are delivered (or not) to the recipients through the discretion of staff and use of coping strategies, such as 'rationing services', 'differentiation and prioritization/creaming of clients' and 'husbanding resources' (Kørnøv et al., 2014, p. 5). Because a major focus is on coping strategies that are not advantageous to the service recipients, an inherently negative view of the street-level bureaucrats' use of discretion is found in much of this field, in line with the inherently negative view of 'implementation gaps'. The normative values of discretion have been debated, with arguments that the exercise of professional discretion by street-level bureaucrats is not inherently 'bad', but that it can also be seen as an important professional attribute (Evans & Harris, 2004). Scholars thus have divergent views about the normative value of discretion and coping in street-level policy implementation, though there is a strong consensus that street-level bureaucrats play an important role in policy implementation.

As the relevant reviews and studies from the first literature search disclosed, this has resulted in a substantial amount of research focusing on what factors and variables have an effect on street-level bureaucrats' discretion and use of coping strategies. Kørnøv et al. (2014) and Goldman and Foldy (2015, p. 168) in their reviews of street-level research, summarize factors and variables that are found to influence the direction of the discretionary behavior. These include individual factors such as individual demographics, preferences and attitudes (e.g. Brehm & Gates, 1997; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Nielsen, 2006; Oberfield, 2010; Watkins-Hayes, 2009; Winter, 1994); organizational factors such as limited resources, role structures and priorities

(e.g. Dias & Elesh, 2012; Hasenfeld, 2010; Sandfort, 2000; Smith & Donovan, 2004; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977); management's ability to influence the frontline workers' discretionary behavior (see May & Winter, 2009); norms and cultural expectations (e.g. Garrow & Grusky, 2012; Sandfort, 2000; Winter, 1994); the motivations and abilities of the clients in the target group of the policies (e.g. Moore, 1987; Taylor & Kelly, 2006) and various policy-related factors (Goldman & Foldy, 2015 p.168; see also Brodkin, 1997; Fording, Soss & Schram, 2007; Riccucci, 2005a; 2005b). On the other hand, another considerable amount of research focuses on the outcomes of the discretion and coping strategies by the street-level bureaucrats (Goldman & Foldy, 2015). These include negative outcomes, such as incomplete implementation, not accomplishing policy outcomes and discrimination against user groups (ibid), as well as positive outcomes, such as the adaption of procedures to meet obstacles in their implementation (Borins, 2000; Cooney, 2007; Gofen, 2014) and workers stretching the policy limits in order to respond to the specific circumstances of the clients (Goldman & Foldy, 2015; see Hasenfeld, 2010; Lens, 2008; Soss, Fording & Schram, 2011).

The literature reviews of the thesis concludes in line with Hupe (2014, 2016) that while a vast number of studies exist on the subject of factors which influence street-level bureaucrats' exercise of discretion, only a scant amount of empirical research focuses on 'how the workers actually arrive at their decisions' (Goldman & Foldy, 2015 p.169), or use a multi-leveled perspective to investigate the problem (Hupe, 2014). By shifting the focus from the variables and outcomes of discretion to how frontline workers actually reach their decisions, and taking into account their multi-layered context, research can provide deeper explanations for why street-level bureaucrats implement a new policy according to its intention or not. In addition, whether the outcome of implementation at the street-level is an implementation gap that needs to be fixed, is a normative discussion that is also important to consider (Hill & Hupe, 2003).

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how and why street-level workers implement policy, also taking into consideration the influence of the multi-level context, rigorous lenses of social theory are needed (Garrow & Grusky, 2012; Meyers & Nielsen, 2013; Rice, 2013; Sandfort, 2000). Winter (2000

cited by Meyers & Nielsen, 2013, p. 307) poses the question: 'Are street-level bureaucrats servants or masters?' This question is referring to 'whether, and how, policy-making principals control the discretion of their implementing agents' (Meyers & Nielsen, 2013, p. 307). It might as well point to the debate of how the context and structures in which the street-level bureaucrats are embedded, restrict them as agents in using their discretion, or whether these 'implementing agents' control their discretion themselves. The question of structure or agency as the drivers for change is a question that sociologists for eras have been struggling to answer. By not addressing this issue when researching policy implementation at the street level, it seems to be somewhat taken for granted that street-level bureaucrats are fully rational regarding their choices (Garrow & Grusky, 2012) to implement a policy or not. In her article on collaboration and public management in the frontlines of the welfare system, Sandfort (2000, p. 752) draws on social theory that informs the relationship between agent and structure in the shaping of the welfare workers' discretion and implementation outcomes. Sandfort (ibid, p. 752) also points to the need for more theoretically informed research 'focusing on the collective, day-to-day experience' of street-level bureaucrats and drawing connections to larger structural forces, thus integrating multiple levels of analysis. Meyers and Nielsen (2013) call for more fully integrated theories for understanding the complexities in which street-level discretion must be explained. They assert that researchers have examined a variety of political, organizational and professional factors that could be predicted to control the discretion of the frontline workers; and that this research is vast with various outcomes, and sometimes with contradictory results. They contribute the varied results to the complexity of the frontline workers' contexts: Street-level bureaucrats are embedded in interacting socio-economic, policy, organizational and professional systems, and 'the capacity of any single factor to influence their discretionary behaviors' is mediated by the influence of other, sometimes even competing forces in the implementation system Meyers and Nielsen (ibid, p. 246).

Further theoretical developments of the street-level approach have been done by bridging Lipsky's (1980, 2010) approach with institutionalist theory (Rice, 2013). Rice (ibid) builds a framework for understanding how societal systems and institutions affect the interaction between citizens and welfare case-workers and how that interaction shapes societal structures in return.

Through the lens of institutional theory, the policy implementation process may be viewed as a process of institutionalization. Institutions have been defined as 'self-reproducing recurrent patterns of behavior' (Leca 2006, p.632) that 'gradually acquire the moral and ontological status of taken-for-granted facts, which in turn, shape future interactions and negotiations' (Barley & Tolbert, 1997, p. 94). Eventually these taken-for-granted scripts are said to be continuously reproduced by the actors, who may not even be aware that they exist (Leca, 2006). For a new policy or strategy to be institutionalized through implementation, new practices have to form. In the case of policy implementation, the new policy may be defined as institutionalized when it has become a natural part of the street-level workers' toolbox to be considered in applicable cases. Among the vast amount of research studying street-level bureaucrats and their use of discretion for policy implementation, the attention to the processes of institutional change are not addressed to any great degree according to Rice (2013). Lipsky himself is said to have used a rational choice institutionalism approach to understanding street-level bureaucrats and their use of discretion (ibid). Even if scholars of individual studies on street-level implementation after Lipsky are not explicit regarding their theoretical approach, street-level bureaucrats are often portrayed with taken-for-granted freedoms in shaping their discretions (ibid).

Garrow & Grusky (2012) applies the notion that agency at the street-level is institutionally embedded and that practices are partially determined by institutional settings. Garrow & Grusky (ibid) as well as Rice (2013) contribute to the much needed structure-agency debate for policy implementation in an institutional setting. Where Garrow & Grusky (ibid) focus on street-level bureaucrats as institutionally constructed actors whose decisions are institutionally conditioned in systematic ways, Rice (ibid) focuses on structure-agency in social change at a larger scale, investigating how street-level agency shapes macro structures and macro structures shape street-level agency in return. To the best of my knowledge, however, including how street-level workers perceive and respond to institutionally conditioned implementation instructions in a multi-layered context as well as including the workers' reflections on their situational contingencies in the analysis, has not yet been done. According to scholars in the research paradigm of critical realism, when structures at different levels of an organization condition the agents' [implementation] practices, these actors'

reflexivity is the mechanism through which structural possibilities are considered and choices are made (Delbridge & Edwards, 2013). In this view, the interaction between structure and agency can be teased out by investigating the actors' reflexivities (Archer, 2003) regarding specific situations where the implementation of a new policy may be an issue. This thesis is inspired by the research paradigm of critical realism presented in the next section. Before presenting the CR approach and because the thesis is based upon a case study where the practices of frontline workers in their meeting with implementation instructions is a central issue, it is appropriate to discuss why I chose to position the thesis within a critical realist approach, and not within a practice approach (e.g. Smets, Aristidou, & Whittington, 2017). The decision is based upon how the two frameworks' different approaches the debate of structure and agency in social change, also called the 'paradox of embedded agency' in institutional theory.

The debate on how institutionally embedded agents are influenced or can influence institutions and structures that surround them during processes of institutional change has been problematized as the 'paradox of embedded agency' in institutional theory (Battilana & D'aunno, 2009; Burns & Nielsen, 2006; Delbridge & Edwards, 2013; Seo & Creed, 2015). Tied to social theory in general, the paradox evolves around the issue of determinism or voluntarism, structure or agency, as the drivers for social change. This issue in institutional theory refers to the 'controversy surrounding agency in institutional change [which] highlights the tension between the notion of actors as strategic agents and the powerful influence of institutional forces on human agency' (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009, p. 96). There has been a gradual shift of attention among institutional theorists, moving from a 'first generation' neo-institutional (Morgan, Edwards, & Gomes, 2014) focusing on the macro processes of isomorphism and 'reproduction of institutionalized practices' within an 'over-socialized view of action' (Battilana and D'aunno 2009:31), to 'second generation' neo-institutionalists progressively placing their attention on institutional change (Morgan et al. 2014). The shift of focus towards institutional change highlights this paradox to account for how institutionally embedded actors can change the institutions that embed them.

As a response to the tendency of deploying macro explanations for action (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012), and the opposite tendency of

attributing 'heroic' qualities to agents as institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana et al. 2009), a more recent development in the debate of embedded agency is a 'turn to practice', aimed at giving better insight into the micro-processes and actual everyday work situations of embedded actors (e.g. Seo & Creed, 2015; Bjerregaard & Jonasson, 2014; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013; Jarzabkowski, Smets, Bednarek, Burke, & Spee, 2013; Smets et al., 2012; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010; Jarzabkowski, Matthiesen, & Van de Ven, 2009;Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). This 'practice turn' is inspired by scholars such as Schatzki, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Giddens and Bourdieu (Buch, Andersen, & Klemsdal, 2015). A main intention is to shift 'the focus of analysis from the individual actor, the isolated subject (…) to the practices we inevitably participate in when going about our daily business as social beings' (Buch et al. 2015, p. 1-2). In the field of institutional theory, this is in response to calls to re-connect the 'macroworlds' of institutions and the 'microworlds' of the actors who populate them (Smets and Jarzabkowski 2013). Schatzki et.al.'s (2001) book *The practice turn in contemporary theory* has been essential for the development of practice-based approaches (La Rocca, Hoholm, & Mørk, 2017). According to (Schatzki, 2001, p. 3) the social field is 'a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings… [whereby] individuals, (inter)action, language, signifying systems, the life world, institutions/roles, structures, or systems (…) can only be analyzed via the field of practices'. This in effect take 'actions, interactions and negotiations between multiple actors' as the core levels of analysis (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009, p. 289). Practice approaches thus focus on practices as the primary ontological level where actors become actors by their participation in these practices. From this perspective, practices can also be perceived as processing devices where both individual actors and the technical/institutional environment become realized (e.g. in practice). However, the thesis study is concerned with how individual frontline employees relate to and deal with designed policy innovations and contexts, working on the assumption that this relationship can be analyzed as a duality.

CR scholars hold that although practice approaches escape the over-focusing on macro influences at the expenditure of micro influences or vice versa in explaining the role of agent and structure in social change, they conflate structure and agency into one level (of practices), leaving it difficult to

analyze the interaction between the agents and the contexts that are influencing them (e.g. Archer 2010; Porpora 2015). This is not to say that the collective practices of the frontline employees do not represent an important frame for how the individual employees relate to and handle the designed policy innovations. However, basing this study on a practice ontology would have made it more difficult to focus on the active relationship between the frontline employees and the policy innovation and context. Without attempting to devaluate the advantages of the practice approach in analyzing street-level implementation practices, the thesis therefore applies a critical realist lens to the study of implementation at the street-level, and thereby contributes to finding explanations for implementation practices by analytically separating structure from agency in order to explore their interaction in social change.

2.3   The research paradigm of critical realism

Redman-MacLaren & Mills (2017, p. 3) give a clear description of the meta-theoretical terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology that are important to be explicit about in scientific research. They summarize *ontology* as 'how the researcher conceives the nature of reality'; *epistemology* as how the researcher conceives the process of gaining 'knowledge about the nature of reality"; and *methodology* as being about 'principles which inform steps taken to gain this knowledge'. In the early stages of this thesis, various scientific paradigms were considered. The critical realist (called CR from now) research paradigm seemed most fit for investigating deep explanations of the social phenomena of implementation practices. As a result, this thesis takes a CR stand on ontology, epistemology and methodology. This section describes the central principles of CR that inspired this thesis. Methodological consequences of choosing a CR research paradigm are elaborated in chapter three.

The research paradigm of CR can be said to be somewhere between the two contradictory positions of objectivism (e.g. approaches based upon positivism, empiricism and deduction) and subjectivism (e.g. approaches based upon social constructionism, interpretivism and induction). Whereas objectivism shares the ontology with CR that reality is objective and exists independently of people's language, perceptions and imagination, CR also recognizes the

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subjectivist stand that the social world consists of subjective interpretations that influence how that world is experienced and enacted (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). CR's main objective is that 'of understanding why things are as they are' (Easton, 2010, p. 119) or happen as they do. Its goal is 'not to identify generalizable laws (e.g. positivism) or to identify the lived experience or beliefs of social actors (e.g. interpretivism); it is to develop deeper levels of explanation and understanding' of social phenomenon and change by discovering underlying mechanisms and contingencies that can account for the events (McEvoy, 2006, p. 69). In a CR perspective, mechanisms operate as 'tendencies whose activation, as well as the effect(s) of the activation, are not given but contingent' (Tsoukas, 1994, p. 291) According to Elster (2007, p. 36), mechanisms are 'casual patterns that are triggered under generally unknown conditions or with indeterminate consequences'. That is, mechanisms are that which 'cause' something to happen and operate only when they are being triggered. Because the social system is an open system, the same mechanism may produce different events, and conversely the same type of event may have different causes (Sayer, 1992). Although mechanisms are an implicit part of all levels of an implementation system, this thesis focuses on mechanisms at the micro level of human interactions that can help explain what happens (Elster, 1989). Social mechanisms have been conceptualized to exist as a potentiality of the combination of agentic concerns (the driving force behind causes, motives, considerations, choices) and situational contingencies involved (Blom & Moren, 2015). How mechanisms manifest (or not) therefore, depends on the agents involved and the macro, meso and micro contextual conditions that the event is taking place in (Leca & Naccache, 2006). Hence, the role of structure and agency in social change (and in this thesis: the role of structure and agency in implementation practices) is important to deliberate on.

A CR-informed approach to research makes a point of analyzing social change as a result of the interaction between contextual conditions or structures and actors' actions or agency. CR considers 'actors' actions and structures as two separate ontologically different but related levels of reality' (Leca & Naccache, 2006, p. 629). According to Bhaskar (1975 as referred to by Leca and Naccache, 2006, p. 629), 'both structures and actors' actions possess distinctive emergent properties, relative autonomy, a previous

existence, and causal powers, and they are in constant interaction'. As described in the previous section, the debate of structure versus agency is dealt with by focusing on what happens in the interaction between them by separating actors' actions and structures analytically. Archer (2003), in her book 'Structure, agency and the internal conversation' is concerned with conceptualizing and explaining how agency on the one hand is based on the formation of the individual person's 'constellations of concerns' (ibid), and on the other hand is relational to situational contingencies. Archer (ibid, p. 139 – 140) characterizes situations as having emergent properties that are ontologically distinct from the individual actors. Situations are broadly characterized by structural properties (positions and distributions) and social expectations (cultural and institutional), and form what Archer (ibid) characterizes as objective conditions for choice and actions. She further holds that the social actors relate to the situations according to their own subjective interpretations and descriptions of the situations at hand, and that on the basis of their personal concerns and the possible choices within this situational contingency, choose how to act and thereby influence how the situations unfold (ibid).

Social change (or non-change) is thus treated in this thesis as occurring through the interaction between the situational conditions and the agents' reflexive deliberations rooted in their subjectively determined 'constellations of concern' about to the situation at hand. This underlines the importance of focusing on the individual frontline workers' reflexive deliberations on what happened at the micro-level in the implementation process, as well as considering the multileveled and complex contexts in which the implementation was (supposed to be) happening. The CR notion of separating structure and agency analytically in order to understand the interaction between the two, and hence find not only descriptions but also explanations of what agents do in response to top-down implementation efforts, is made particular use of.

3 Theoretical landscaping

The CR approach presupposes an objective reality and at the same time holds that 'all description of that reality is mediated through the filters of language, meaning-making and social context' (Oliver, 2012, p. 374). An important purpose of scientific inquiry, then, is to explain that reality as closely as possible to what is real (Oliver, 2012, p. 374). CR studies rely on pre-existing theories for finding the best explanations for the phenomenon at hand (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017) and emphasize the importance of social theories as frameworks for interpretation and as tools in that process (Danermark, et al., 2001). In the following, I introduce the theoretical landscape that has contributed to answering the research questions. Because of the multi-disciplinarity of the thesis, a vast number of different theories could be used to explore and explain the phenomena in question. Several theoretical intakes have also been considered, however, because of the theoretical complexity of the lenses that inform the thesis, alternative theoretical frameworks are subdued for the benefit of the theoretical landscape chosen. First, theoretical frameworks that elaborate on the contextual and situational contingencies of the case study are presented. These are the theoretical debates of managerial principles in Nordic Welfare Sectors (e.g. Kamp, Klemsdal, & Gonäs, 2013; Torfing, Sørensen, & Roiseland, 2016) (article I-III); the framework of multi-level implementation systems (e.g. Sandfort & Moulton, 2015) (article I) and institutional logics and complexity (e.g. Friedland and Alford, 1991; Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011) (article II). Second, theoretical frameworks that elaborate on the role of agency in the case study are presented. These are the theoretical debates on institutional logics in action (e.g. McPherson & Sauder, 2013) (article II), the role of authenticity, autonomy and dignity in resistance and organizational misbehavior (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Karlsson, 2012; Thunman, 2013) as well as debates on employee-based innovation (e.g. Fuglsang, 2010; Lippke & Wegener, 2014) (article III). Further elaborations of these theoretical approaches are to be found in the respective articles.

3.1 Managerial principles in the Nordic Welfare Sector

In the public sector of the Nordic nations, structural and cultural dynamics consist of complex, hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational structures, multifaceted professional standards, as well as values and traces from an overlapping journey of governance and managerial principles (Fuglsang & Rønning, 2015; Kamp et al., 2013; Torfing et al., 2016). Managerial principles widely found in in the Nordic welfare sectors (Hartley, 2005; Kamp et al., 2013; Torfing et al., 2016) include: Classic Public Bureaucratic principles of legal authority and standardization of services; New Public Management principles of customer focus, performance measuring and documentation practices; and more recently, endeavors to incorporate the newer and trending models of governance emphasizing bottom-up innovation, collaboration, user-participation and co-production as important agendas for meeting the changing demands for welfare services.

During the decades before and around the millennium, New Public Management principles, including a heightened focus on performance and outcome monitoring as well as documentation and registration requirements, became dominant in many areas of the public sectors (Kamp, et al., 2013). More recently, public welfare sectors, and at least the public and academic debates on welfare systems and governance, have been increasingly moving away from New Public Management (Osborne & Brown, 2011; Torfing et al., 2016). In the midst of this, however, public welfare organizations in the Nordic nations still contain elements of all three sets of managerial principles (Kamp et al., 2013). This leads to complex organizational pressures, such as when Classic Bureaucratic principles of legitimization and standardization blend with New Public Management pressures of performance measuring and registrations, and also with top-down efforts to implement newer models of service provision based upon more recent principles of collaboration and user-participation. Empirical studies show that the still strong New Public Management hold on the public welfare sector has led to high demands from top levels of welfare organizations to implement documentation and registration procedures at the operational levels (Thunman, 2016). This may also be the case in NAV, and could indicate that all these overlapping managerial principles together form complexity and put additional pressure on

the frontline workers in the case study. It is therefore important to explore the possible existence of overlapping managerial principles in NAV in order to map the contextual landscape and gain an increased understanding of what happens at the frontline during implementation processes.

3.2 Multi-level implementation systems

In recent works, Sandfort and Moulton (2015) constructed a framework of complex implementation systems that takes into account a rich understanding of implementation across multiple interacting levels. They use the metaphor of water running through a natural three-layered water filtration system in a pond to illustrate how policy flows through a multi-level system during its implementation process. Sandfort and Moulton (ibid) specifically focus on three levels of the implementation system of a public policy or an intervention: the policy field that is a bounded network between organizations carrying out the particular policy; the organizational field where the policy is authorized and operationalized; and a frontline field 'where the implementation system interacts directly with the target population to carry out the program' (ibid p. 25). In this way, the policy can be analyzed, both in content and context. Each layer has its unique social structures where social actors filter and shape the policy as it passes through while, at the same time, these social structures are embedded in the rest of the context (ibid). In complex systems, order emerges from the interactions of many different entities in unpredictable ways, at the same time as 'intentional human action is important in shaping and understanding the patterns that unfold in such systems' (ibid p.25). Sandfort and Moulton's (ibid) multi-level implementation system, especially its three-layered conceptualization and focus on the policy content and context, provides a tool for mapping and conceptualizing the FG and the complex context of the work inclusion implementation system at the policy level, through the organizational and frontline levels of the case office. Although Sandfort and Moulton (ibid) draw heavily on Fligstein's (2011) theorizing of strategic action fields, this thesis only draws on the structural conceptualization of the framework in order to explore and map out the FG and the multi-layered complexity surrounding the implementation process. In article I, a simplified version of the framework is

used to illustrate the complexity that needs to be taken into consideration when planning the implementation of new measures and policy.

3.3 Institutional logics, complexity and logics as tools

The theoretical framework of institutional logics and complexity are valuable both for identifying how the institutional environment of public services contains multiple logics that come together at different levels, sometimes in incompatible ways, as well as for understanding how actors at the operational level manage, negotiate and enact these potentially conflicting institutional tensions in their daily practices. The concept of institutional logics was first introduced by Friedland and Alford (1991) and defined as 'central logics that supply principles of organization and legitimacy', and later as 'the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality' (as referred by Leca & Naccache, 2006, p. 632; Thornton, 2002; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). As such, institutional logics provide a link between individual agency and institutional practices. According to Thornton and Ocasio (2008, p. 103), 'while individual and organizational actors may seek power, status and economic advantage, the means and ends of their interests and agency are both enabled and constrained by prevailing institutional logics.' Accordingly, logics may be seen as logics of value and action. Actions become meaningful and valuable and people become socially recognized as sensible social actors by adhering to the right logics. In addition, logics provide possibilities for classification and categorization, shaping our cognition (Dimaggio, 1997). From this perspective then, logics do not necessarily provide procedures and script, but rather more generic frames that can be used to develop a socially adequate understanding of what is going on and what to do in concrete situations, 'establishing core principles for organizing activities and channeling interests' (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012, p. 77).

Delbridge and Edwards (2013, p. 928) holds that 'the concept of institutional logics is valuable because it is built upon an integrated conceptual architecture

that works at three levels of analysis (the individual, the organizational and the societal)' (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Thornton, et al., 2012). At the societal level, an 'inter-institutional' system is theorized to consist of distinctive institutional domains such as market, family, corporation, state, profession and community, all characterized by separate and generic logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012). The institutional domain of profession, for instance, is associated with the quality of craft which is the personal expertise essential for specific professions (Thornton, et al., 2012). According to such theorizing on institutional logics, the logics of this domain would be framed according to the values and norms of the profession in question and would act as organizing principles for the individuals that identify with them. This indicates that agents working within a certain profession may abide by and identify with the institutional logics of that profession. The institutional domain of state on the other hand, associated with democracy and bureaucratic principles for legitimization, would frame institutional logics according to different assumptions, beliefs and rules (Thornton, et al., 2012), and agents working within such a system would identify with and feel compelled to abide by an associated set of institutional logics.

Advancement of the scholarly field has broadly acknowledged that logics are not only delivered by the societal domains they are associated with, but that they are derived from a manifold of mechanisms, such as being provided by the societal level, by 'logics of neighboring fields and from the endogenous actions of the individuals who populate them (Thornton, et al., 2012). Institutional logics at the organizational level may, for instance, be represented through various managerial principles and through guiding principles for its members of the organization. Research on institutional logics also focuses on how logics from multiple domains, such as the examples above, are often brought together in specific situations creating combinations of logics with conflicting or 'diverging prescriptions for behavior' (Martin, Currie, Weaver, Finn, & McDonald, 2016, p. 104). These theoretical lenses of institutional domains, logics and complexity proved fruitful in mapping the institutional landscape of this case.

These advancements in theoretical research offer building blocks for integrating micro-processes of agency with higher-order levels of analysis that

relate to institutional plurality and complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011). Much of the research in this area focuses on how social actors handle institutional complexity, particularly at the organizational level (ibid). According to the theories of institutional logics, the more complex the institutional landscape is in terms of competing logics, the more complex and challenging it should be for organizational actors to maneuver.

However, emerging literature discusses institutional complexity as a possible source of creative tension and autonomy at the operational level, or as comprising a space for agency among members of the organization, emphasizing the role of agency (e.g. Binder, 2007; McPherson & Sauder, 2013). The notion of 'institutional logics as tools' stems from this discussion and studies how logics can be used strategically as tools by organizational members to reach certain goals (e.g. Currie & Spyridonidis, 2015; McPherson & Sauder, 2013). According to this literature, at the operational and micro level of the organization, instead of being a source of complexity, logics may be available as tools in the individual actors' purposive attempts at making sense of themselves and their actions in social situations and contexts. The view of institutional logics as tools is a useful lens in this thesis to investigate how organizational actors relate to institutional logics when accommodating implementation of policy measures, specifically when investigating how frontline staff at the case office of NAV perceived and responded to the implementation efforts of the Facilitation Guarantee.

3.4   Agentic concerns, resistance and coping

The thesis draws on the central CR scholar Archer's (2000, 2003) essential contributions to theorizing the role of agency within sociology. According to Archer (2003, p. 138), the world of humans consists of 'three clusters of inescapable [agentic] concerns' that humans reflexively survey and determine the relative importance of. She uses the term 'constellations of concern' to describe the way individuals prioritize their concerns in these three constituent orders: nature (physical well-being), practice (performative achievement) and the social (self-worth). These prioritizations generate personal patterns of identity and reflexivity and thereby influence the agents' 'ultimate concerns' in the situations at hand (ibid). The 'ultimate concerns' are seen in relation to the agents' concerns within the three orders, such as the need for performative

achievement in the order of practice as well as a need for maintaining self-worth in the order of the social (Archer, 2000).

In this way of thinking, frontline employees in welfare services may be seen to be motivated by their 'ultimate concerns' about performative achievement and self-worth and the resulting strong inclinations to abide by professional values and ethical standards of their work. In the case of social workers, the practical and the social dimensions seem to be interrelated but still analytically separable. Where the social dimension refers to social recognition and the altruism of helping service recipients, the sense of performance achievement is contingent upon the practical mastery of serving these recipients.

Literature on work life studies and organizational misbehavior highlight the importance of employees' sense of professional dignity (Karlsson, 2012), autonomy (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999) and authenticity (Thunman, 2013) for their work satisfaction and performance. For frontline workers in welfare offices, such as in the case study, this means adhering to the professional standards of social work in providing correct, efficient and tailor-made services for their service recipients (Kjørstad, 2005; NASW, 2017; Thunman, 2013; Tummers, Bekkers, & Steijn, 2009). These 'ultimate concerns' then become an important basis for how welfare workers perform their work and may be linked to this need for autonomy (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999) in performing tasks according to these standards of performative achievement (in the order of work/practice) (Archer, 2000). Further, these motivations may also be related to the workers' need for self-worth (in the order of the social) (ibid) through the need for feelings of dignity and authenticity (Karlsson, 2012; Thunman, 2013) in their work, serving the end-user to the best of their ability. In any way, the 'ultimate concerns' of frontline employees may likely have an influence on implementation practices.

Contextual conditions discussed in section 3.1, brought about by overlapping managerial principles of bureaucracy and NPM, have been found to weaken professional autonomy and workers' opportunity to make choices according to their professional ethics and standards (Kamp et al., 2013). Such pressures on frontline staff in welfare service organizations are thus likely to come into conflict with their ultimate professional concerns of providing services

according to a set of standards and values. Being unable to work according to their 'ultimate concerns' may then prevent staff fulfilling the sense of performative achievement and self-worth in their job. The literature that emphasizes workers' sense of autonomy (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999) and dignity (Karlsson, 2012) as crucial factors in work satisfaction, hold that workers' reactions to a mismatch between their sense of autonomy and dignity versus managerial principles or other obstacles, may lead to organizational misbehavior and resistance. This may help explain the 'why' of implementation practices among frontline workers in the study?

In line with Lipsky's (1980, 2010) point that street-level bureaucrats develop coping strategies, the concept of coping is used in this thesis to describe the behavior that the frontline workers portray as a reaction to the implementation instructions. Lipsky's use of the concept was inspired by Folkman and Lazarus' (1980:223, cited by Tummers, Bekkers, Vink, & Musheno, 2015) definition of coping as 'the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them'. The literature on coping does not usually distinguish between coping mechanisms and coping strategies (e.g. Tummers et al., 2015). The thesis uses the term coping strategy to refer to what seem to be conscious strategies of coping, openly described by informants in the study[3], while the term coping mechanism refers to mechanisms that happened in a less explicit way, not openly described by informants but emerging from the extensive analysis of the findings[4].

3.5   Public sector innovation theory and employee-based innovation

In parallel with academic scholarship on public policy implementation, there has been an increased focus on scholarship on innovation in the public sector. Scholars have concluded that the public sector, despite commonly-held negative assumptions, is innovative (e.g. Fuglsang & Pedersen, 2011; Hartley,

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[3] E.g. the coping strategies of adjusting, down-prioritizing, tricking and rejecting in article III and section 5.2.3.
[4] E.g. the mechanisms of categorization, valuation, prioritizing; strategizing by revision or resistance strategies, justification in article II and section 5.2.

2005). Such scholars highlight the differences between studying innovation in the public sector compared to studying innovation in the market-based sector, especially the differences in the value created through the innovations. Innovation in the marked-based sector is inherently defined as 'novelty that creates economic value' (Høyrup, 2010, p. 144), whereas public sector innovation is promoted in order to help solve societal problems and to create value for the public (Hartley, 2013). The term innovation has several definitions. Hartley (2005) refers to definitions such as 'novelty in action' (Altschuler & Zegans, 1997, referred by Hartley 2005, p. 27) and 'new ideas that work' (Mulgan & Albury, 2003, referred by Hartley 2005, p. 27), and emphasizes that innovation is not just a new idea, but an idea put into practice. The new ideas can be of any origin: coming from policy or being of technical, administrative or organizational character (Van de Ven, 1986). This "new" becomes an innovation when it is implemented through continuing practices (Fuglsang, 2010).

The public sector innovation field, like the public policy implementation field, has an analytical division between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Bottom-up innovation approaches, such as 'practice-based innovation' (Ellström, 2010), 'bricolage and tinkering' (Fuglsang, 2010), 'everyday-innovations' (Lippke & Wegener, 2014), and 'work(er) innovation' (Smith, 2017) bring insight to the understanding of how new innovations are created in everyday practices among employees in their day-to-day solving of practical problems. However, what happens at the level of the frontline staff in welfare offices when they are instructed to implement policy measures delegated from the top, does not appear to be the focus of this literature. Literature on public sector innovation that does consider policy implementation, tends to do so from a top-down or management perspective, researching how different forms of governance might affect the innovation capacities (e.g. Moore & Hartley, 2008) or giving prescriptions to management for how to foster innovation and implementation activities in their organizations and among their employees (e.g. Bason, 2007).

As discussed, the bottom-up focus of the literature of public policy implementation, specifically stemming from Lipsky's (1980, 2010) theorizing of street-level bureaucracy, focuses on exploring variables of an individual and contextual character that might hinder or facilitate policy implementation

at the level of the street-level workers. The street-level policy implementation approach seems, however, to be lacking an innovation perspective on the implementation work that is being done by the frontline staff. Bottom-up innovation literatures, on the other hand, argue that innovation among service employees in the public sector is characterized by elements of 'tinkering' or 'bricolage' due to 'unforeseen events', the complexity of the services provided and 'wicked problems' present (Fuglsang, 2010, p. 74). In public service organizations that are set to serve the complex and volatile needs of the citizens, 'adjusting protocol to unforeseen events' and 'creating structures by means of events' are thus imperative for delivering appropriate services (Fuglsang, 2010, p. 74). Such innovation activities happen in the day-to-day practices of employees while solving their work tasks (e.g Fuglsang, 2010; Lippke & Wegener, 2014) and are not instructed by management. In this thesis the term employee-based innovations is used for this type of innovation. This is not to be confused with the concept of 'employee-driven innovation', which also refers to innovation activities among employees, but includes activities that management is actively aware of and working to facilitate (Høyrup, 2010).

Drawing on insights from research on employee-based innovation, it is suggested that such an innovation perspective can bring valuable insight to the street-level approach of policy implementation research. The non-application or deviance from policy intent that often is termed implementation failure in classical Lipskyan literature may be viewed in a more positive light through the lenses of innovation theory, as is discussed in article III and section 7.2.1.

4   Research methodology, design, methods and reflections

Having presented the theoretical positioning and landscape of the thesis, I now devote this chapter to describing and discussing its methodological choices and consequences. The implications of a CR informed methodology on case study research, its research design and methods are discussed. Then methodological reflections on the criteria for the quality of the study and ethical issues are elaborated on.

4.1   Research methodology

Qualitative case study research has become popular in several fields within the social sciences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Wynn & Williams, 2012). Savin-Baden & Major (2013, p. 154) argue that case study research in a qualitative framework 'is an approach to research that focuses on a specific case [and] employs case study research methods that draw upon other research approaches'. They hold that it is important to be explicit and clear about what research approach the case study is drawn upon. The research approach chosen will have important implications for the selection of phenomena of interest, the research design and case selection, the data collection methods as well as for the strategies of analysis chosen (ibid).

Researchers who associate themselves within a CR research paradigm emphasize the importance of flexibility when matching the research approach with the research questions, methods and theoretical frameworks (Fletcher, 2016). The most common point of departure towards a research approach among CR researchers seems to be a pragmatic, eclectic and creative research process (e.g. Belfrage & Hauf, 2017; Fletcher, 2016) where the researcher places primacy on the exploration of explanations of the phenomena through bricolaging a 'variety of methods to help reveal the real' (Kempster & Parry, 2014, p. 98). When the nature of the research aim is to understand and explain complex phenomena of social change, such as the phenomena of implementation practices, a qualitative research approach is appropriate, using a case study design that allows for deep study (Harrison & Easton, 2004).

Several CR scholars do point to case studies as a research approach that fits well with the methodological aims of exploring social phenomena in context and in real life, and searching out explanations (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014; Kessler & Bach, 2014). The case study methodology involves investigations of 'one or a small number of social entities or situations about which data are collected by using multiple sources of data and developing a holistic description through an iterative research process' (Easton, 2010, p. 119). A key reason for using a case study is therefore its inherent opportunity to study a phenomenon comprehensively and in depth (Easton, 2010), and the possibility to 'tease out ever-deepening layers of reality in the search for generative mechanisms and influential contingencies' (Harrison & Easton, 2004, p. 195). Setting the research design within the boundaries of the case study distinguishes the setting of the social phenomena to be studied, making a manageable research approach inspired by a CR methodology.

4.2   Research design and methods

In his book titled *A realist approach for qualitative research*, Maxwell (2012 p. 76) emphasizes research design as a 'do-it-yourself" and 'ongoing, interactive process' rather than a predefined plan or 'linear sequence of activities'. In this study, the initial research questions and plans of data collection and analysis were continuously challenged, adjusted and further specified as insights into the case deepened. The research project was started within a complex context and with little known in advance, so it was not obvious which policy implementation processes or levels of the organization to explore. The case selection, data collection and analysis process all became elements of the interactive journey that makes up this thesis.

4.2.1 Case selection

When using a case study design, defining the case, the case setting or context and type of case study are important parts of the research process (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Harrison & Easton, 2004). Because the social phenomenon in question was complex and multi-dimensional, using a progressive sampling and analysis process based on emergent findings was appropriate. At the same time, by letting 'theory inform the selection of cases while using the collected

data to refine theoretical understandings' (Bergene, 2007, p. 12), I selected the cases to gain deeper understandings and find explanations for the results emerging, in line with a CR informed case study design. In this study, a single case design, with the possibility of comparison between elements in the case, such as events, work conditions and organizational levels, became the most suitable. Miller and Tsang (2011, p. 152) explain that comparisons within single case studies can reveal 'how continuities and discontinuities in mechanisms and contexts affect outcomes...[and how p]athological or extreme cases can reveal conditions where mechanisms are undermined or unimpeded'. The case was defined according to which implementation effort became the focus of the study, which parts of the implementation process became the focal interest of the study, and which parts of the organization became the site of the study.

Selection of implementation effort. The initial intention of the study was to explore an instance of successfully implemented public policy innovation in the frontlines of NAV that could give valuable insight to explain why the implementation effort turned out to be successful. Talking to informants holding key positions in NAV during the initial phases of the research project, led to my interest in the Facilitation Guarantee. As described in chapter 2, the FG was a work inclusion method in the shape of a processual tool with the intention of enabling better collaborations between NAV, employers and potential employees/service recipients. During initial interviews, the FG appeared to have high discursive value among key stakeholders in NAV, and the implementation process had been documented thoroughly. Its reception at the frontlines initially seemed to be good. However, eventually when I gained more insight into the case, it became apparent that the FG had not necessarily been implemented as presumed and intended, making it a 'pathological case' (Danermark, et al., 2001), and thereby even more interesting to study.

Implementation impact and case office selection. Initially, I defined the case as the implementation process of the FG from its inclusion in 2006 to the end of 2015. During the study, I narrowed the case focus to 2012-2015 because of the increased implementation focus after the 2012 Audit report (Riksrevisjonen, 2013). The period from 2006 until the 2012 Audit thus served as the historical context. The case context or setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Harrison & Easton, 2004) I chose to be a frontline NAV office that had

experienced the implementation effort of the FG in the stated period and that appeared to have good results. In addition, it seemed important to include the other parts of the organization of NAV that had central roles in the implementation effort, such as the regional NAV office and several of its support units, the Directorate of Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

On the basis of statistical result data and internal documents from central levels of NAV on the use of the FG among frontline NAV offices, I sampled a specific frontline office in collaboration with key informants at managerial levels of NAV. It was theoretically sampled for representing a somewhat 'exceptional' (Vincent & Wapshott, 2014), 'extreme or pathological' (Danermark et al., 2001) case, in that it stood out in a significant and relevant way. This specific case office chosen had done exceptionally well in its use of the FG after the 2012 Audit (among the best in Norway), but had then suddenly dropped to almost nothing just before the onset of the case study in 2015. The sudden drop after a period of high usage, I speculated, indicated that something had happened in the context that could shed light on causal configurations and mechanisms of importance to the implementation process of the FG. It is by seeing 'how something goes wrong we find out more about the conditions of its working properly than we ever would by observing it working properly' (Miller & Tsang, 2011). Together with these initial findings, Miller & Tsang's (ibid) tenant changed the research focus of the case study from an 'innovation gone right' to an 'implementation gone wrong': searching for explanations within the case to understand implementation practices at the frontline.

4.2.2 Data sources and collection methods

At the onset of the research project, I obtained permissions from the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) and the Research and Development Department of NAV. See appendix 1 for approval letters. When major changes had to be made during the research process, such as changing data collection methods and extending the project period, additional permissions were obtained. Major ethical dilemmas were discussed with advisors at the NSD and documentation of the conversations and conclusion stored for transparency. The research participants were selected as described

below and anonymized as discussed in the ethics section of this chapter. The data material was stored safely before anonymized by the fall of 2017 as agreed in the permission and invitation letters (appendix 1 and 2). The informants came from all hierarchical levels of NAV, holding positions as managers, coordinators of implementation efforts and frontline workers. They all had knowledge in various degrees about the FG and its context that were important for the study. The distribution of informants according to their belonging at organizational levels and work positions are illustrated in table below.

INFORMANTS				
Organizational level / Position	Ministry and directorate	Provincial office	Local case office	Total
Managers	3	2	3	8
Coordinators	2	6	0	8
Frontline employees	0	0	11	11
Total	5	8	14	27

Table 1 – Distribution of informants according to belonging at organizational levels and work titles

My initial plan and research design was to divide the study into two main phases. Eventually, the two phases grew into each other, complimenting and informing each other in the process. The first phase was aimed at providing a historical and contextual understanding of the wider field in question through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and document studies. Starting with acquiring an overview of the field of work inclusion through various official documents, such as governmental white papers and reports, I proceeded with five background interviews with managers and coordinators at a provincial office. These initial interviews gave insight into the work inclusion services and focuses in NAV, helping to narrow down the locus of the study as well as guiding the selection of informants and documents required to move on with the research. It was during these initial interviews that the specific case emerged and was defined, including the Facilitation Guarantee as the selected

policy implementation process, as well as the time period and case office in focus. Having selected the case, the objective was to gain access to relevant internal organizational documents and informants relevant to the FG implementation effort, so that the contextual landscape of its complex implementation system could be mapped (Sandfort et al., 2015). After interviewing some more key informants in the organization, the rest of the informants of the first phase of the study were selected through the snowballing method (Patton, 2014), focusing on informants with important positions in this specific implementation effort at all levels of the organization. This first phase of the data collection consisted of 16 informants distributed at various levels of the organization. Five were recruited at the national level in the Ministry and the Directorate, eight at the provincial level and three at the municipal level. They accounted for 21 interviews, with several key informants being interviewed more than once to follow-up and specify findings that emerged. The interviews at the level of Directorate and Ministry were conducted well into the second phase of the study for reasons that emerged during the data collection process.

In the second phase of the study the purpose was to explore how the frontline workers reacted to the implementation instructions at the specific employment office in order to find explanations for the implementation outcome of the Facilitation Guarantee at that office. This was done through 11 one-to-two hour long semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The informants had frontline positions in the selected employment office. The findings of the interviews were informed by preliminary findings from interviews and document studies from the initial phase of the study, as well as by observational data from office visits and 24 case and department meetings during the last four months of 2015, while the interviews at the case office were being conducted.

The figure below gives an overview of empirical sources and data material in the thesis:

Research interviews	• 21 interviews with leaders and coordinators at all levels of NAV • 11 interviews with frontline workers at the case office
Observations	• 16 case meetings at the case office • 8 administrative meetings at the case office • 5 "coffee machine-encounteres" at the case office
Document studies	• internal plans, reports and other documents • external evalutations of measures and reform

Figure 1 – Empirical sources and data material

4.2.2.1   Document studies

Documents can provide important insight into the study of social phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). The use of documents in the study mainly had an exploratory intent, a way-in to grasping the history and the context that the case was to be set in (Bowen, 2009; Mutch, 2014). The documents included several research reports on the NAV-reform and work inclusion measures, as well as policy documents such as governmental white papers, audits and evaluations. As the study progressed, I was granted access to internal documents from NAV, such as job descriptions of central positions in some selected implementation processes; target and disposition letters between the different levels of NAV in the relevant time period; letters and presentations from workshops about the measures; as well as statistical results of the use of several measures, including the FG, at national and local levels. I surveyed and searched the documents for 'meaningful and relevant passages of text' (Bowen, 2009) for this exploratory phase of the study. I made notes when deemed appropriate and the most relevant documents and notes I included in Nvivo. This eventually allowed me to make more specific searches as well as to code for certain connections with interview and observation data material.

The document readings, notes, searches and specific codings laid the ground for insights into the contextual and historical background of the FG, the policy field of work inclusion and NAV's organizational configurations and structures, as well as insights into certain processes of implementation and outcomes of implementation efforts at national, provincial and local levels of NAV. Three institutional logics also emerged from this data material. In the table below is an overview of the elements of the document study: the amount of research material, time of collection and the role of this document study in

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the analytical process. An overview of the documents is provided in appendix 6.

DOCUMENT STUDIES		
External and internal documents		
Amount of research material	Time of collection	Use in analysis and theory development
78 documents	January 2014 – January 2016	Contextual background

Table 2 – Overview of document studies

4.2.2.2   Interviews

Individual interviews as a method for data collection may give both insights to direct experience, interpretations and the reflections of those experiences by the informants (Smith & Elger, 2014). In addition, collectively, interviews may provide wider understandings of the phenomenon when seen in context with other interviews and data material collected (ibid). The thesis was informed by a CR-approach to interviewing as laid forth by Smith and Elger (ibid). According to the CR-lens of interviewing, interviews 'provide one important basis for gaining access not only to the attitudes and emotions of informants but crucially to richly textured accounts of events, experiences and underlying conditions or processes, which represent different facets of a complex and multi-layered social reality' (ibid, p 14). In CR-informed interviewing, the researcher is viewed as having the expertise in characterizing wider contexts and outcomes of action, while the expertise of the interviewee is seen to be in relation to explanatory mechanisms that focus on 'reasoning, choices, motivations' (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 303; as referred in Smith & Elger, 2014). In addition, the researcher need to probe and question the interviewee for emerging explanations and mechanisms, as well as comparing and assessing the empirical findings gathered from other interviews and research methods so as to develop the understanding of social structures and processes (ibid).

Accordingly, the interview style in the thesis may be best described as semi-structured and in-depth in the sense that the questions and directions of the discussions were guided in order to enhance the insights of the continuous findings (ibid). The responses were generated by an interactive process between the interviewer and the interviewees. In order to tease out reflexivity and individual reasoning from the informants important for revealing

structure-agency interactions (Archer, 2003; Blom & Moren, 2015; Delbridge & Edwards, 2013), the informants were queried as 'dialogical partners' (Archer, 2003 p. 162) being asked, for example, to reflect upon why they prioritized their work tasks as they did. In the preparation before each interview, I created or updated thematic interview guides and summarized topics important for the upcoming interview. However, the informants were also left with ample room to elaborate or bring up new insights. Therefore, the thematic guides changed slightly as insight broadened, also making it possible to try out new understandings and building explanations together with the informants in the process (Smith and Elgar, 2014).

The interview guides, sampled in appendix 3, were not the same between managers and frontline staff. These two groups of informants served different roles in the search for exploring and finding explanations of the implementation process. The informants also offered different insights into the processes due to their various positions in the organization. The topic guides for the managers and coordinators evolved around the intentions and implementation strategies of the FG and other similar policy measures in focus at the time. The topic of the interviews of the frontline workers evolved around their immediate work situations, their prioritizations of work tasks as well as their reactions to these implementation instructions. The frontline staff's reflections of work prioritizations and usage of the FG were specifically teased out by using a constructed vignette about a service user that seemed to be a classic case for the FG. Samples of interview guides as well as the vignette are attached in appendix 4.

Taking on an active role in the interview process, and because it was important that the informants felt comfortable enough to talk about matters of potentially not following up on orders from central levels of NAV, I found it important to be clear to them about my intent and role as researcher. I introduced myself as someone who was positively interested in the employees and service-users of NAV and in the organization as a whole. In addition I introduced myself as someone who had work experience in the organization, for the frontline workers, in a way as a 'colleague', but from a different NAV unit providing different services, and therefore lacking some insight into their specific work situations and tasks. I also pointed out my intent to only be that of a curious researcher who wanted to understand the phenomena of

implementation in the organization, not someone evaluating their use of the FG.

After each interview, I wrote memos of immediate contemplations and analytical dwellings. The first 10 interviews I transcribed personally verbatim, making memos and applying thematic coding unremittingly. An assistant transcriber wrote out the rest of the interviews. In order to make sure that outsourcing the transcription process did not weaken my insight into the data, I listened to the recordings of the interviews while reading and coding the written transcripts. In addition, efforts were made to make sure the transcription of the interviews were done according to research ethical standards, such as transferring the interview recording files using a secure method, and having the transcriber sign a form of confidentiality.

In the following table is an overview of the interview data: informant position, number of informants, number of interviews, periods of interviewing, minutes recorded and number of pages transcribed verbatime. Because of anonymity issues discussed further in the section on ethical considerations, the informants' gender, age, and other demographics are not disclosed.

INTERVIEWS OVERVIEW					
Informant position	**Informants**	**Interviews**	**Time of collection**	**Minutes recorded**	**Pages transcribed**
Management / coordinator	16	21	01.2015 – 01.2016	1356	588
Frontline employee	11	11	09.2015 – 12.2015	866	360
Total	27	32	1.2015 – 1.2016	2222	948

Table 3 – Overview of interview data

4.2.2.3 Observation studies

Observation studies may be defined as describing a phenomenon for scientific purposes through recording the observations systematically, and then describing, analyzing and interpreting the observations (Bøllingtoft, 2007). Observation studies in a CR perspective have the role of 'giving the researcher an opportunity to approach the field with the purpose of getting an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, an later use this knowledge in the process of identifying mechanisms or structures' (ibid, p. 408). In addition, observation studies give the researcher the possibility of observing the

phenomenon in its natural context from various perspectives (ibid). In this thesis, the observation study was primarily used to gain a contextual insight into the workdays and interactions among the frontline workers and their management, as well as into normative structures in the case office. The approach chosen for the observation exercise was a semi-structured type. In his book on structured to unstructured observation techniques, Gillham (2008, p. 19) states that semi-structured observations are well fitted to research that 'seeks to identify practical problems people experience'. The first meeting observations helped structure themes for the observation guide, but still left room for new themes that emerged as the research progressed. The observation guide was based on how the agendas of the meetings were set up, and the themes developed from the topics discussed in the meetings as well as various aspects of the interactions, discussions and underlying assumptions that emerged. The observation guide was constructed and continuously reconstructed to take note of issues in the case meetings that showed the practical everyday challenges and expectations of the frontline workers. I was present in most the case and department meetings between September and December of 2015, sitting in as a researcher and taking rough notes according to the semi-structured observation guide. After each meeting, I sat at a computer in a designated office in the agency, making memos and writing down immediate reflections. Some observations during the case study were of a more unstructured sort, in that I had small conversations at the coffee machine and even overheard conversations about how to respond in upcoming interviews, revealing some important findings of the study.[5] These types of observations that were not attached to any meetings or observation guides, I made memos of immediately afterwards.

The following table gives an overview of the amount of research material, time of collection and the way that the observation material has been used in the analysis process and theory development.

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[5] For example: Before one of the interviews I overheard a conversation in the hallway while sitting in my designated office. One of the informants, who was to be interviewed in a few minutes, asked another informant whether it would be ok to say the truth, that the FG was of absolutely no interest in the group. "Should we tell her…?". The informant told me about this conversation during the interview, and the overheard discussion only confirmed what I had already found to be the case during earlier interviews. It did also confirm that these were not only individual differences, but an overall norm and practice at the office - something that they had tacitly (maybe even consciously) agreed upon.

OBSERVATION STUDIES		
Case- and administrative meetings + office observations		
Amount of research material	**Time of collection**	**Use in analysis and theory development**
− 24 case and department meetings − Several informal conversations − 49 pages of notes	September 2015 – December 2015	Insight into work situation and normative standings at the case office

Table 4 – Overview of observation research material

Together with the document studies and the interviews, the observations gave a broad way in to the implementation practices at the designated NAV office, and allowed the advantages of methods triangulation and insights from various perspectives (Healy & Perry, 2000).

4.2.3 Data processing and analysis

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that there is no clear distinction between collecting and analyzing data in qualitative studies. The process of collection and analysis of the research material of this case study happened iteratively and in a constant dialogue between new empirical data, memo taking, transcriptions, coding, analytical contemplations and theoretical enquiries. During the process of analysis, the case study was written up and eventually developed into the three articles in the thesis.

The data processing and analysis in this thesis work can roughly be divided into three interconnecting stages. Throughout the process, I wrote descriptive and analytical memos and contemplations, guiding the next step. The first of the three interconnecting stages of analysis, I started an initial round of coding, sorting the data into organizational codes (Maxwell, 2012) or topic-based 'bins' that sort information (Fletcher, 2016). For example, I coded all references to informants' work situations, the various implementation instructions that they talked about etc. into separate 'bins'. While gradually developing presumptions about the implementation process in focus, I was committed to remaining open and flexible to the empirical data as it built up. I added, changed, or deleted codes as the data necessitated, and this helped me gradually to grasp certain empirical tendencies or 'demi-regularities' that I felt inclined to follow further (ibid).

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During the second of the interconnecting stages of analysis, I lifted these emerging tendencies to a more abstract level through the strategy of abduction, creating theoretical themes 'derived from prior theory' (ibid) and applying them to appropriate organizational codes. These theoretical themes arrived on during the iterative course of analysis, were derived from theoretical approaches that stood out as relevant during readings of academic literature, such as constructs of logics associated with work tasks as well as ways of coping among frontline workers.

In a third cycle of coding and analysis, I gradually reduced the large number of codes by re-organizing and combining them into theoretical constructs. These had the purpose of organizing the data material in a way that could help explain the tendencies that I had found earlier in the process. Through such activities, the analysis moved back and forth between the data material, developing codes and trying out different theoretical lenses that could explain the results.

Overlapping coding cycles	Central coding themes that emerged
1 Coding of empirical data	• Heavy work load and need to be loyal to service recipients and management • Compliance of FG central intention • Categorizing FG implementation instructions as "top-down things" • Reactions against such instructions
2 Coding for themes	• Agentic need to adhere to professional values and standards to feel dignity, authenticity and performative achievement • Implementation instruction overload in surplus of work tasks • Logics associated with work tasks and managerial principles • Strategies/practices to cope with work situation
3 Coding for theoretical constructs and explanations	• Coping mechanisms • Institutional logics as tools • Structure and agency interactions through agents' reflections and contextual insight

Table 5 – Overview of coding process and central themes that emerged.

The table above shows an overview of the fuzzy coding process, illustrating the coding cycles and central coding themes that emerged in that process.

Appendix 7 shows an overview of the coding cycles for three main conceptual themes.

4.3 The position of the researcher in the research analysis

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher in the initial phase of the research process often adopt an inductive approach in order to work out what social phenomena are of interest, what is happening, and then progressively develop a theoretical framework through the data collection and analysis process. At the same time, and in line with the CR-methodology, certain theoretical frameworks and preconceptions are unavoidably present in the mind of the researcher. She will unavoidably start out with some hunches and theoretical framework, which she builds upon, making the research process an abductive interaction between the researcher's preexisting ideas and theories on the one hand and the empirical findings and analysis on the other. The important CR presumption is that there are many ways to explain and understand reality (Bhaskar, 1978) and this gives the researcher a role as detective in explaining reality as close as possible to what is real. When applying a CR approach to research, then, the role of the researcher is to 'essentially connect the inner world of ideas to the outer world of observable events as seamlessly as possible' (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014). This takes as a given that the intellectual workings of the researcher has an important place in the conclusions of the study. This is in opposition to the view of the neutral researcher as one who extracts data objectively in line with empirical or positivist' viewpoints. The CR approach, in acknowledging the position and contribution of the unique perspective of each researcher, necessitates that she must transparently account for her reflections and standpoint. As such, the background and preconceptions of the researcher is important to deliberate upon, as a caveat to the analysis presented:

First, as an organizational sociologist, I was inclined to deploy an organizational case study in my thesis. Because of my theoretical interests, I already had presumptions about the role of institutional logics in organizational change, and in addition, I have always been curious about the sociological mystery of the role of agency and structure in explaining social

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change. Reading vast amounts of literatures on this matter lead me to the CR-approach. At the same time, my previous experience in qualitative research made me inclined to start the research process with an open mind, not depending on my theoretical preconceptions in the early analysis, but not neglecting them either.

Second, because of my personal history I started the research journey strongly motivated to contribute to research that could improve work inclusion services for young people who need facilitation at work. Third, as I have previously described, I have experiences with NAV, both as an employee and as a service recipient. Together with the fact that NAV is the organization in Norway responsible for the implementation of work inclusion services, my prior access and knowledge of the organization largely explains my motivations for choosing NAV as the case study setting. My experience as an employee of NAV before I started the work with my doctoral thesis may have led consciously or unconsciously to me presuming how NAV as an organization may or may not be influencing the work situations of employees and the experiences of service recipients at the operational level. I did not myself work in a frontline office, but in another part of NAV. I did however collaborate with frontline office employees in my job, and thereby had some knowledge of how they were working. I had also been using the same computer systems and experienced some of the same organizational pressures that I later found to be prevalent, also in the frontline case office.

The most important preconceptions that I would have brought to the analysis were my employment experience in NAV and the importance I perceived there to be in the complexity and abundancy of work tasks I found there. I saw NAV employees as dedicated to doing a good job, and that understandings among colleagues about 'how things should be done here' were important, sometimes even more important, than managerial instructions. My role as a service recipient was also relevant and had mostly to do with work inclusion efforts by NAV for a close family member during the early stage of my PhD case study. Joining in with meetings between the service recipients and NAV professionals, and following the case closely because of my personal involvement, gave me an insight into the workings of NAV from the other side of the table as well. These experiences as both NAV employee and service user, will have strengthened my preconceptions, and

have impacted on the research findings, that employees in NAV were genuinely interested in providing good services to the service recipient. In addition, also in line with my research findings, I noted how the FG was not an issue at all, until I myself brought it up later in the work inclusion process.

My role as a researcher with this kind of inside experience from the organization in question have both advantages and possible pitfalls. The advantages are that my own experience in the organization becomes somewhat of a data source itself, in that my experiences may add to the interpretations of findings of the study. In addition, my tacit knowledge as an operational employee, for example in having experienced similar work pressures and the demands and functionings of the same computer systems, gave me the possibility to connect the experiences of the informants with my own experiences in order to elaborate deeper with them during the interviews. In addition their knowledge of my role 'almost' as a colleague probably also gave me the advantage of higher trust and openness from the informants.

The pitfall of having such motivations, experiences and preconceptions can be that the findings may have been tainted by these preconceptions, that the findings may be said to be only a result of a self-fulfilling prophesy of the researcher. In addition, a pitfall may be that the informants took for granted that the researcher understood their experiences and situation, and hence held back information or explanations in the interview they thought would be obvious to me. In order to minimize these pitfalls, I was openly reflexive with informants, discussing my preconceptions with them, other stakeholders and my supervisors. I contrasted my assumptions also to the wider research literature and other research findings found there in the field. In order to avoid the second pitfall, I told the informants that I had not worked in a frontline office, that there were many issues that I was not aware of, and at the same time, making sure that I asked them to confirm my understandings during the interview process.

4.4   Reflections on the quality of the study

According to Healy and Perry (2000 p. 121), a research 'paradigm is a world view spanning ontology, epistemology and methodology' and the quality of the 'research done within a paradigm has to be judged by its own paradigm's

terms'. They claim that where positivist researchers evaluate reliability, internal, construct and external validity; and constructivist researchers emphasize trustworthiness, confirmability, dependability and transferability as essential criteria for research quality; researchers operating within the CR paradigm should consider criteria for assessing the quality of their research that correspond to that specific paradigm. Whether qualitative research needs to be judged within its own paradigm or whether its quality should be reflected on by other criteria, such as what is often called the Golden standard of qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), representing a constructivist research paradigm, could be debated. Whether choosing to reflect on the study within the paradigm of CR or within the Golden standard reflected above, an important question when considering the quality and value of qualitative research is how the trustworthiness of the results can be established so that they can be considered transferable or generalizable to other empirical settings. Also having considered and taken steps to satisfy the Golden standard of qualitative research (ibid) throughout the course of the research project, I decided that the discussion of the study's quality and value is best offered through the paradigm of CR as suggested by Healy and Perry (2000). Below are the reflections and steps taken to ensure the quality of the study within the CR-paradigm.

Scholars have discussed various criteria for assessing research within the CR paradigm (e.g. Healy & Perry, 2000; Maxwell, 2012; Wynn & Williams, 2012). Maxwell (2012) explains how other research paradigms within qualitative approaches tend to rely 'heavily on the use of specific procedures', using procedural criteria for assessing validity or trustworthiness. Brinberg and McGrath hold: 'Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques … Rather, validity is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to purpose and circumstances' (1985, p. 13 cited by Maxwell 2012 p. 129). Maxwell further points out that the CR approach to validity 'pertains to the accounts or conclusion reached by using a particular method in a particular context for a particular purpose, not to the method itself' (Maxwell, 2012, p. 130). For the assessment of the quality of research within the CR research paradigm, Healy and Perry (2000) identified the selected criteria below.

Ontological appropriateness. Different research paradigms focus on different characteristics of the phenomena being investigated. The ontological position of a CR paradigm is that research is dealing with 'complex social phenomena outside people's minds, involving reflective people' (Healy and Perry 2000 p. 125). Its goal is to find explanations though identifying mechanisms that may generate certain events, not to predict future events or understand the subjective meanings behind events, such is the goal in other research paradigms (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p. 793). The ontological appropriateness of this thesis can thus be assessed through looking at whether the framing of the research questions are 'how' and 'why' problems (Healy and Perry 2000). In this thesis, this criterion is attained by first exploring how the implementation effort of the FG was received among the frontline employees, and then discussing explanations for 'why' they are received the way they are received.

Multiple perceptions and triangulations. Because the participant's perceptions are seen as 'a window to reality through which a picture of reality can be triangulated with other perceptions', research within a CR paradigm 'relies on multiple perceptions about a single reality' (Healy & Perry, 2000). First, it is important to be aware of the researcher's preconceptions that may influence the study. Having worked within the organization of NAV, which is the empirical site of study and the public service organization responsible for delivering mandated polices and strategies for work inclusion, I started out with a strong hunch, based on my own experience in the organization, that it is at the frontline offices, where service professionals and recipients meet, that the policies and strategies are put to the test. As an organizational sociologist, the research topic focusing on what happens at the operational level in the organization to find explanations for the implementation result was therefore very relevant.

In addition, in order to strengthen the reliability of this thesis, several kinds of triangulation are drawn upon in order to create possibilities to see 'reality' in different perspectives that help answer the research questions. These include method triangulation, using interviews, observations and document studies; data triangulation, depending on informants with various positions in the organization; and theory triangulation, providing alternative interpretations of the same research material (Bøllingtoft 2007). In addition, findings have been

discussed with peer researchers, such as conference participants, supervisors, and coauthors in the articles, gaining input from yet other perspectives.

Methodological trustworthiness. Comparable with the criterion of reliability (positivist paradigm) and dependability (constructivist paradigm), assessment of methodological trustworthiness in CR research refers to the trustworthiness of the findings, and to the extent that it can be audited (Healy and Perry, 2000). A conscious aim while carrying out the research for this thesis was to make the choices and research procedures transparent. The earlier sections of this chapter, describing the research design and methods, including case selection, data collection and procedures of various methods used as well as the way the data was analyzed and the coding schemes in the appendix are all contributions towards methodological trustworthiness. In addition, to add to that transparency requirement, a case study database in Nvivo has been developed as well as the use of extensive quotations from interviews in the articles.

Contingent validity. The social system in CR terms is not a laboratory or fixed system, but an open and fuzzy system, leaving social phenomena 'fragile, so that causal impacts are not fixed but are contingent upon their environment' (Healy and Perry 2000, p. 123). Contrasting internal validity of coherence of results in positivist terms and credibility in the accounts of subjective realities in constructivist terms, contingent validity within the CR paradigm concerns the validity about 'mechanisms and the contexts that make them contingent' (ibid, p. 123). This criterion is met in this thesis through exhausting the research material with in-depth questions, first emphasizing deep understandings of the context and events that made up the contingencies, and then attempting to find explanations for the social phenomena in question through the use of various triangulation techniques described above (Bøllingtoft 2007).

Analytical generalization and external validity. Despite the common misunderstanding that empirical findings based upon a single case study (e.g. implementation process within a single organization) cannot be generalized to contribute to scientific development (Flyvbjerg, 2006), the CR approach holds that finding explanatory mechanisms (e.g. for implementation outcomes in a frontline NAV office) may provide theoretical contributions that could be

recognized elsewhere (Easton, 2010). The goal for research in the CR paradigm is that of building theory (analytical generalization – Yin, 1994), not testing the applicability of that theory to a population (statistical generalizability) (Healy and Perry, 2000). As such, the aim is to find possible 'mechanisms and influential contingencies' (Harrison & Easton, 2004, p. 195) that may be generalized to account for ever-deepening understandings of the social phenomenon in question. The findings of the thesis are based upon a case study of a specific implementation process in a single (though complex and large) organization. By pointing to mechanisms as tendencies that may be activated under specific circumstances, the implications of the findings may apply to other frontline offices in NAV or to operational levels in other sectors under similar circumstances. In order for a case study to be analytically generalizable, it needs to account for possible mechanisms and theoretical explanations of the findings (Healy and Perry, 2000). In chapter 7 possible explanations for the implementation result of the FG at the case office are discussed. Possible mechanisms inunder certain contingencies are conceptualized into a simple model (figure 4) that in this light, also may apply in other implementation settings. The possibility of generalizing the research findings are discussed further in the concluding remarks,

4.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations and reflections should be at the center of the researcher's attention from early design, throughout the research processes and into publication (Webster, Lewis, & Brown, 2013). Several ethical guidelines and codes exist that have been published by social science organizations in order to provide summaries of key ethical principles, such as the general guidelines for research ethics by the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committee (2015). Common but important principles include avoiding harmful consequences to the research participants, informed consent, the respecting of confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and voluntary participation.

Reflecting upon relevant ethical dilemmas has been an integrated part of the research process. In the following, some of the thematics that have been necessary to deal with in order to deliver a thesis according to ethical standards are discussed. These are especially the dilemma of voluntary

participation in a gatekeeper setting and the dilemma of anonymity of informants at various hierarchical levels in this specific and therefore transparent implementation process.

The first dilemma of voluntary participation is a result of the snowballing method as well as the wish of NAV managers to organize the interviews at the frontline office. This resulted in the dilemma of managers' acting as gatekeepers. The NAV office was very busy and one could not take for granted the ability for staff to give their valuable time for a research project. The managers appointed informants to time slots that fitted their schedules, evidently not leaving much option for employees to abstain. The problematic was diminished by making it clear to managers that potential participants should understand that their participation was voluntary. However, there would still be a possibility for potential participants to feel direct or indirect pressure from their managers (due to imbalance in power). In order to secure the voluntary participation of the participants I contacted each of them personally by mail. Through this personal mail, the meeting date set up by their manager was confirmed, and a clear point was made that they could cancel the appointment at any time without explanation or report to their managers. As listed in the guidelines of the NSD, the mail also included a letter about the purpose of the research; the reason that the specific participant had been chosen; the information about the voluntary nature of participation and the possibility to withdraw participation any time in the process; confidentiality; as well as a form of consent to sign at the interview (see appendix 2). In addition, at the start of each interview, I clearly repeated the importance of voluntary participation and informed participants again about their option to withdraw. The participants seemed comfortable with their participation; however, one potential participant withdrew from participation after mail correspondence. This may indicate that the method of securing voluntary participation had worked.

Because the informants included both frontline workers and managers and coordinators at several levels of the organization, continuous ethical reflections were needed in the topic of voluntary participation. Considering the responsibility and possible sense of duty by public leaders to contribute to research in their field, the research project does not focus on personal attributes or sensitive personal information, but rather on processes that

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happen in public offices. This could make participation in the project less personal or risky, at least for the participants in the lower levels of the organization with less responsibility for specific implementation outcomes. For participants with a higher level of responsibility for the implementation outcome, participation might have seemed more risky. The participants with high levels of responsibility might have felt they had an even stronger duty to participate in the project because of their public office/mandate, but at the same time, may have felt uncomfortable with the investigation into their role in the implementation outcome.

Secondly, and as a consequence of the above, in addition to the dilemma of voluntary participation, the ethical dilemma of securing anonymity of the participants in the publication of the findings became of the utmost importance. Because the object of study is a very specific implementation process in a transparent single case study and with very specific people responsible for the implementation process, internal anonymity of some of the most central research participants was hard to keep from the rest of the organization. This ethical dilemma was dealt with by mostly using the findings from interviews at higher (and therefore more transparent) levels of the organization only to investigate and understand the contextual background needed for the analysis of the implementation reactions among the more anonymous frontline workers. Findings that can be attributed directly to the interviews at higher levels of the hierarchy are generalized to any level in the hierarchy above the operational, making it hard to trace who said what.

In addition to protecting the anonymity of informants at higher levels of the organization, the anonymity of the frontline employees was also thoroughly protected. Frontline informants appeared very open and honest during the interviews, providing enthusiastic and often emotionally rich descriptions of their experiences. To protect their anonymity, the interview quotes were not tied to demographic information of gender, age or work program. All informants were identified as 'frontline worker/employee' and the gender used was either only 'he' or only 'she' in the publications, although both genders were well represented. Individual ways of speaking, such as dialects and jargon that could identify specific informants were masked by the English translation of the quotes, which also helped protect anonymity.

5 Case findings

The three articles provide various insights into the multi-level implementation context and process of the FG in NAV and into how frontline staff at the case office perceived and acted on the implementation instructions of the FG. In order to provide a broader elaboration than was possible in the confinement of three articles, the following presents the case findings based upon research questions a) and b):

a. *What do the multi-level implementation context and process of the Facilitation Guarantee in NAV look like? (5.1)*

b. *How did frontline staff at the case office of NAV perceive and respond to the implementation efforts of the Facilitation Guarantee? (5.2)*

5.1 Exploring the multi-level implementation context and process of the FG in NAV

Incorporating contextual factors from multiple levels into the analysis of implementation practices at the frontline of public welfare services is important for understanding how and why frontline workers respond to top-down implementation instructions the way they do (Hupe & Buffat, 2013). The characteristics of what is to be implemented are also a vital part of the implementation context and must be included in the analysis (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). Essentially, frontline staff's work situations in public service organizations, such as the NAV office in focus, are filled with a complex of societal and organizational pressures and expectations (Schott, van Kleef, & Noordegraaf, 2015). The three articles together give insight to this contextual complexity in the case and will be summarized in more detail in the next chapter. In Article I, the FG's characteristics, its history and implementation strategy and multi-level implementation system, are explored. In Article II, insight to its institutional landscape is provided. In Article III, managerial principles surrounding the implementation process are discussed. In the following, elaborations on these contributions are discussed in relation to research question a) and in correspondence with the mapping of a multi-level implementation system as consisting of a macro-level of policy fields, a

meso-level of organizational fields and the micro-level at the frontlines (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015).

5.1.1 Inter-institutional systems, institutional logics, managerial principles and the policy field of the Facilitation Guarantee

In this thesis, an inter-institutional system comprising several distinctive institutional domains, all characterized by separate logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Thornton, 2004; Thornton et al., 2012) are seen as being part of the case context. In article II, the case was described as comprising multiple inter-institutional domains, including market, state, profession, corporation and community. The concept of institutional logics as discursive resources and frames was used to differentiate more limited domains in the case (Thornton et al, 2012), similar to, for example, the NPM and post-NPM related institutional logics discussed in other research on NAV (e.g. Fossestøl, Breit, Andreassen, & Klemsdal, 2015). As article II depicts, three distinct institutional logics emerged from multiple levels of the case during the empirical analysis: A logic of administrative accountability connected to performance measuring, documentation and registration routines; A logic of industrial production related to ideals of standardization, fairness and productivity; And a logic of craft related to offering user-oriented and tailored services to the target group in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Where article II placed the case in the inter-institutional system comprising multiple institutional domains and subsequent institutional logics, article III described overlapping managerial principles encompassing the case. Emerging from the analysis, these included elements of bureaucratic principles of standardization of services and legal authority; elements of NPM principles of performance measuring and documentation practices, as well as elements of post-NPM principles emphasizing collaboration, user-participation and co-production and tailoring services (Hartley, 2005; Kamp et al., 2013; Torfing et al., 2016). Seen together, the managerial principles may be viewed as responses to or enactments of higher-order institutional logics. The institutional logics in the case study may be related to inter-institutional domains and managerial principles as follows: The logic of administrative

accountability can be seen in relation to the inter-institutional domains of state and market and corresponds to NPM principles of performance measuring and documentation principles for legitimization; The logic of industrial production associated with the inter-institutional domains of state and corporation may be related to managerial principles of bureaucratic productivity and standardization; And the logic of craft related to the inter-institutional domains of profession and community may be linked to post-NPM principles of tailoring and collaboration, all emerging as institutional and managerial complexity starting at the macro level and potentially influencing the implementation system in question at the operational level.

Representing the highest level of the multi-layered implementation system (Sandfort and Moulton, 2015) of the FG, the policy field of work inclusion included governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, as well as work inclusion industries consisting of public, private and non-profit actors with diverse authorities and interests in the field. These actors operated within different institutional domains, and had various interests or influences on the political priorities and budgeting structures in the system. A myriad of work inclusion measures and strategies were initiated as a result of this complexity of interests and political pressures in the policy field. These were filtered to NAV as the public body in Norway responsible for implementing new work inclusion measures and services to citizens in need of special facilitation to gain or maintain employment.

The work inclusion measure, which is the main object of implementation in this thesis, is the FG.[6] As described in article I, it originated from the 2006 Inclusive Working Agreement[7] between the Norwegian government and their social partners. From 2008, the FG was to be used in all of NAV's work inclusion cases where collaboration between NAV, an employer and an employee was needed (Spjelkavik, 2014). It comprised of a written contract listing contact information, rights, responsibilities and points of follow-up. Meeting the employers' need for predictability from NAV (Schafft & Spjelkavik, 2014a; 2014b), the FG was intended to influence the willingness

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[6] The 2012 audit report resulted in a call for an evaluation of the FG by the Control Committee of the Norwegian Parliament, eventually leading to a revision process of the FG from 2014, and ending in a revised version put into effect on 1 January 2016. This case study is focusing on the implementation process of the FG up until the revised version was put into effect" (Høiland & Willumsen, 2016, p. 24).
[7] IA-avtalen in Norwegian.

of employers to provide employment opportunities for people with needs of work facilitation. Important elements of the FG were that the employers and employees received a specific contact person at the NAV office responsible for coordinating the granted measures from NAV, as well as following up and supporting the employer and the employee in the process, tailoring the services to both the individual service recipient, as well as to the employer (Rambøll-management, 2008; Riksrevisjonen, 2013). This central intention of the FG fits into the post-NPM managerial principles of collaboration, user-participation and co-production, and may thereby also be related to the logic of craft discussed above.

5.1.2 Implementation intention, strategies and work situations at the organizational field

Implementation intentions and strategies In its movement from the policy field and through the organizational field of NAV, the implementation instructions of the FG appeared to be associated to logics other than the logic of craft. This could partly be understood as a result of the strengthened implementation strategies that had been initiated from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and central levels of NAV as a result of the conclusion by the Norwegian Parliament's Control Committee in 2012 that the FG had not been implemented as intended (Riksrevisjonen, 2013). The strategies set into effect included strengthening the focus through the roles of the designated FG implementation coordinators in all county offices. Their responsibilities and thus implementation strategies comprised delivering workshops and other forms of communications to highlight the FG's importance; keeping track of the number of contracts in circulation; evaluating each frontline NAV office's use of the FG; and reporting to the frontline offices and to the Directorate on a regular basis. The provincial office overseeing the frontline case office communicated clearly that the FG contract was to be used in all cases of work training, including when the work inclusion services were being outsourced to external service providers, as discussed more closely in article I. In the specific case office, implementation strategies included this 'standardized-use instruction' from the provincial office, systematic reporting and feedback of results by the FG coordinator, as well as the communications and workshops offered to all offices in the county. In addition, the case office had been given

extra implementation resources through an added person from the provincial office, working daily for an extended period, instructing, and motivating the frontline workers to use the FG. These implementation strategies may be linked to managerial principles of standardization, performance measuring and documentation. This was also seen in the emphasis on several parallel centrally initiated implementation instructions at this frontline office, in line with the logic of administrative accountability.

Succinctly, where the prime intention behind the FG and similar implementation instructions, was in line with managerial principles of collaboration and individualization of services associated with the institutional logic of craft, the strengthened emphasis on implementing the FG after the 2012 audit led to implementation strategies more in line with managerial principles of standardized solutions, quantifiable outcome measurements, registration and documentation requirements, associated with the logic of administrative accountability.

Work situations After a shift in the areas which were prioritized in this case office, due in part to other implementation requests initiated from central levels of NAV, the FG usage numbers eventually declined during early 2015. In order to understand this decline, the project further explored the frontline employees' work situations. The frontline office selected for the case study had been divided into departments according to citizens' levels of need for follow-up in public employment and social security services. The particular department of the case study was responsible for work inclusion services for people who for socio-economic or health-related reasons had the most complex and specific needs for facilitation and follow-up. This division consisted of frontline workers employed by the state or the municipality, and responsible for two different work inclusion programs, but working together in mixed teams under the same management. The frontline staff pointed to structural differences between the two programs, but also described several similarities in their work situation. All described a work situation consisting of continuous top-down implementation demands and ever-changing focuses of measuring schemes in their work place as well as large numbers of work tasks to administer and prioritize every day. In addition, they all had access to the same work inclusion measures and they were all responsible for offering work inclusion services to the service recipients in their respective case

portfolios in collaboration with employers and possibly external work inclusion service providers. Outsourcing work inclusion services to external service providers was done extensively by both municipal and state workers in the case office.

Structural differences between the state-run and municipal programs that influenced the individual work situations included caseloads, intake procedures of service recipients to the respective programs, application processing and degree of economic consequences for the program service recipients, as well as service recipients' follow-up rights in the two programs. In the state-run program, the caseloads, or portfolio of service recipients that each frontline worker was responsible for, were larger than that of the workers responsible for the municipal program. Differences in intake procedures and application processing deadlines for the two programs resulted in the employees' responsible for the state-run program having a smaller degree of autonomy in managing portfolio sizes. In addition, the state application was often the next step towards securing income where another monetary benefit was ending (such as sick leave or unemployment benefits), whereas the municipal applicants were usually already receiving social security benefits from another NAV department. This put additional pressures on the employees responsible for the state-run program to prioritize the processing of non-stop state applications in line with elements of the logic of industrial production, and contributed to a stronger sense of urgency and to making the down-prioritization of other tasks inevitable.

The frontline employees in the municipal program had smaller portfolios, more autonomy in managing daily work tasks and less urgency in securing income for users. However, their service recipients had stronger statutory rights to close and interactive follow-up. As a result, the municipal frontline employees were met with a stronger demand to follow up high-need beneficiaries more closely, in line with the logic of craft. Even though they did have more time for individual follow-up, the increased demand of the service recipients' 'never-ending' needs also led to the municipal frontline workers' experiencing a strong obligation to down-prioritize other tasks.

Consequently, there were structural differences in: workers' autonomy to manage the size of their own portfolios and workdays; the urgency in securing income for users through application processing; and the time allowed them

for individual follow up of high-need service recipients. There were also differences in logics attached to their most pressing work tasks. However, all described their work situation as comprising of continuous pressures from varying and various implementation instructions about work inclusion methods, information technologies and new or varying focuses on registration and documentation procedures in their daily work, associated with managerial principles of bureaucracy and NPM. All informants described a work situation which demanded harsh prioritizations of work tasks as a result.

5.1.3 Values at the frontlines

The values that the frontline employees in the study identified with mainly sorted under the institutional domain of profession, founding their identity on values and ethics of social work. The inter-institutional domain of profession is associated with the quality of craft and personal expertise essential for the specific profession in question (Thornton, 2012). Institutional logics at the organizational and individual levels connected to this domain will be framed according the values and norms of that profession and will 'supply principles of organization and legitimacy', as well as 'incorporat[ing] the assumptions, beliefs, and rules through which individuals [frontline employees] organize time and space' (as referred by Leca & Naccache, 2006, p. 632; Thornton, 2002; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). According to ethical standards of social work (NASW, 2017), a user-oriented focus is important, both in close follow-up in the services provided (here work inclusion services), but also in providing welfare services for income-securing and application processing in a correct and timely manner. These two elements can be related to the logic of craft (the individual follow-up) and the logic of industrial productivity (application processing in a correct and timely manner). Related to the values of professional social work (ibid), these logics constituted an important part of the frontline level of the FG implementation system, and had an important influence on the agentic 'constellation of concerns' among the frontline employees in the case (Archer, 2003).

To summarize this section, the contextual complexities of the case were traced through multiple levels, describing how institutional logics from different domains, managerial principles and implementation intentions and strategies

of the FG combined and emerged through the work situations at the organizational level, making up the situational contingencies that frontline employees maneuvered in and drew upon in their daily work and implementation practices. The work situation of the frontline employees was described as consisting of an overload of work tasks, including a continuous pressure to implement new measures, resulting in a need for harsh prioritizations. In addition, the constellation of concerns of the frontline workers could be associated with professional values of social work, associated with the logics of craft and industrial production, respectively. Though the prime intention behind the FG and similar implementation instructions from central levels was in line with the institutional logic of craft, the implementation strategies and thereby implementation instructions manifested at the frontlines, could be associated with the logic of administrative accountability. The table below provides an overview of institutional logics in the case study and corresponding characteristics.

Institutional logics	Logic of craft	Logic of industrial production	Logic of administrative accountability
Associated managerial principles	Focus on collaboration, user-involvement, individualization of services	Focus on standardization of services, efficient production	Focus on documentation and reporting on goal achievement
Associated work-tasks	Individualized tailored work inclusion services and collaboration for better services Close follow-up of service beneficiary and employer	Processing applications and requests within set deadlines and according to standards Income securing Using IT programs to keep track	Documentation and registration procedures for measuring-purposes Following implementation instructions
Extent of matching values of social work	Matching	Matching to some degree	Not matching
Corresponding inter-institutional systems	Profession Community	Corporation State	State Market

Table 6 – Overview of institutional logics in the case study and corresponding characteristics.

Having discussed what the multi-level implementation context and process of the FG in NAV looks like, the following section elaborates on how frontline staff at the case office of NAV perceived and responded to the implementation efforts of the FG.

5.2 Exploring how frontline staff at the case office of NAV perceived and responded to the implementation efforts of the FG

The second research question was mainly dealt with in articles II and III. Article II explored how frontline employees at the case office perceived and responded to the implementation instructions through the perspective of 'institutional logics as tools'. Article III explored the same by identifying types of revision and resistance used by the frontline employees in response to the implementation instructions.

As described in the previous chapter, statistical findings provided from central levels of NAV had shown that the use of the FG was high at the case office during the two years prior to the onset of the case study, but that its usage had plummeted only a few months prior to its onset. This could indicate that something had happened during the implementation efforts at the case office. The way that the frontline workers had responded to the implementation instructions of the FG and other similar instructions, therefore, became a central focus among the enquires in this thesis. Three interrelating tendencies among frontline employees that emerged during the analysis are depicted in figure 1 below and elaborated on in the following section.

Categorizing, valuating and prioritizing work tasks

Using resistance or revision practices to deal with devaluated work tasks

Justifying the resistance or revision practices
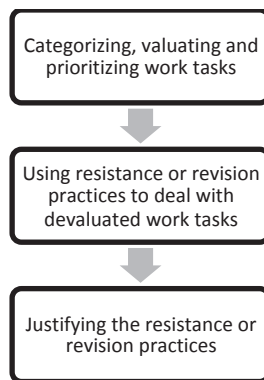
Figure 2 – Summary of tendencies among frontline employees during the FG implementation effort

5.2.1 Classifying, valuating and prioritizing work tasks according to categories associated with specific institutional logics

A tendency among the frontline workers was that they seemed to classify their work tasks, including implementation instructions, into three distinct categories that could each be associated with one of the three separate institutional logics discussed and summarized above and depicted in the table below.

Work tasks	Institutional logics
− Individualized tailored work inclusion services and collaboration for better services. − Close follow-up of service beneficiary and employer.	Logic of craft
− Processing applications and requests within set deadlines and according to standards. − Income securing. − Using IT programs to keep track.	Logic of industrial production
− Documentation and registration procedures for measuring purposes. − Following implementation instructions.	Logic of administrative accountability

Table 7 – Overview of categorizations of work tasks associated with institutional logics

The first category of work tasks contained activities of tailoring the work inclusion services for the individual based on collaboration and close follow-up activities with the service recipient. This category could be associated with the logic of craft with its focus on individualization of services and collaboration. The second category of work tasks contained activities related to productivity – that is, work tasks that reflected efficiency at work and justice according to set standards for the service recipients, such as processing applications for income-securing according to strict deadlines, processing work capability evaluations of service recipients and answering all kinds of contact requests in a timely and just manner. This category could be associated with the logic of industrial production, with its focus of productivity and standardization. The third category of work tasks were related to documentation activities, such as work tasks linked to measuring

performance and registering procedures with the purpose of producing numbers for statistical purposes and to 'satisfy the system'. This category could be associated with the logic of administrative accountability. Relating the FG with these logics, frontline workers tended to associate the central intent behind it to the logic of craft because of its elements that called for collaboration such as being available, trustable and providing an overview of contact information and rights to the employer and the potential employee. However, they tended to associate the implementation instructions of the FG to the logic of administrative accountability because of specific registration procedures and the focus on performance measuring.

The interviews with the frontline workers gave an insight to a work-related value hierarchy. This hierarchy can be related to a ranking of the three logics according to how far they seemed to match the frontline workers' inclinations towards professional values of social work and their loyalty to NAV's organizational mandate and mission regarding providing welfare and work inclusion services to citizens. The frontline workers' valuation of work tasks in ways that matched their 'ultimate concerns' as professional social workers, can be seen in relation to the three institutional logics as depicted in the figure below.
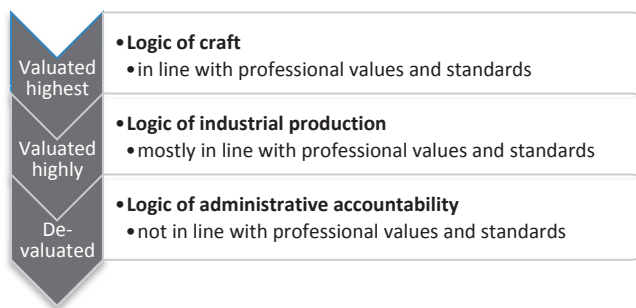
Figure 3 – Logics ranked on the value hierarchy

After having categorized the work tasks according to the value hierarchy based on professional values matching their 'ultimate concerns' (Archer, 2000), frontline workers then seemed to prioritize the tasks accordingly. Work tasks that were categorized as belonging to the logics of craft and industrial productivity appeared to match the professional values of the frontline

employees and were therefore deemed meaningful and highly valued by them. Adhering to these work tasks resulted in resonating a loyalty to the professional identity and 'ultimate concerns' at work. Work tasks in line with these two logics were thereby often prioritized. Work tasks that were categorized as belonging to the logic of administrative accountability seemed to be devalued in relation to professional values and standards, as well as from what was considered the core mission of NAV, and thereby often not prioritized. The criteria of demarcation was thus whether the work tasks were associated to the devalued logic administrative accountability or associated with the two other logics with their value-laden standards of service provision on an individual level or even to the mission of NAV as a provider of 'possibilities' through welfare and employment services at the organizational level.

An important focus of the study, therefore, became how the frontline workers categorized and thus valuated and prioritized the FG and similar implementation instructions. It became apparent during the analytic process that the frontline workers seemed to distinguish sharply between aspects of the centrally provided measures that appeared useful for doing a good job (towards the service-users) and aspects categorized as 'pointless measuring to satisfy a system'. As discussed, the central intention behind the FG and other measures appeared to be accepted as useful and in accordance with professional standards and values of service delivery associated with the essence of the logic of craft, thus ranking highest in the value hierarchy in figure 2. Because the implementation strategies chosen at managerial levels had strong elements of registration and documentation procedures the analysis showed that despite the central intentions, the frontline employees seemed to associate these implementation instructions with the logic of administrative accountability. This categorization of the implementation instructions of the FG in association with the logics of administrative accountability had implication for how the instructions were valuated and thus prioritized in their daily work, leaving the implementation instructions of the FG devalued and often down-prioritized.

5.2.2 Resistance strategies to deal with devaluated implementation instructions

The section above describes the tendency found among frontline employees, that is, their tendency to categorize and prioritize valuated work tasks over devaluated ones. Another tendency among frontline employees was to apply different revision and resistance strategies to deal with the implementation instructions they had devaluated. The four coping strategies elaborated in article III and depicted in the table below were often used for making room for other work tasks that the frontline workers considered to be more in line with the values of their professional standards of social work.

Coping strategies for handling devaluated instructions			
Revision strategy	Resistance strategies		
Adjusting	Down-prioritizing	Tricking	Rejecting
Revising the instructions as deemed appropriate	Not prioritizing the instructions when not in focus by management	Reluctantly and deceptively following instructions when in focus by management	Explicitly deciding not to follow instructions regardless of focus by management

Table 8 – Coping strategies for handling devaluated implementation instructions.

It appeared that frontline workers in this case found ways to deal with the implementation instructions that they deemed counter-productive to what they considered valuable for the service-users, and for the core mission of the organization they served. They thereby adjusted the implementation instructions to fit the individual needs of the service-users and potential employers, in line with the logics of craft and industrial production, and down-prioritized, tricked and rejected the parts of the instructions that seemed pointless in this regard, associated with the logic of administrative accountability.

5.2.3 Justifying the resistance strategies

Another tendency emerging through the analysis of the implementation practices at the frontline of the case study was that the frontline workers

seemed to be using the valuated logics as tools to justify their resistance strategies by leaning on the logics that they had ranked high in their value hierarchy, thus sustaining the resistance practices.

The complexity of the work situation together with the frontline workers' practice of ranking certain work tasks related to specific logics over others influenced how they continuously made decisions of how to prioritize between the many tasks in their workday. Frontline workers had to prioritize between important work tasks, and they felt distressed about going against managerial instructions. Choosing to down-prioritize, trick or reject work tasks associated with the logic of administrative accountability, opposed the frontline workers' loyalty to management. The frontline workers showed a strong commitment of being loyal to their closest leaders – the management in the NAV office where they worked, and to some degree to NAV as their employer – but they portrayed an even stronger commitment to their professional values benefitting the service recipients. The obligation to deliver on the core mission of NAV and what was ranked highest according to their professional values surpassed the obligation to follow managerial instructions that were perceived as only having the purpose of 'satisfying the system'. Nevertheless, while applying revision and resistance strategies to prioritize work tasks aimed at the service recipients, they at the same time felt that they were being disobedient to their employer. In order to deal with this moral discrepancy, that of loyalty to service recipient versus to management, they justified their actions and choices of resistance by leaning on the logics that supported their choices. For example, when down-prioritizing, tricking and rejecting the implementation instructions, they justified their choices by invoking the logics of craft to emphasize the importance of tailoring the services, or by invoking the logics of industrial production to emphasize the importance of using their time wisely. They applied these revision and resistance strategies as a way to focus on what they saw as their most important work: to provide work inclusion services to their service-users and to make sure that applications and income-securing were handled in a timely and just manner. Countering the part of the system that they saw as valuing 'good numbers' above quality of services to service-users, was justified by instead contributing to the 'true' value creation of NAV.

In summary, frontline staff at the case office of NAV appeared to be responding to the implementation efforts of the FG (and similar instructions) by classifying them among a surplus of work tasks. These work tasks then seemed to be valuated in relation to three institutional logics, and prioritized according to a value hierarchy based on the frontline workers' professional standards and values. The work tasks called for through the implementation instructions of the FG were often ranked and related to the devaluated logic of administrative accountability. Coping strategies of revision and resistance were used to deal with these devaluated work tasks; and the various logics on the value hierarchy were used as tools to justify the resistance strategies for the greater good of the service recipients and NAV's mission.

6   Summary of the articles

The overall aim of the thesis is to improve our understanding of mismatches between centrally directed policy measures and implementation on the operational level of public service organizations. This is in order to contribute to the research field of street-level implementation as well as to the planning and management of implementation processes. The thesis consists of three individual articles that address this research aim in different ways. In this chapter, a brief summary of the articles is provided. In the next chapters, overarching findings and implications will be discussed.

6.1   Article I - summary, results and contributions

Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth. (2016). *Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice.* Journal of Comparative Social Work, (2), 1–29.

The first article, on implementation in complex public organizations, serves to map the contextual background for the rest of the study through the lenses of a framework of multi-level implementation systems (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015) in response to the call to use multi-level perspectives to investigate implementation at the street level (Hupe, 2014). Its aim is to explore selected aspects of the case office's wider context, specifically the FG's characteristics, its history and implementation strategy and to chart its multi-level implementation system. The article traces the influence of one of several possible factors that can help explain how the FG was used at that specific NAV office. Specifically the article explores how the extended and instructed use of outsourcing work inclusion services at the case office competed directly with the instructed application of the FG. This pointed to a mismatch between the everyday work situations at the frontlines versus decisions about resource allocation, priorities and performance measuring at the levels of management in the organizational field. The article serves as an illustration of the complexity involved in implementation work, and stresses that analyzing the implementation process in relation to its wider context is necessary for understanding the final implementation outcome at the operational levels of the organization. The article's main contribution is to give an empirical

illustration of an implementation effort in a Nordic public welfare organization as well as emphasizing the importance of recognizing the contextual complexity in implementation planning and practices.

6.2   Article II - summary, results and contributions

Høiland, Gry Cecilie & Klemsdal, Lars. *Institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions.* (Submitted 2018).

The second article, on institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions, serves to explore the wider institutional context as well as how and why frontline employees prioritized using the FG or not among a surplus of other work tasks. This responds to the call to use a multi-level perspective to explore and explain what actually happens at the street-level during implementation efforts (Hupe, 2014, Hupe & Hill, 2016). The article draws on the literature on institutional logics and complexity (e.g. Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012) and institutional logics in action (e.g. McPherson & Sauder, 2013) and explores how actors on the ground relate to and use institutional logics to handle implementation instructions in their work situations and thereby contributes to explanations for implementation practices. The article discloses how the implementation instructions of the FG, rather than being the carriers of intended logics, were classified, valuated and then prioritized by the frontline employees in the light of a set of institutional logics in relation to their 'configurations of concern' and the immediate situational contingencies.

The contributions to the theory of institutional logics further the understanding of how logics may be used as tools for action. The findings of the thesis resonate with similar studies that focus on how actors on the ground deal with institutional complexity creatively and how they use the logics on the basis of their local situational circumstances rather than just responding to them (e.g. Binder, 2007; McPherson & Sauder, 2013) This illustrates how frontline workers may use logics strategically by adapting them to local situational circumstances in order to promote their personal or professional agendas. However, the thesis also demonstrates how higher order institutional logics, rather than posing multiple expectations that constitute complex work situations to be handled or used strategically by the frontline workers, are

available as systems of classification and meaning-making that help the actors cope with the situational complexity stemming from a more immediate lower order situational contingencies. The article suggests that the conflicting and, to an extent, competing institutional logics of craft, industrial productivity and administrative accountability did not themselves constitute the complexity in the work situation, but rather represented a toolset to classify, valuate and prioritize work tasks. In this way, the logics became powerful tools to give meaning and value to particular tasks and allowed staff to identify and justify up or down prioritization of work tasks based on their individual 'constellations of concerns'.

The article contributes to the field of street-level implementation research, as will be discussed in section 7.2.2, by giving an insight into the interaction between structure and agency through institutional theory, taking prime in both the influence of situational contingencies as well as the deliberate maneuvering within these contingencies by agents according to their 'configurations of concern'. The results imply the importance of understanding both in the planning of implementation processes.

6.3   Article III - summary, results and contributions

Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth. (2018). *Frontline public welfare workers' resistance practices as value-driven, employee-based innovation.* Nordic Journal of Working Life studies. 8(2).

The third article, on resistance and innovation, serves to give a deeper insight into the frontline employees' actual handling of the FG implementation instructions. It has a twofold purpose. First, to describe coping strategies as types of resistance used in response to the devaluated implementation instructions of the FG; and second to discuss these coping strategies through the lens of employee-based innovation theory.

The article makes use of the theoretical notions of certain managerial principles diminishing professional autonomy (Kamp et al., 2013), the role of autonomy (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999) as well as dignity (Karlsson, 2012) in organizational misbehavior such as resistance, as well as the concept of coping strategies of 'street-level bureaucrats' and their subsequent policy

adjustments to fit their work situations (Lipsky, 1980, 2010). In addition, the article draws on theories of 'everyday' and 'work(er)-driven' innovation (Lippke & Wegener, 2014; Smith, 2017) and practice-based innovation strategies of bricolaging and 'adjusting protocol' (Ellström, 2010; Fuglsang, 2010).

The article describes four coping strategies that frontline employees used when faced with the top-down implementation instructions of the FG that they valuated as not matching professional standards. These were: 'adjusting', 'down-prioritizing', 'tricking' and 'rejecting' the instructions, as depicted in table 8 in section 5.2.3. The four coping strategies are then discussed through the lens of employee-based innovation theory that points to an important type of innovation in the workplace characterized by elements of 'tinkering', 'bricolage' and 'unforeseen events' that happen in the day-to-day practices of employees while solving their work tasks (e.g. Fuglsang, 2010; Lippke & Wegener, 2014). If we view the four coping strategies through this lens, the employee-based innovation activities that emerged through the case analysis were not instructed or driven by management, but rather, driven by motivations among the frontline employees to be true to their need for autonomy for performative achievement and dignity at work for a sense of self-worth. The table below shows two main types of employee-based innovation that emerged from the analytical process of the case.

Coping strategy:	Adjusting	Down-prioritizing	Tricking	Rejecting
Subcategory of strategies	Value-driven revision strategies	Value-driven resistance strategies		
Innovation type	E.g. bricolaging (Fuglsang, 2010), practice-based innovation (Ellström, 2010) and 'everyday innovation' (Lippke & Wegener, 2014).	Resistance-driven innovation Employee-based innovations as a result of value-driven resistance strategies counteracting managerial instructions		

Table 9 – Overview of innovation types and corresponding coping strategies

The first type of innovation can be considered in line with innovation concepts in existing literature, such as 'bricolage' and 'everyday innovation' (e.g. Fuglsang 2010; Lippke & Wegener, 2014). These types of innovation activities were bricolage-based and evolved from a value-driven need to

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adjust the instructions, stripping from them what did not fit the tailoring of services for the service recipient.

The second type of innovation was different. By associating Lipsky's (1980, 2010) theorizing of street-level bureaucrats' use of resistance strategies with a study that connected resistance practices to innovation practices (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013), the article uses a theoretical possibility of establishing a link between resistance that appears counter-productive (e.g. Lipsky, 1980, 2010) and employee-based innovation which is seen to create value in the organization. Specifically, frontline workers' strategies to resist top-down implementation were conceptualized as an alternative type of employee-based innovation, because the strategies were driven by the inherent need to follow professional ethics and values in their quest for professional autonomy and dignity in the face of managerial principles which appeared to counter this quest. The article suggests that these types of innovation, 'bricolage' and this new type labeled 'resistance-driven' innovation may have a function of calibrating public value creation in organizations submerged in managerial principles that do not match the professional values of the frontline employees.

The following tables provide an overview of the three articles. Table 10 provides an overview of the articles' objectives, theories used and main findings. Table 11 provides an empirical overview of methodological approaches applied, data collection, analysis and participants for each article.

	Title	Objective	Theory	Findings
I	*Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice*	To map the implementation system of the FG and to illustrate the significance of considering the contextual complexity influencing implementation work.	Multi-level implementation systems (Moulton and Sandfort, 2015).	*Contextual factors at higher levels of an implementation system impact on its application at the operational level of case-to-case decisions of implementing new policy. *This needs further exploration
II	*Institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions.*	*To explore how actors on the ground related to and used institutional logics to handle and create practical and legitimate order in everyday work. *To discuss explanations for implementation practices on the ground.	Institutional logics and complexity (e.g. Thornton et al., 2012). Institutional logics in action (e.g. McPherson & Sauder, 2013) Archer's contribution on agency (Archer, 2003)	*Three distinct categories for classifying work tasks that can each be associated with three separate institutional logics identified on the organizational level were found. *Frontline workers used the logics as tools to categorize, validate and prioritize work tasks, as well as to justify the choices. *A mismatch of logics between central intention and implementation strategy and the frontline workers constellation of concerns influenced the implementation practices on the ground.
III	*Resistance-driven innovation? Frontline public welfare workers' coping with top-down implementation*	*To describe types of coping strategies by frontline employees when dealing with a constant flow of implementation instructions. *To analyze these coping strategies as revision and resistance strategies through a lens of employee-based innovation theories	*Management principles (Kamp et al., 2013) *Organizational misbehavior, autonomy and dignity (e.g. Karlsson, 2012) *Employee-based innovation (e.g. Fuglsang, 2010)	*Four main types of coping strategies to preserve dignity in work were described. *Three of them directly resisted implementation instructions on the basis of value- motivated prioritizations of work tasks. *When linked to employee-based innovation literature, one complementary type of employee -based innovation was suggested: Resistance-driven innovation.

Table 10 – Overview of contribution and aim of the articles

	Title	Research phase and approach	Data collection	Participants
I	*Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice*	Exploratory phase of CR informed case study.	Preliminary findings from document studies + interviews of key informants	-16 informants in managerial and coordinator positions
II	*Institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions*.	Descriptive + explanatory phase of CR informed case study.	Semi-structured interviews from all levels of organization, meeting observations, document studies.	-16 informants in managerial and coordinator positions -11 informants in frontline positions
III	*Resistance-driven innovation? Frontline public welfare workers' coping with top-down implementation*	Descriptive + explanatory phase of CR informed case study.	Semi-structured interviews from all levels of organization, meeting observations, document studies	-11 informants in frontline positions

Table 11 – Overview of research phase & approach, data collection and participants for each article

7 Discussion

The overall aim of the thesis is to improve our understanding of mismatches between centrally directed policy measures and implementation on the operational level of public service organizations. The purpose is to contribute to the research field of policy implementation as well as to the planning and management of implementation processes. The thesis aim was operationalized into five research aims in section 1.2. Research questions a) and b) have been discussed in the articles and elaborated on in chapter 5. The following research questions of the thesis are elaborated on in this chapter:

c.   *Why was the Facilitation Guarantee not implemented as intended at the case office? (Article II and III, chapter 7.1)*

d.   *What are the theoretical implications, mainly for the street-level policy implementation research field (Chapter 7.2), but also for the fields of institutional logics (Article II) and employee-based innovation (Article III)?*

e.   *What are the implications for the planning and management of implementation processes? (Chapter Article I, II, III and 7.3)*

The research questions have been answered to some extent in the articles, but this chapter provides a broader elaboration than was possible in the confinement of the three articles. Research questions c), d) and e) will be dealt with in the following ways in this chapter: In section 7.1, research question c) is elaborated through a CR lens of explaining social phenomena. Section 7.2 contains a discussion of the theoretical implications of the findings for the field of street-level implementation research – question (d). The theoretical contributions to the other research fields are discussed in the respective articles, but not elaborated further in this chapter. Section 7.3 deals with question e) and discusses the implications for the planning and management of implementation processes, including the implications of an emancipatory goal of CR (Bhaskar, 1978).

7.1 Discussing why the FG was not implemented as intended at the case office

Article I primarily maps the contextual complexity of the case, and illustrates the extended practice of outsourcing services as one possible explanation for the implementation outcomes of the FG in the case office. Article II shows that even though the central intention of the FG was in line with the logic of craft, the strategies used for its implementation at the street-level could be associated with the logic of administrative accountability. Articles II and III together unfold implementation practices at the case office, and thereby contribute to answering *research question c* more directly. Goldman and Foldy (2015) pointed to the need to shift the focus from the variables and outcomes of the frontline workers discretions to what happens in the 'space before action', where the frontline workers actually arrive at their decisions to be used in their interactions with the service recipients. As discussed, much street-level research centers on coping strategies and coping mechanisms among street-level workers in their direct interaction with the service recipients (e.g. Tummers et al., 2015). However, coping mechanisms that do not directly involve the service recipients, but that do influence how frontline workers prioritize their work tasks therefore influencing the way new policy is implemented, should be of interest. As such, the three successive tendencies of categorization, valuation & prioritization; revising & resisting; and justifying, elaborated in section 5.2, may be seen as coping mechanisms that are triggered in the 'space before action' and eventually influence the implementation outcome of the FG and similar implementation instructions.

In order to explain further the outcome of the implementation effort of the FG, the findings can be understood through a lens of CR. According to this perspective, social events/outcomes (e.g. the implementation practices and outcomes of the FG implementation effort) were caused by social mechanisms[8] (e.g. mechanisms of using resistance strategies) that were activated by certain situational contingencies (e.g. the surplus of valuated and devaluated work tasks) in combination with certain agentic concerns and

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[8] Whether the mechanisms accounted for in the thesis should be called generative mechanisms, social mechanisms or just coping mechanisms, is not important. The point is that they are not just descriptions of how frontline workers react to the implementation instructions, but also part of an explanation for why they react as they do, based upon Archer's theorizing of the interaction between structure and agency and the CR notion of mechanisms for explanatory puposes.

choices (e.g. agentic concerns of professional dignity and autonomy for performance achievement). As discussed in section 2.3, social mechanisms can be seen in the combination of the agentic concerns and situational contingencies involved (Blom & Moren, 2011 p 65), and operate as tendencies whose 'activation, as well as the effect(s) of the activation, are not given but contingent' (Tsoukas, 1994, p. 291). In this way, how events unfold, depends on whether mechanisms are triggered (or not), which again depends on the agents and the contextual conditions involved, including the activation of other mechanisms (Leca & Naccache, 2006). As a result, analyzing the agentic concern involved, as well as the situational contingencies and the activations of other mechanisms, is important for understanding and eventually explaining the 'why' of street-level policy implementation. According to Archer (2000) and her contributions to theorizing agency as presented in section 2.3, one may see the world of humans as consisting of clusters of inescapable orders (nature, practice and the social) which can be understood in relation to the agents' 'constellations of concerns' along these orders, influencing their 'ultimate concerns' in the situations at hand. The agents (frontline employees) in this study were found to portray strong professional needs for performative achievement (in the order of practice), and for maintaining self-worth (in the order of the social) (ibid).

As described in chapter 5, the work situation of the frontline employees consisted of a multiplicity of work tasks from the multilayered organizational field of NAV, nested from expectations and interests in the policy field of work inclusion, as well as overlapping managerial principles and institutional landscapes. In addition, the frontline employees appeared to have a need for an overview and order in their work, and a wish to make choices in their daily work tasks that were in line with professional standards of social work (NASW, 2017). These agentic concerns could be connected with the need for performative achievement in line with certain values as well as the need for maintaining self-worth (Archer, 2000) and autonomy in their job (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999). This combination of the agentic needs of performative achievement and autonomy and the existence of an overwhelming number of work tasks in the immediate work situation, some that did not combine with these values, seemed to have triggered a *mechanism of categorization, valuation & prioritization.* By drawing on the integrated system of logics,

workers seemed to categorize their tasks according to different logics ranked as a value hierarchy according to how the relevant institutional logics matched the workers' professional standards and values. Implementation instructions, such as the implementation of the FG, were devaluated because they consisted of tasks that did not match the logics that the frontline workers classified most highly in their professional value hierarchy (logics of craft and industrial production), but rather matched work tasks that were associated to the logic ranked lowest (logic of administrative accountability). Since there was limited time for performing well and doing what workers valued as a dignified job, work tasks that were devaluated were often not prioritized.

The study identified a strong need among the frontline employees in the study to feel authenticity (Thunman, 2013) and professional dignity (Karlsson, 2012) in their work. This can be understood as the agentic concerns for performative achievement in the order of practice as well as the need for maintaining self-worth in the order of the social (Archer, 2000). The activation of the previous coping mechanism, together with the agentic concern for maintaining authenticity and professional dignity, in combination with the pressures of devaluated work tasks of the implementation instructions, such as the FG, seemed to trigger a *mechanism of strategizing by revision or resistance*, specifically by using coping strategies of directly 'adjusting', 'down prioritizing', 'tricking' or 'rejection' the instructions. This supports the assumption, discussed in section 3.4, that the lack of professional dignity and autonomy at work may lead to resistance and organizational misbehavior (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Karlsson, 2012).

This second mechanism of using revision or resistance strategies when dealing with devaluated implementation instructions, was in open conflict with a widespread desire on part of the workers to do as their managers asked. The agentic concern of authenticity (Thunman, 2013) and professional dignity (Karlsson, 2012) among the frontline employees at the case office also seemed to include being compliant and loyal to management and NAV as their employer. This agentic concern for maintaining authenticity and professional dignity in dealing with the discrepancy, appeared to trigger another mechanism. To cope with this discrepancy, a *mechanism of justification* was triggered, that resulted in the frontline workers leaning on relevant highly valued logics to explain and support their choices. This third

mechanism of justification helped sustain the coping strategies of revision and resistance when dealing with work tasks ranked more highly by management than by frontline staff. Table 12 below gives an overview of agentic concerns, situational contingencies and successive mechanisms in the case.

A successive tendency of the three mechanisms appears in the way that for instance the mechanism of categorization, valuation & prioritization had to be activated for a work task to be devalued and then resisted, triggering the mechanism of strategizing by revision or resistance. The mechanism of categorization, valuation & prioritization may be seen to have activated the mechanism of strategizing by revision or resistance, whereas the mechanism of justification seems to have led to its sustenance. In this way, all three mechanisms either indirectly or directly influenced the implementation outcome of the FG in the case study. Among the three mechanisms analyzed in the study, the mechanism that directly led to the outcome for FG implementation appears to be the mechanism of strategizing by revision or resistance, specifically the strategies of 'adjusting', 'down-prioritizing', 'tricking' and 'rejecting' the devaluated implementation instructions in the study. The strategy of adjusting lead to a partial implementation gap of the FG managerial instructions in that the instructions were followed somewhat, but adjusted to fit the service-user. The strategy of tricking that was used mostly for a limited period when pressured by management to follow instructions, lead to *apparently* adopting the instructions and resulting in what looked like a no-implementation gap during that period. This can explain why the number of FG usage in the case office was high in the period between 2013-2015, when there was an especially strong focus of the FG in the case office. However, when the managerial focus of the FG decreased, the tricking strategy was to some extent replaced with the strategies of down-prioritizing and rejecting, leaving notable implementation gaps for the FG.

The thesis thus identifies three mechanisms as well as situational contingencies and agentic concerns present for the mechanisms to be activated, which can help explain the implementation outcome of the FG at the case office. This is not to say that these three mechanisms offer a complete explanation. Other mechanisms arising from other situational contingencies and agentic concerns at all the levels of the implementation system, that have not been in focus in this thesis, are probably also responsible for the

implementation outcome. For example, mechanisms operating at the different levels of management in NAV, possibly also activated certain mechanisms that could help explain the outcome. The same holds true for mechanisms at a macro level, such as changes in the labor market leading to a higher number of service recipients' needing work inclusion services as well as fewer jobs available[9].

Agentic concerns	Situational contingency	Successive mechanisms
A need for order, overview and professional autonomy for performative achievement and self-worth.	Overwhelming number of important work tasks. Existence of work tasks that are ranked at different positions in a hierarchy of values in the work place.	1. Categorization, valuation & prioritization
A need for feeling authenticity and dignity for performative achievement and self-worth.	The demands to follow managerial (implementation) instructions that are ranked low on the value hierarchy and devaluated. The triggered mechanism of categorization, valuation & prioritization	2. Strategizing by revision or resistance (adjusting, down-prioritizing, tricking, rejecting)
A need for feeling authenticity and dignity for performative achievement and self-worth.	Resisting managerial (implementation) instructions thereby being disobedient, also in conflict with feelings of dignity and performative achievement in the role of employee. The triggered mechanism of strategizing by revision or resistance	3. Justification

Table 12 – Overview of agentic concerns, situational contingencies and successive mechanisms in the case

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[9] The data collection of the case study happened during a time of recession in Norway due to the fall of oil prices in 2013. This became an issue at the case office, and this contextual fact was kept in mind during the analysis. However, due to the nature of the frontline context, this situation did not influence the findings in a significant way and was not the focus of the study.

7.2 Theoretical implications for the field of policy implementation research

As discussed in section 2.2 there is a need to find explanations for what happens during street-level implementation, and this leads to the need for more extant theory (e.g. Meyers & Nielsen, 2013) as well a need to also take in its multi-layered implementation context (Hupe, 2014, Hupe & Hill, 2016) of street-level implementation. In addition, a normative tendency of viewing implementation gaps as implementation failure is prevalent in much implementation literature (Hupe, 2014). In this study, extant theory, such as CR-theorizing about the interaction between structure and agency, institutional logics as tools and employee-based innovation were used. Theoretical implications for street-level implementation research will be discussed. First, answering to a need for empirical studies to focus on the how and the why of street-level implementation in a multilevel context, the implications of the findings are discussed through the lenses of structure-agency interaction and institutional logics as tools. Second, challenging the normative tendency of viewing implementation gaps as implementation failure, the findings are discussed through the lens of employee-based innovation theory deliberating on the contribution of the new concept of 'resistance-based innovation'.

7.2.1 Bringing analysis of structure/agency interaction to implementation research

In section 2.2, Winter's (2000 cited by Meyers & Nielsen, 2013, p. 307) question: 'Are street-level bureaucrats servants or masters?' was discussed as representing a debate of how the structures in which the street-level bureaucrats are embedded, restrict them as agents in using their discretion, or whether these 'implementing agents' control their discretion themselves. In the street-level literature, a major focus was identified that circled around variables and outcomes of discretionary behavior, leaving out what happens in the 'space before action' before the decisions of using the new policy with the service recipients is made (Goldman & Foldy, 2015). Thereby, also the empirical attention to 'the how and the why' of implementation (Hupe 2104) is not in focus. Further, a point was made that among the vast amount of

research studying street-level bureaucrats and their use of discretion for policy implementation, the question of structure and agency has not been addressed to any great degree (Rice, 2013). For example, although Goldman and Foldy (2015) analyzed how frontline workers arrived at their decisions of discretion during the 'space before action' in their study, they did not address the issue of how structure and agency interact as the drivers for change, and it seems to be somewhat taken for granted that street-level bureaucrats are fully rational in their choices. In order to gain a deeper understanding of what is happening in these processes, tying them back to the context, a call for rigorous lenses of social theory was identified (Sandfort, 2000; Meyer, and Nielsen, 2013; Rice, 2013). Specifically, this included a need for more theoretically informed research that focuses on day-to-day experiences of street-level bureaucrats and drawing connections to larger structural forces, thus integrating multiple levels of analysis. (Sandfort, 2000, p. 752)

An important objective of the thesis, then, is to attempt to lift the veil on the how and the why of street-level agents' everyday dealings with implementation instructions from the top in a multi-level context, and how this can help us understand and explain implementation practices and outcomes. According to the CR perspective, as discussed in section 2.3, the role of structure and agency in explaining social change is dealt with by focusing on what happens in the interaction between them by separating actors' actions and structures analytically. Social agents relate to the situations at hand according to their own subjective interpretations of those situations and contexts, and then, on the basis of their personal concerns and the possible choices within these situational contingencies, choose how to act and thereby also influence how the situations are unfolding (Archer, 2003). Social change (or non-change) is thereby seen as occurring through the interaction between these structural situational conditions and the agents' reflexive deliberations that are rooted in their subjectively determined concerns in relation to the situation at hand (ibid).

The study illustrates how the implementation practices of the FG were the outcome of the mechanisms of 1) categorization, valuation & prioritization, 2) strategizing by revision or resistance, and 3) justification, all activated by certain situational contingencies and agentic concerns and choices. The combination of a surplus of work tasks, including devaluated ones, and the

agentic concern of professional dignity through performative achievement and adhering to professional values of social work, activated this consecutive line of mechanisms that triggered the reactions to the FG instructions. Thus the mechanisms explaining the implementation outcomes were teased out by analyzing the interaction between structure and agency, through investigating the actors' reflexivities regarding objective situational conditions and the agents' reflexive deliberations that were rooted in their subjectively determined concerns in relation to the situation at hand (Archer, 2003). The thesis thereby analyzes how the frontline workers in the study, through their agentic concerns and deliberations of their situational contingencies, made choices that influenced how the implementation instructions of the FG were practiced in their office. By not only considering the variables and outcomes of the frontline employees' discretions in their practices regarding the FG, but instead analyzing how the frontline workers actually arrived at their decisions in the context of their multi-layered work situation, the study provides deeper explanations for why the frontline employees ended up not implementing the policy as centrally intended. An important theoretical implication to the research field of street-level implementation is that when we look at the structure – agency interaction in implementation practices, insights are gained into the 'how and why' of street-level implementation, including the influence of the multi-layered implementation context. Taken a step further, the thesis illustrates how situational contingencies in combination with agentic concerns may trigger mechanisms that determine the outcome of the implementation efforts. Specifically, in situations similar to the case, where frontline employees are faced with the need to prioritize between a surplus of work tasks associated to logics that may or may not match their professional values and agentic concerns, similar successive mechanisms may be activated when implementation instructions are given. This is illustrated in the model below with references to possibly resulting innovation types that will be elaborated on in 7.2.3.[10]

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[10] The manager-driven innovation type that is the stipulated result of employees adopting the implementation instructions as intended by management pictured in the model below is not in the focus of the thesis due to the nature of the empirical findings. It is added to the model only as a tentative possibility.

AGENTIC CONCERNS

o   Professional values and standards

o   Need for performance achievement according to professional values and standards

o   Need for professional dignity and authenticity

SITUATIONAL CONTINGENCIES

o   Institutional logics

o   Managerial principles

o   Implementation instructions

o   Work situation (organization and content of tasks, available resources: time, portfolio size, autonomy etc.)

SUCCESSIVE MECHANISMS

1.   Categorization, valuation & prioritization of work tasks

2.   Strategizing to deal with implementation instructions

3.   Justifying implementation practices according to logics/agentic concerns

Depending on agentic concerns, situational contingencies and triggered mechanisms, different scenarios may result. Below is a table showing possible implementation practices, outcomes and possibly resulting innovation types.

IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES	IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOMES	INNOVATION TYPE
Adopting instructions	No implementation gap	Manager-driven innovation
Revising instructions o adjusting to tailor	Partly implementation gap	Employee-based bricolage etc. innovation
Resisting instructions o down-prioritizing o tricking o rejecting	Implementation gap	Employee-based resistance-driven innovation

Figure 4 – Overview of triggers of mechanisms, successive mechanisms and possible implementation practices, outcomes and innovation types.

7.2.2 The contribution of the 'institutional logics as tools' perspective in exploring implementation practices

The thesis contributes to the field of street-level implementation research by giving an insight into the interaction between structure and agency, taking prime in both the influence of multilevel situational contingencies as well as the deliberate maneuvering in these contingencies by agents according to their 'configurations of concern'. The thesis contributes further to the understanding of structure/agency interaction in implementation practices by also taking advantage of the notion of 'institutional logics as tools'.

In section 2.2, a point was made that among research studying street-level bureaucrats' use of discretion during policy implementation, institutional theory had not been used to any great degree despite the need to consider the complex institutional environments in which today's frontline workers operate (Rice, 2013). Further, despite its function in understanding operational conditions of modern public services containing multiple and often conflicting logics (e.g. Fossestøl et al., 2015), the concept of institutional logics and complexity has not been used to any great degree in the street-level literature (Garrow & Grusky, 2012). Garrow and Grusky (ibid, p. 104) in their research on HIV test counseling apply the notion from institutional theory that 'agency is institutionally embedded', to the idea of street-level discretion. They use the concept of institutional logics in relation to street-level behavior to demonstrate that differences between frontline workers' discretional decisions may be related to underlying institutional logics. Concluding 'that street-level workers are more likely to implement policy mandates in a manner that is congruent with policy intent when the aims and assumptions of the policy are consistent with the core institutional logic of the organizational field', they question the assumption of individualistic interests that underlies much of the research on street-level discretion (ibid, p. 105). They contribute to important insight into the role of agency in policy implementation; however, they do not focus on the possible complexity of institutional logics comprising the organizational fields in their study. The role of agency is thereby undermined, when the possibility is left

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out that frontline workers might use the plurality of 'institutional logics as tools' in their implementation practices.

As discussed in article II, the notion of 'institutional logics as tools' emerges from developments in the field of institutional theory suggesting that institutional complexity experienced on the ground level is a likely source of creative tension and autonomy, possibly comprising a space of autonomy and agency for the actors (e.g. McPherson & Sauder, 2013). In article II, the 'logics as tool' perspective is brought further by exploring how a complexity of logics is experienced on the level of the individual frontline employees as an integrated repertoire for managing the situational complexity posed by lower level, concrete situational contingencies.

The contribution of the findings based on the intuitial logics perspective in the thesis to the field of street-level implementation is threefold. First the thesis illustrates how the use of the notion of 'institutional logics as tools' can be employed to explore the 'how and why' of street-level implementation in more detail. This is seen through the way that the thesis explores how frontline workers used a set of logics as a system for classification, valuation and prioritization of a surplus of work tasks. In this way, the thesis illustrated how frontline workers used logics as tools to give meaning and value to implementation instructions and to justify up or down prioritization of implementation tasks on the basis of their 'constellations of concerns' according to their professional values.

Second, the institutional logics perspective serves as a theoretical framework for a multi-level perspective, as called for by Hupe (2014). The concept of institutional logics can be seen as valuable in the sense in that it builds upon 'an integrated conceptual architecture that works at three levels of analysis (the individual, the organizational and the societal)' (Delbridge and Edwards, 2013, p. 928). Its value in multi-level analysis can be seen in the elaborations of how policy intent and managerial principles may be connected to institutional logics and thereby viewed as responses to or enactments of higher level logics, whereas, at the same time, the same logics are used as tools by the frontline employees for handling lower-order situational complexities arising at the operational level as a consequence of the enactment of these managerial principles.

Third, conceiving of logics as tools influences the way that the role of agency in street-level implementation research is understood. Garrow and Grusky's (2012, p. 104) finding that street-level employees are more likely to implement policy congruent with policy intent when the aims of that policy are consistent with the core institutional logic of the organizational field', are supported by the findings in the thesis. However, their notion of agency is restricted by not considering how possible pluralities of logics influenced the outcome. Because the thesis focuses on the complexity of institutional logics comprising the multi-layered context of the case, the possibility that frontline workers use the plurality of 'institutional logics as tools' in their implementation practices is recognized. This opens the opportunity to elaborate further on the role of agency in implementation practices at the street-level, as was discussed in section 2.2 in the discussion about the paradox of embedded agency. Drawing on a CR notion of the role of agency in the 'structure – agency debate' in social theory, agents are given an important role of reflecting upon their structural and cultural enablements and constraints and making choices according to their own subjective interpretations of the situation at hand as well as according to their concerns and projects (Archer, 2003). In this way, agents are seen as constrained by the wider context and situational contingencies, but that the constraint is mediated through the agents' own interpretations and prioritizations within the possibilities of these constraints in their environment. By showing how institutional logics can be continuously combined, configured, and manipulated to serve the purposes of actors in the case, the thesis illustrates how the notion of 'institutional logics as tools' can serve as a fruitful theoretical conceptualization of what happens in the interaction between structure and agency during implementation processes at the ground level of complex organizations.

7.2.3 Employee-based innovation theories and the normative discussion of street-level implementation gaps

Theoretical implications of using an employee-based innovation lens in the research field of street-level implementation does not inform the understanding of the 'how and why' so much as it puts a normative mark on

the widespread view of implementation as 'applying instructions'. This also implies that deviance from policy intent at the street-level is implementation failure (Hupe & Hill, 2016). A basic point of street-level implementation literature is that frontline employees become lower level policy-makers because their choices comprise how the new policy measure is used in practice (Lipsky, 1980, 2010). The normative view of deviance from intended policy as implementation failure (Hupe & Hill, 2016), as well as Lipsky's (ibid) focus on coping behavior as disadvantageous to the service recipients, have led to an inherently negative view on the use of discretion by street-level bureaucrats. The mismatch between policy intent and policy implementation by street-level bureaucrats is often termed an 'implementation gap' (Hupe, 2014). In this view, an important aim of implementation research is to inform management how to fix this 'problem'. Adding to the more recent debate of normative values of discretions in the street-level literature (Evans & Harris, 2004), the following discussion draws upon insights from research on employee-based innovation, suggesting that this perspective can bring valuable contributions to the normative debate on the implementation gap in street-level implementation research.

Innovation scholar Wegener (2015, p. 4) holds that 'employees may perform creative actions with innovation potential without knowing it and without managers, politicians or researchers acknowledging these efforts as potentially innovative', so that innovation potential may 'be present while managers or politicians mistakenly conclude that an innovation policy has failed'. The thesis findings of how and why the frontline workers dealt with specific top-down implementation instructions in their overloaded work situations leads me to question the often taken-for-granted negative viewpoint of non-implementation as implementation failure. Even though organizational misbehavior of countering managerial instructions (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999) through resistance strategies were identified, the thesis argues that this may not necessarily be negative in all circumstances.

Drawing on an employee-based innovation perspective, article III argued that the frontline workers' revision and resistance strategies, even though easily associated with a form of organizational misbehavior, could be conceptualized as two types of employee-based innovations. Firstly, the term innovation may be applied because workers were motivated by a drive for value creation

(Wegener, 2015) as a response to a felt need to calibrate their work with what they considered the core mission of NAV, which was also in line with their professional values. And secondly, both these alleged innovation types can be described as a 'tendency to think of new and better ways of doing things and to try them out in practice' (Fagerberg, 2005, p. 1; cited in Smith, 2017)– a notion widely used to define innovation.

The first strategy, that of revision described as an adjustment of implementation instructions to better tailor for the individual service recipients, was linked to employee-based innovation concepts such as 'bricolage' (Fuglsang, 2010) and 'everyday innovation' (Lippke & Wegener, 2014) etc. that are already well documented in the field of employee-based innovation research. The other strategy, that of resistance specified as 'down-prioritizing', 'tricking' and 'rejecting', were directed against the implementation instructions in order to prioritize work tasks in line with professional and organizational values. Being labeled value-motivated resistance strategies, these three were then conceptualized as representing a different type of employee-based innovation, called 'resistance-driven innovation'.

The two innovation types, bricolage-type and 'resistance-driven innovation' can be seen as a result of the frontline workers' striving for keeping their professional dignity in a work situation with a surplus of devalued work tasks. Their professional dignity was attached to the possibility of prioritizing work tasks associated with the logic of craft and industrial productivity over work tasks associated with the logic of administrative accountability. Thus the innovation types, one well documented in earlier research and one new, emerged from the frontline workers' strategies of downplaying the prevalence of the logic that did not match their values, here the logic of administrative accountability and what they saw as only answering to the administrative system, not to the core mission of NAV. By using their discretion based on professional and organizational values to disregard managerial instructions and thereby create implementation gaps, it may be argued that frontline employee-induced implementation gaps may hold other consequences than only implementation failure. The thesis thus suggests that these two types of employee-based innovations, in some circumstances, may have a function of potentially calibrating public value creation through the sustenance of core-

mission work tasks in an organization submerged in managerial principles of multiple and contradictory agendas and logics. Thus, drawing on insights from research on employee-based innovation, the thesis suggests that resistance against implementation instructions, resulting in the non-application or deviance of policy intent, or implementation gaps, often termed implementation failure in classical Lipskyan literature, may actually be viewed as contributing to value creation through the lenses of innovation theory.

Consequently, the normative stance both in practice and in academia that implementation gaps, ie, the non-application of or deviance from policy intent, is implementation failure, is challenged. The discussion in the previous sections can be elaborated further towards the case of the FG. For the purpose of this argument, one may claim that the goal of public value creation by the FG was upheld, despite the so-called failure to implement the measure as intended and instructed. Quantitatively, the FG as a registered paper contract and in the period of 2013 to early 2015 was used, mostly due to managerial focus and pressures, often through the strategy of tricking. When the focus of the FG lingered in the beginning of 2015 and onwards, the FG was almost not used at all as instructed, and therefore seemed to not have been internalized at the case office. Qualitatively, however, it seems that the intention of the measure had become part of the work inclusion practices of the frontline workers in that they used other ways to maintain good collaborations with employers, just not as instructed by management. The core intention of providing better collaboration and a more trusting relationship between the new employer, the service recipient and NAV is, however, difficult to measure, and it is only possible to imply what may be the case. In sum, the implementation effort of the FG might have contributed to the frontline employees adopting its post-NPM inspired intention – to secure better collaboration practices between NAV and its target group. However, this was mostly achieved by the frontline workers through their innovative revision and resistance strategies that did not comply with managerial instructions. The bureaucratic and NPM-like managerial implementation strategy and resultant instructions - standardized use of a paper contract and registration procedures - however, had not been adopted due to their stealing time away from the perceived core mission of NAV, and therefor instead down-prioritized, tricked with and outright rejected, thus not becoming part of everyday practices as

centrally intended. Taken one step further, this implies that implementation gaps between intended and actual applications of policy measures at the street-level are not necessarily always bad.

7.3 Implications for the planning and management of implementation processes

The thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of the typical mismatch between centrally directed intentions of change and their implementation at the operational level. In the following, the findings are discussed in regard to their implications for the planning and management of implementation processes. Three specific implications are especially important and discussed below: 1) the necessity for implementation planners and managers to have an extensive understanding of the implementation system; 2) the possible emancipatory contribution of the study; and 3) the implications for the planning and managing of implementation processes if viewing implementation gaps through the lens of resistance-driven innovation.

7.3.1 Extensive understanding of the implementation system

The thesis serves as a reminder to implementation practitioners to consider the wider context, the work situation of the frontline employees as well as their professional concerns when planning and managing implementation processes. The thesis also gives insight into what managers need to be aware of if they want to avoid implementation gaps, that is, for the implementation outcome at the operational level to be according to the intent of the policy makers.

The findings showed that the central and initial intention of the FG could be associated to the logic of craft in line with the post-NPM managerial principles of collaboration, co-production and tailoring services. However, managerial strategies of implementing the FG to the frontlines of NAV were associated with the logic of administrative accountability in line with NPM-like managerial principles of registration, documentation, performance measuring, leading to less autonomy on the part of the employee. As such,

even when the intention behind innovative policy measures initiated from central levels of NAV *do* match the professional values and ultimate concerns of the frontline employees, if the implementation strategies/managerial approaches chosen at various levels of the organization for an efficient implementation of these policy measures, *do not* match the professional values and ultimate concerns of the frontline employees, challenges of implementation are imminent. Therefore, an implication for the planning and management of implementation processes is that implementation intentions and strategies need to be planned to fit the work situations and ultimate concerns of the frontline workers who are intended to integrate the new measures into their work practices. Consequently, when working with the design and framing of new policy measures and tasks that are the objects of implementation, it is important to avoid new policy measures' being associated with logics that do not resonate with the values of the frontline employees (such as the logic of administrative accountability in this case). Instead, it is imperative, if the central intention of the measure is actually in line with the logics highly valuated by frontline employees (such as the logic of craft in this case), that this logic is maintained through the way that the implementation instructions are designed.

In the end, if we are attempting to generalize the findings to be applicable to similar cases, the way to improve implementation outcomes at the operational level of organizations that consist of employees with strong professional drives, seems not to be by increasing documentation requirements, registration procedures and standardization of use, thereby decreasing the autonomy of these frontline workers. Ways to improve implementation outcomes may rather be found in facilitating the immediate work situation of the frontline workers in a way that will support their sense of professional dignity and authenticity of their work. This may include giving them more autonomy by diminishing the focus on standardized and quantifiable implementation instructions. If these do not make sense for the frontline employees, who know their service recipients and their own work situations first hand, maybe they are not for the greater value of the organization either?

7.3.2 Emancipatory contribution of the study and implications for management

The thesis shows that the frontline employees tended to practice what was termed 'resistance-driven innovation' as a result of the high level of various implementation instructions in their work situations so they could calibrate their work with what they considered the core mission of NAV which was also in line with their professional values. The study thus points to the important normative debate that may serve as an emancipatory outcome of the study, in line with the CR tradition (Bhaskar, 1978). Frontline employees in the case often expressed guilt and a need to justify their resistance practices as a result of feelings of discrepancy between their agentic concern of delivering proper services to the service recipients (in line with the logics of craft and industrial production), versus their loyalty to their managers and NAV as their employer to follow implementation instructions (in line with the logic of administrative accountability). The emancipatory contribution of the study serves the frontline employees in that their tendency to cope by resisting and disobeying certain instruction by management is not necessarily destructive. Rather it may be understood as an important contribution to maintaining public value creation in a system where managerial principles associated with the logic of administrative accountability of 'serving the system at the cost of the service recipient', seems to have become dominant.

7.3.3 Implications of viewing implementation gaps through the lens of resistance-driven innovation

Where implementation gaps, or non-application of intended implementation instructions at the operational level, are a consequence of well-founded discretionary decisions taken by frontline workers in order to stay true to their ultimate concerns as professionals (on the part of their recipients and the core mission of the organization), an implication is that public frontline workers should be considered to have important roles as calibrators for their organization and ought to be included in the planning of implementation processes. In this way, the filtering and honing function of the professionals at the operational level might better be considered an essential innovation activity that compensates for the tendency for top-down governance of public

services. Employee-based innovation activities such as bricolage and 'resistance-driven innovation' may be viewed as corrective innovation activities that have a function of calibrating the value creation in a work place overwhelmed by managerial principles and logics that may not serve the core mission of the organization. For this calibrating function to be efficient, the innovation activities should be recognized and, even better, organized, as part of the daily work.

The fact that frontline workers in the case see a need to find strategies for calibrating their work tasks to be more in line with their professional values and the overriding aim of the organization, leads to a discussion about challenges at the system level of NAV. On a general level, NPM-principles in combination with bureaucratic principles that have ridden the public sector in Western nations for a few decades, have been found to have negative impacts on the service, the service recipients and public service providers at the frontlines of public service organizations (e.g. Thunman, 2016; Tummers et al., 2009). An implication for politicians may be to initiate a paradigm shift in governing public welfare services toward agendas more in line with post-NPM principles of collaboration, co-production and innovation (Torfing et al., 2016). An important implication for implementation planners and managers within such NPM/bureaucratic regimes is to be cautious about imposing too many new focuses at the frontlines of public welfare organizations. The importance of authenticity of work to welfare workers and their ability to provide welfare services in line with professional standards and values, does imply that hindering the flexibility and space needed to solve wicked problems of everyday work by flooding frontline employees with constant top-down implementation instructions typical of NPM-like managerial principles, may be counter-productive to the most important mission of public welfare organizations, that is, to provide useful welfare services to its citizens.

8   Concluding remarks

The overall aim of the thesis was to improve our understanding of mismatches between centrally directed policy measures and implementation on the operational level. The thesis explored a specific implementation process in a complex public organization and discussed possible explanations for the outcome at the frontlines of the organization, where the innovation was meant to be put into practice. The thesis drew on a CR informed case study, investigating the Facilitation Guarantee and its street-level reactions in NAV. The research questions were to explore the what, how and why of the implementation process, answering the need for empirical studies in street-level implementation literature that focus on the how and why of street-level implementation using a multi-level perspective. The thesis found that the implementation system's complexity in the policy and organizational fields, including a plurality of logics, managerial principles and a multiplicity of work tasks, influenced how implementation instructions were manifested and perceived at the front level of the organization. The thesis further found mechanisms activated as a result of the discrepancy between situational contingencies and the frontline workers' need for professional dignity and adherences to values. The mechanism of strategizing by revision and resistance to deal with implementation instructions categorized as devaluated logics, led to the emergence of an implementation gap between the intended application of the policy measure and the actual outcome.

An important purpose of science in the view of the CR approach is to contribute to theory on the basis of constructs that can be theoretically or analytically generalizable. As such, the thesis discloses central mechanisms for how measures are received (rejected, adapted or adopted) by frontline employees. Whether centrally initiated implementation efforts will be prioritized or used at all depends on how the implementation instructions and the measure to be implemented become classified within the frontline worker's hierarchy of value. This in turn is based upon situational contingencies and the frontline workers' 'constellations of concern'. For implementation to be carried out as planned, new policy measures seems to benefit form being framed in the following ways. They need to suit the purpose of the measure, but also be consistent with the specific logics that

match the 'constellations of concern' of the frontline workers involved in implementation. In order to allow implementation outcomes more in line with the policy intention, aspects that are associated to the 'wrong' logics should be down-played. Even in contexts where other logics are prevalent, where other contingencies constitute the work situation and where other values influence the 'constellation of concern' among frontline employees, it seems imperative that these are well-known and understood in order for centrally initiated, top-down implementation efforts to be implemented as intended. Thus, gaining an extensive insight and knowledge of the organization in general and the operational lines specifically, including the employees' complex work situations, their 'constellations of concern' and existing organizational pressures and implementation instructions, need to be part of the implementation planning process. Because the findings are based upon a CR approach of drawing out mechanisms that may be activated under circumstances specified, it may be argued that these more general implications may apply to different empirical settings of top-down implementation, such as other NAV offices, different public service sectors, or even public sectors in other Nordic nations. However because of the extent of the empirical material of this single case study, it is not possible to hold that this is true in all similar cases.

Practically, professionals from several different public sector services have recognized the explanations posited during presentations at conferences, lectures and seminars. This may suggest that, at least, the findings of the study may contribute to a widening of the understanding of implementation and innovation processes at the frontlines of welfare services. For example, the normative questioning of NPM-like managerial principles of documentation and registration that the case points to in NAV, and which was found to have an important influence on the implementation result of the FG, may apply to other parts of the public service sector that are influenced by similar NPM-like managerial principles. This point is in line with the purpose of CR studies of having an explanatory and thereby also an inherent emancipatory purpose in the social sciences (Bhaskar, 1978).

8.1 Limitations of the study

The thesis discusses explanations for the implementation gap of the FG. However, there is a vastness of possible explanations for implementation outcomes in such a complex setting, and this is certainly not the only explanation of the FG implementation result at the NAV office in the case study. For example, the thesis mainly focuses on mechanisms at the fronline of the implementation system. The mechanisms at this micro-level were strongly influenced by contingencies at all levels of the implementation system, and further elaborations could most probably identify connected mechanisms at macro and meso levels as well. For example, all identified mechanisms were triggered by the implementation instructions related to NPM managerial principles and the logic of administrative accountability, indicating possible mechanisms at both meso and macro levels triggering micro-level mechanisms. In addition, the findings on the role of management had to be left out as a result of the ethical issue of protecting anonymity in a transparent single case study. A stronger focus on the management would probably supplement existing findings with an even deeper understanding of street-level implementation. However, it has not been the intention to provide a complete explanation of the phenomena. Rather, the aim has been to offer develop and propose a potential explanation strongly supported by data and rich in theoretical implications.

Because of the need to narrow down the locus of the study, the target group of the Facilitation Guarantee was left out. Direct interactions between frontline workers and the target group, including potential employers and service recipients, certainly had influenced the implementation outcome. For example, frontline workers often had experienced that potential employers did not see the point of the FG contract. However, the focus of the study was on the 'space before action' (Goldman & Foldy, 2015), not on the interaction with the target group. As such, among the three mechanisms and the four coping strategies, only one coping strategy (adjusting instructions) was one that was used directly towards the service recipients and potential employers. Also, the 'voice' of the service recipient is probably not silenced; taking into consideration the rich descriptions that frontline workers gave about their daily work, including their work with service users through their extensive storytelling.

Representativeness of informants may be an issue. Most of the frontline informants at the case study had been working in NAV for a number of years. It is possible that employees who were not working there anymore had left because of the tough work situation. The informants that were part of this study may be the "stayers" who used coping strategies to deal with the work stress. The implications of this to the findings of the study may be that if also ex-employees had also been part of the study, other coping strategies, such as for instance an exit strategy, could have been drawn out of the data, related to the concepts of exit, voice and loyalty (Hirshman, 1970) which would be another interesting theoretical link to follow. Such coping strategies could also influence the implementation practices of the FG, in that sick leaves and ever-new employees add to the workload of others. However, such a circumstance would possibly result in situational constituencies with even higher workloads, possibly also activating the mechanisms presented.

Another possible limitation of the study is that the initial and special focus on the FG traced through all levels of NAV had to be supplemented with other implementation efforts that the informants at the street-level brought up consistently while talking about the FG. This indicated that the informants associated these efforts closely together, revealing that informants categorized certain implementation efforts together to represent a documentation regime. This insight was helpful for the analysis of the categorization mechanism. However, because the research design gave access to frontline informants *after* already having investigated the implementation process of the FG, the same extent of contextual information about other implementation efforts were not present during the progressive analysis. It may be seen as a weakness that other selected implementation effort included in the study (Job Matching) had not been as thoroughly investigated as the FG. Some information about Job Matching had been discussed with coordinators and managers early in the research. Investigating this selected implementation effort more closely, however, was not prioritized. This was partly because of practical reasons, but also because frontline interviews gave a rather clear understanding of how implementation processes in general were done in the organization through thorough descriptions, almost merging the various implementation efforts into one.

8.2 Possible directions for further research

As mentioned at the end of section 7.1, even when using a multilevel perspective on the analysis of the how and why of street-level implementation, the thesis focuses on mechanisms at the micro-level of the implementation system to find explanations for the implementation outcome. Further research could focus more closely on mechanisms also at the meso and macro levels. For example, mechanisms at the macro-level in the policy field of the implementation system, as well as mechanisms at the managerial levels could be further investigated. However, as discussed in section 4.4, because of the transparency of the research design, keeping the internal anonymity of central research participants at central levels of the organization was dealt with by mostly using the findings from such interviews for investigating the contextual background needed for the analysis of the implementation reactions among the more anonymous frontline workers at the ground level. Findings that can be attributed directly to the interviews at managerial levels of the hierarchy were thereby generalized to any level in the hierarchy, making it hard for readers to trace who said what. In addition, certain findings had to be left out of the thesis. These are findings that imply that the role of management/implementation coordinators in street-level implementation and possible mechanisms triggered by other types of agentic concerns and situational contingencies should be investigated more closely. This could to be done by using a different research design in a future similar study to protect anonymity.

In order to explore if similar mechanisms operate at other or similar contexts, a comparable CR informed case study could be designed, investigating an array of public service organizations where frontline organizational members describe similar documentation and registration principles linked to the NPM principles still said to be riding a vast area of public sector at least in the Western world. Such public frontline members could include teachers, healthcare practitioners, police officers and welfare workers. Maybe, as a result of other situational contingencies and agentic 'constellations of concern', other mechanisms then would emerge to provide other or wider explanations to implementation gaps. In addition, it would be interesting to use a similar research design to investigate street-level implementation and possible implementation gaps in organizations that have embraced different

types of managerial regimes, such as post-NPM principles, at the cost of bureaucratic and NPM principles. How would street-level implementation look like in such circumstances? While this study suggests that the top-down implementation process might be smoother, it might lead to a partial loss of 'resistance-based' innovative practices. More work is needed to establish benefits and costs involved in the complex interplay between structural logic and the endless human quest for meaning.

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PART II

The articles

Article I: Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth (2016). *Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice.* Journal of Comparative Social Work, (2), 1–29.

Article II: Høiland, Gry Cecilie & Klemsdal, Lars. *Institutional logics as tools for maneuvering top-down implementation instructions.* (Submitted 2018).

Article III: Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth (2018). *Frontline public welfare workers' resistance practices as value-driven, employee-based innovation.* Nordic Journal of work place studies, 8 (2).

Article I

Høiland, Gry Cecilie, & Willumsen, Elisabeth (2016). *Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice.* Journal of Comparative Social Work, (2), 1–29.

Article

Understanding implementation in complex public organizations – implication for practice

by

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Abstract

The effective implementation of politically initiated public service innovations to the front-lines of the public service organization, where the innovation is to be applied, is a challenge that both practitioners and researchers struggle to solve. We highlight the importance of analysing contextual factors at several levels of the implementation system, as well as the importance of considering how the practical everyday work situations of the front-line workers influence their application of the innovation in question. We illustrate this by exploring the implementation process of a specific work inclusion measure, looking at its wider context and some of its implementation outcomes at a specific public agency. The intention is to illustrate the significance of considering the contextual complexity influencing implementation work as a reminder for practitioners to take this into account in their planning and practices.

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None

1. Introduction

Implementing centrally initiated innovations into the daily operational practices of front-line workers in public agencies is a challenge that practitioners and researchers have struggled with for more than half a century (Hupe, 2014; Moulton & Sandfort, 2016). Assumptions that initiatives of change from top levels of political authority and leadership will automatically be executed at the front-lines of the organization are a thing of the past (Hill & Hupe, 2014). Implementation and innovation researchers describe the process as complex, multi-levelled and dynamic, but in many cases 'underemphasize[s] the interactions between [the] different levels' in their research agenda (Wong, 2005, p. 2). Approaches that integrate this multi-level complexity into innovation and implementation research have been called for (Hill & Hupe, 2003; Hupe, 2014; Wong, 2005). Current scholarship aims to understand the complexity of innovation and implementation processes by applying various sociological perspectives. This includes a critical realist holistic perspective to help explain social change and phenomena, drawing on a rich understanding of change as happening in the interactions between the structures or contexts of the implementation processes and the people acting within them (Wong, 2005; Mihailescu, Mihailescu & Carlsson, 2013). In addition, a framework of multi-level nested implementation systems of strategic action fields have been applied to analyse the complexity involved (Moulton & Sandfort, 2016; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). Moreover, Wegener has recently stressed the need to consider the drivers of innovation in the everyday practices of service providers (Wegener, 2015). In the context of this article, we use the concept of an implementation system to emphasize the contextual understanding of interacting levels, from the policy level through the organizational level and the operational front-lines. We specifically emphasize the importance of seeing the wider context of the implementation system in relation to the specific work situations and everyday practices of the front-line workers. In the end, the front-line workers are the ones who bring the intended innovations to use or not, and their everyday decisions have important implications for the policy outcome.

The term *innovation* has numerous definitions. Hartley (2005) emphasizes that innovation is not just a new idea, but a new practice. Innovations may originate from policy and can be technical, administrative or organizational in character (Van de Ven, 1986). The purpose of innovation in public services is to meet certain societal

challenges, or to achieve more with the resources available (Hartley, 2005). In order to reach political ambitions through public agency, innovations are often planned at central levels of government, though with the intention to be executed at the front-line of service organizations in which service providers, such as social workers, meet service users. One example can be seen in Norway's major emphasis on employment as the foundation of welfare for individuals and society, in addition to its political goal of improving the quality of work inclusion services for citizens with disabilities or other needs for publicly assisted facilitation to join the work force (Norwegian Ministry of Labour, 2006, 2013; Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2016). The organization responsible for providing work inclusion services to the citizens is NAV. NAV grew from a merger in 2006 between the central government administrations of public employment and national insurance, as well as the local governments' social service administrations (Christensen, Fimreite, & Lægreid, 2014). It consists of the Directorate of Labour and Welfare at the top level, overseeing various NAV units, such as County and Municipal offices at increasingly lower levels of the organization.[1]

The political emphasis on work inclusion has resulted in a myriad of public service innovations, strategies, agreements and measures being implemented through NAV (Norwegian Ministry of Labour, 2012). One such measure, which will be the illustrative focus of this article, is the Facilitation Guarantee (FG).[2] The FG was derived from the *Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on a more Inclusive Working Life,* better known as the Inclusive Working Agreement (Spjelkavik, 2014), between the Norwegian government and their social partners, the employer and employee organizations, all of which are central in the Nordic Work Model (Moene, 2010). The Inclusive Working Agreement was a response to high disability benefit uptake rates and sickness absence found throughout the OECD countries in the 1990s (OECD, 2005). The White Paper, 'On an action plan for people with disabilities 1998-2001' (Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2006, p. 5) stated that, 'It is the government's goal that as many people with disabilities as possible shall be permitted to participate in the labour market. People with disabilities constitute an important labour resource.' Parallel to the White Paper, the Norwegian government initiated a working group to investigate the causes of increased sick leave and the increased uptake of disability benefits (Rambøll management, 2008). As a result of the working group's report, rather than proposing a tightening of benefits as in some other countries, the Norwegian

government set out to give more responsibility to solving these issues to employer and employee organizations (OECD, 2005). Aiming to reduce 'the outflow from the labour market into health-related benefits and early retirement schemes', the government and social partners signed the Inclusive Working Agreement for the period from 2001-2005 'to cooperate on strengthening active measures at the workplace' (OECD, 2005, p. 5). The idea was that the workplace is the primary arena where progress could and should be made (OECD, 2005). The initial Inclusive Working Agreement was evaluated in 2005, with the conclusion that sick leave had in fact decreased in the period from 2001-2005, but that the rate of employment among people with disabilities had not changed (Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2009).

Research on employment and disabilities shows that work inclusion prospects are enhanced when a person is trained on the job as part of the ordinary work force, a so-called Work First strategy, rather than being trained for the job in sheltered activities (Spjelkavik, 2012). An effective Work First strategy requires collaboration between public service agencies and sectors, and importantly includes collaboration between the public employment agency and the ordinary labour market (Spjelkavik, 2014). However, barriers have been found to exist, deterring employers from hiring people who are in need of special adaptations in their job situation (Dyrstad, Mandal, & Ose, 2014). Research on employers' views of barriers against employing people with disabilities finds that elements such as security and relationships of trust with the public employment agency are essential ingredients for promoting work inclusion into the ordinary work force (Gustafsson, 2013; Gustafsson, Peralta, & Danermark, 2014; Schafft & Spjelkavik, 2014b). Responding to employers' need for a secure and trusting relationship with NAV has been found to be of major importance for increasing work inclusion for people with disabilities (Schafft & Spjelkavik, 2014a).

During the first period of the Inclusive Work Agreement, a test project called 'Flexible jobs', with a Work First focus, tried out interventions such as salary substitutions and a close follow-up of employers by public employment agencies in six counties (Rambøll-management, 2008). The evaluation of this project resulted in the introduction of the FG in the renegotiation of a new Inclusive Working Agreement for the period from 2006-2009. The parties agreed on a need to focus on recruiting people with disabilities into ordinary working life. The FG was one of the solutions proposed

to help with employers' need for close contact and collaboration with public agencies during the process of work inclusion for people with disabilities. By ensuring that potential employees and employers would receive guaranteed facilitation and follow-up from public agencies, the risk for employers would be decreased (Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2006). The FG was explained in detail in an attachment to the new Inclusive Working Agreement from 2006-2009. In 2007, the central government decided that the FG would be subject to a one-year test project in five of the original 'flexible jobs' counties. By the end of the period, the FG was merged with an existing, similar work inclusion measure called the 'Guarantee of facilitation' available at the Centre for Assistive Technology and Adaptions that became a part of NAV during the reform. In 2008, the FG was made into a permanent work inclusion measure at the national level of NAV (Riksrevisjonen, 2013). The FG entails a written document for the employer, the employee and NAV that lists contact information and the commitments of the three parties. A central element of the FG is that the employer and employee receive a specific contact person, a front-line worker at the NAV office who is responsible for coordinating the granted measures from NAV, as well as following up and supporting the employer and the employee, both before and during the work inclusion process (Rambøll management, 2008; Riksrevisjonen, 2013).

In 2012, the FG was specifically included as part of a new work inclusion strategy for young people, called the Job Strategy, resulting in a sharp increase in its use (Riksrevisjonen, 2013). An audit by the National Audit Commission on the implementation of the FG, in the period from its introduction through 2012, concluded that it had not been implemented as intended the previous years, and pointed to several shortcomings that needed to be addressed (Riksrevisjonen, 2013). This led to a call for more goal-oriented work by NAV to secure the proper implementation of the FG, and for the local NAV offices to ensure that work on implementing the FG was prioritized.[3] Starting in 2013, NAV increased the efforts to make the FG an integral part of a work inclusion methodology at the local offices. This contributed to the increase in the use of FG started in 2012 due to the Job Strategy (Riksrevisjonen, 2013). However, at the onset of this case study in 2015, seven years after its initial introduction and despite increased implementation efforts, the use of the FG by front-line workers in NAV was still of varying character at many local offices. Specifically in the local NAV office of the case study, after being counted as one of the local offices using the FG

most frequently in one of the most effective counties in terms of the number of FGs used during the period from 2013-2014, the FG usage dropped during 2015 after dedicated implementation efforts had ceased. This may indicate a lack of internalization into the practices at the front-lines of this specific office.

To understand such a relative lack of attainment in incorporating the FG into existing practices in general and particularly at this local office despite considerable implementation efforts, we point to the importance of considering the wider context of an implementation process in addition to the micro-processes involved at the front-line. In this article, we use a critical realist case study approach and draw from a theoretical framework of complex multi-level implementation systems set forth by Sandfort and Moulton (2015) and Moulton and Sandfort (2016). This article is part of a case study exploring innovation processes in a complex public organization using the implementation of the FG in NAV as the empirical illustration. More specifically, the study attempts to find explanations for the extent and the way that the FG was implemented at this selected local NAV office. The study emphasizes both the wider contexts at the macro- and mezzo-levels of the implementation system, as well as specific micro-processes at the level of the everyday practices of the front-line workers who, in the end, are the ones who bring the innovation into their daily work or not. Our aim in this article is to explore selected aspects of the wider context and work situation of the front-line workers in relation to the FG implementation outcome at the local NAV office studied. In line with a critical realist case study approach, we identify one of several possible mechanisms that can help explain the outcome. Our intention is to illustrate the importance of recognizing the contextual complexity in implementation planning and practices.

We start by exploring the FG as a public service innovation, and present a conceptualization of implementation and innovation processes. We then give a brief account of the structural elements of Sandfort and Moulton's (2015) and Moulton and Sandfort's (2016) framework for implementation research. We move on to the methodological section, introducing the project as a critical realist case study and describing the critical realist implications for the study, as well as for the case selection, sampling, data collection and analysis. On the basis of an analysis of the FG implementation system, inspired by Sandfort and Moulton's (2015) and Moulton and

Sandfort's (2016) model, we present some selected parts of its wider context in the policy field and the organizational field, as well as relevant parts of its specific context at the front-line. We trace an example of contextual implications that we found had an influence on the final FG outcomes in the case, namely the outsourcing of work inclusion services to external providers influencing the implementation of the FG at the micro-levels of front-line workers. We discuss the impact that the complexity of the context has on this process, and we conclude with a brief summary, as well as a discussion of the limitations of the study and some implications for practice and further research.

2. An analytical framework for exploring implementation processes in complex organizations

2.1 Innovation, implementation and the innovation process

The FG can be explored as different types of innovation, such as policy innovation leading to process innovation and eventually leading to service innovation (Fagerberg, 2005; Hartley, 2005), all surfacing at different times throughout the innovation cycle (Van de Ven, 1999). First, initiated by the Inclusive Working Agreement and given political authority and funding from the central level of government, the FG starts as a public service innovation, a tool for collaborative planning between the NAV representative, employers and jobseekers, as well as between different units of NAV. Second, the implementation of the FG calls for process innovation, a new way of organizing the work process for front-line NAV staff in their collaborations with employers and jobseekers. Third, this has potential to lead to service improvements as a result of a strengthened cooperation between the parties involved. The result is dependent upon the innovation process taking place, especially the extent to which the 'new', in this case the FG, is actually implemented into existing work inclusion practices.

The term to 'implement' has originally been defined as 'to carry out, accomplish, fulfil, produce, complete' as suggested by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973 pp. xiii-xv), and is commonly considered a crucial part of the innovation process. The innovation process may be defined as 'the development and implementation of new ideas by people who over time engage in transactions with others within an institutional context'

(Van de Ven, 1986, p. 591). This definition includes the wider context as an important element in that process. Scholars often divide the innovation process into various phases (Fagerberg, 2005; Wegener, 2015). These broadly tend to include: 1) the development of an idea for a new solution to an identified problem or need, 2) the implementation of this new idea into existing practices, and 3) the diffusion of the new practice into different organizational settings (Hartley, 2013). Wegener contributes to the model of innovation phases by adding 'drivers for innovation' that make innovation possible or not at the practice level, i.e. the everyday work situation of the service providers (Wegener, 2015). In addition, cyclical phases such as evaluation, adaption to change and the implementation and diffusion of the results of these evaluations are important parts of an innovation process (Van de Ven, 1999). As such, the actual sequence of innovation processes is rather cyclical and messy (Van de Ven, 1999). In this article, we focus on the implementation part of the innovation process and the work situation of the front-line staff, but we also illustrate that it must be seen in relation to the innovation process as a whole.

2.2 The implementation system

To analyse the context of the implementation process as a system consisting of interacting levels of the macro, mezzo and micro (Wong, 2005), we draw on a multi-level conceptualization of implementation systems suggested by Moulton and Sandfort (2016) and Sandfort and Moulton (2015) . This framework takes into account the influence of the innovation itself on its implementation process. It also provides a rich understanding of implementation systems by conceptualizing the multiple interacting levels into three nested fields (Moulton & Sandfort, 2016). Because our aim in this article is to explore the FG's context, we mainly focus on the structural elements of the framework.

Sandfort and Moulton (2015) use the metaphor of water running through a natural three-layered water filtration system in a pond to illustrate how a new policy or public service innovation flows through a multi-level system during its implementation process. The structural elements of the implementation system, as illustrated by Sandfort and Moulton (2015) and Moulton and Sandfort (2016), contain: 1) a policy field at the macro-level, consisting of a bounded network of organizations carrying out the particular policy, 2) an organizational field at the mezzo-level, where the policy is

authorized and operationalized, and 3) a front-level field consisting of the micro-level where the implementation system interacts with the target group to carry out the innovation, specifically through the front-line staff in their everyday practices and interactions. Each layer has unique social structures that act as filters and shape the innovation as it passes through, at the same time the social structures are embedded in the rest of the context (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). Both the strength and flexibility of the social structures, and the innovation itself, influence the implementation processes (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). By emphasizing the role of the innovation itself in affecting the process, as well as analytically differentiating the three levels in the system, Sandfort and Moulton (2016) provide a tool for conceptualizing the complex contexts of implementation at interacting levels. This allows us to more systematically analyse the implementation of the FG.

3. Methodology

The empirical data used in this article is derived from the case study described above. The case study was designed to explore and explain the implementation process of a public service innovation in a complex public sector setting. Requiring an in-depth understanding of the contexts and processes involved, a qualitative intensive case study methodology is appropriate (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Tsang, 2013). A critical realist organizational case study approach, which takes into consideration the broader context in a temporal manner to explain the phenomenon in question (Vincent & Wapshott, 2014; Wynn & Williams, 2012) is especially fitting. Critical realist case studies are equipped with tools to 'investigate complex organizational phenomena in a holistic manner', allowing researchers to 'develop in-depth causal explanations for the outcomes' of these phenomena, taking into account the wider contextual factors that, over time, may have had an influence on its occurrences (Wynn & Williams, 2012). This article mainly reports on the exploratory phase of the case study, where the focus has been to develop a case description in order to identify causal links to be analysed in the explanatory part of the study (Yin, 2013)

3.1 Case selection and sampling

Using a critical realist informed grounded theory approach during data collection and analysis (Belfrage & Hauf, 2016; Kempster & Parry, 2014; Oliver, 2012), the sampling

procedure followed a purposeful and unfolding process over several stages (Patton, 2014), aiming to find a somewhat 'exceptional' (Vincent & Wapshott, 2014) or 'extreme or pathological case' (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2001) that could shed light on causal configurations and mechanisms, which help us understand the implementation process. The sampling process started with a few interviews of key informants in NAV. The FG stood out early in this process as a relevant public service innovation considered important by key informants, but which at the same time showed some intriguing implementation results. The initial key informant interviews led to a natural and purposeful expansion of the sample to informants at several levels of NAV and to relevant documents in a snowballing manner (Patton, 2014). These included leaders and implementation coordinators at different hierarchical levels of the system, as well as front-line staff. Because of the need to limit the study, we chose not to include informants from the target groups of the FG. However, the chosen informants all had important roles in the FG implementation process and provided thick descriptions (Patton, 2014) of their personal interactions and experiences with these targets groups.

The case can be defined as the implementation process of the FG during the time period prior to its inception in 2008 until a new version of the FG was put into effect on 1 January 2016. The case context (Harrison & Easton, 2004) is the field of work inclusion and the hierarchical line of the implementation system, focusing on a specific local NAV office and its specific group of front-line workers responsible for work inclusion with the target group. It also includes the corresponding county NAV office, the top level of the state-run part of NAV (called the 'Directorate of Labour and Welfare') and the central government's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for a wider contextual understanding of the case. An insight into the role of the Ministry in the implementation process is important because of its responsibility for policy formation, and for its collaboration with the Directorate in planning the implementation of the FG at the operational level. The county NAV office had an important influence on the implementation processes and strategies in the local offices under its control, through which the FG is put into practice. The specific local NAV office in the case study was chosen in collaboration with the county office as part of the snowballing method, identified as an 'exceptional' case (Vincent & Wapshott, 2014). The local office chosen was significant because it belongs to a county NAV office that was highly prosperous

in terms of FGs used overall, as well as for the local office's unusually high usage of FGs in the period of 2013-2014 and the drop shortly after.

3.2 Methods of data collection and analysis

For the purpose of triangulation, we used a mixture of different qualitative methods (Patton, 1999). These included: 1) examining documents (Bowen, 2009), e.g. relevant policy documents, audits, internal organizational reports and secondary data sources in order to acquire an insight into the context and history of the work inclusion field, 2) observations of case meetings of the two teams of front-line workers at the selected local office (Bøllingtoft, 2007) to gain insight into the practices and work situations of the front-line staff, and 3) individual interviews (Smith & Elger, 2012) with key informants in leadership and implementation coordinator positions, plus front-line workers, to attain insight into the implementation context, process and drivers at the different levels of the work inclusion field. The documents were examined and relevant sections extracted. The interviews were carried out using a semi-structural interview approach, with thematic interview guides being constantly revised as the insights in the field deepened (Oliver, 2012). By continuous updating of the interview guides to fit the informants' focus as the research progressed, the findings emerged in a constant dialogue and continuous analysis of the empirical data (Oliver, 2012). After each interview and case meeting observations, memos were jotted down and added during the analysis process. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and reviewed together with the observation notes and relevant documents. The data analysis of the exploratory phase of the case study (Yin, 2013) relevant to this article is primarily focused on the initial memos, analytical notes and document readings continuously prepared in the initial phase of the study to gain insight into the context and history of the FG. The empirical illustrations used in the article are findings that emerged during this continuous process in the early phase of the case study. Key informants have validated central parts of the case summary and findings during the process of analysis (Healy & Perry, 2000; Yin, 2013).

4. The FG and its wider context

To help understand the implementation outcome of the FG at this local NAV office, we emphasize the importance of analysing the FG itself, and how it fits into the context at the different levels. In this section, we consider important elements of the FG and

selected aspects of the structural contexts at the macro-, mezzo- and micro-levels of the implementation system drawn from the case study. In particular, we draw on Sandfort and Moulton's (2015; Moulton & Sandfort, 2016) framework of multi-level implementation systems. First, we present some central traits of the macro-level work inclusion policy field to which the FG belongs, including important public and private actors in the field, and the policy landscape of the FG. We then present some selected points from the organizational level, focusing on the structure and selected contextual influences, such as a prioritization of resources at the mezzo-level. Lastly, we discuss some selected contextual findings at the micro-level and aspects of the work situation of the front-line staff. More specifically, we illustrate how the macro-level condition of outsourcing work inclusion services, the mezzo-level resource allocation and micro-level front-line coping strategies all combine to influence the outcome of the implementation effort at the local NAV office in the case study.

4.1 The work inclusion policy field of Norway

In any implementation setting there are various actors who, because of their interest and expertise, engage in- or have an influence on the implementation of new policy or public service interventions (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). Norway is a strong welfare state with a wealthy economy, and with important regulations between employer and employee organizations, as well as an increasing focus on a Work First strategy. Though divergent, political parties in Norway are focused on preserving the welfare state through prioritizing high levels of employment. Publicly funded work inclusion services are allocated from within NAV itself, not to mention being outsourced to either publicly owned labour market rehabilitation services, non-profit service providers or for-profit entrepreneurs. In addition to these various service providers, the work inclusion field in Norway consists of governmental and municipal bodies, both political and administrative, employer and employee organizations, and as user organizations (Duell & Tergeist, 2009) that protect the rights of citizens with various disabilities. These actors all have different expertise, legitimate authority, influence and interests (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015) that they bring to the work inclusion issue.

The different actors in the work inclusion policy field in Norway therefore all have an interest in how public service innovations are shaped, how resources are allocated, which user groups are prioritized and the nature of the innovations in focus (Moulton

& Sandfort, 2016; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). The different roles, authorities and interests of these stakeholders may be political, administrative, legislative, operational or financial, and their activities and collaborations all influence different implementation processes ((Moulton & Sandfort, 2016; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). As a central example for our illustration in this article, the recent NAV reform led to a proliferation of work inclusion service providers in the market (Andreassen & Aars, 2015). These providers have an interest in the different work inclusion alternatives available to front-line staff in NAV because their existence as service providers relies on getting work from NAV. A substantial amount of money is allocated every year through the National Budget for the procurement of these work inclusion services (Fjeldstad, 2016). If the services bought are not used, the legitimacy of NAV and its ability to maintain its mandate will be brought into question.

4.1.1 The FG in the context of the work inclusion policy field of Norway

***An analysis of the policy field of an implementation system should include an overview of the legal grounding and funding streams for the innovation in question, as well as existing and potentially competing or complementary measures to that specific intervention (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). The FG is not statured by law, but instead is formalized through guidelines and propositions from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and acted upon through guidelines drawn by the Directorate. As we have seen, it was originally initiated from the political collaboration in the Inclusive Working Agreement between central government, employer organizations and employee organizations. The FG is funded through the annual National Budget approved by the Norwegian Parliament. In response to demands from the elected governments and its ministry, the Directorate continuously monitors the use of the FG through specific performance measures.

The context of competing and complementary measures of the FG must be understood in relation to the fact that the local NAV offices responsible for putting the FG into practice also function as partnerships between the state and the municipalities. Some of the alternative work inclusion programmes available to front-line workers are financed by the municipality, such as the 'Qualification Programme', which delivers work inclusion measures to the target groups internally in NAV, or outsources the services to external service providers. Other work inclusion measures are financed

directly by the state, such as the 'Work Assessment Support programme', with work inclusion efforts followed up internally in NAV through measures such as 'salary-substitution' and 'work training places', or often outsourced to external service providers. The emerging focus on a Work First strategy and attention to the needs of the employers over recent decades, as well as the NAV reform of 2006, have resulted in an increasing number of available work inclusion measures from both the state and municipality to front-line workers in NAV. According to our document review, these included approximately 40 initiatives for work inclusion purposes in 2015.[4]

Being a state measure and intended to promote collaboration between employer, employee and NAV during work inclusion efforts, the FG can be used in conjunction with work inclusion programmes from the municipality or state, measures that are either internally provided or outsourced to other service providers. The formal intention is that the NAV front-line worker writes an FG contract together with the employer *or* the outsourced service provider and the employer, plus the employee early in the process, listing all the work inclusion measures that NAV will be providing for that specific case, as well as contact information, a follow-up plan and an overview of the rights and responsibilities of the different parties involved. As such, the intention is that the FG is complementary to the other measures available, functioning as a tool to support the collaboration between the different parties, in addition to giving the employer the crucial security (Schafft & Spjelkavik, 2014a) that NAV will coordinate and follow-up when necessary. As we will see, however, the use of externally provided services was not seen as compatible with using the FG in the local NAV office in the case study. Some of the reasons for this may be understood by analysing the organizational context at the mezzo-level of the implementation system.

4.2 The organizational field of NAV

The organizational hierarchy of the public work inclusion field in Norway starts at the central level of the Government. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has a responsibility to ensure that labour and welfare policies correspond to the aims set out by the Norwegian government. The Ministry's responsibility also includes defining the outcomes they are aiming to reach, as well as reporting on the results from the previous year through a continuous dialogue with the Directorate. The Ministry is responsible

for the policy formation, and has the formal responsibility for laying down the priorities and implementation strategies to be put into practice by NAV.

NAV was established in 2006 as a result of the largest public reform of recent times in Norway (Christensen, Fimreite, & Lægreid, 2014). The purpose was to design a new public organization that could offer a 'strong structure for early intervention and co-ordinated support' by 'integration of the public employment service, the social insurance and parts of the municipal social assistance into [one] Labour and Welfare Administration' (OECD, 2013, p. 5) An important consequence of the NAV reform was the establishment of local NAV offices working as one-stop shops with the purpose of providing citizens with all their labour and welfare needs through one office and one front-line worker (Andreassen & Aars, 2015). Structurally, the Directorate is at the top hierarchical level of the state-run part of NAV, and is divided into different lines of command, including a service department, a benefits department and an accounting department, as illustrated in the organizational chart in the Appendix. The service department, relevant in this study, includes 19 NAV county offices. These offices are responsible for the local one-stop shop NAV offices at the municipal level in partnership with 428 municipalities (NAV, 2013). The specific NAV local office in this study is organized into different divisions at the front-line level, serving distinctive target groups according to their levels of need for work inclusion facilitation. Especially for this case study, one division of front-line workers is responsible for the work inclusion efforts for people who have a specific need for facilitation and follow-up because of socio-economic or health-related reasons.

In addition to the local NAV offices that work directly with the target groups, NAV consists of several units at the county level with different expertise, which support the local offices on particular issues. These include units with expertise on the local labour market (NAV Market), expertise on working with companies that are voluntarily part of the Inclusive Working Agreement (NAV Inclusive Work Place Support Centre) and expertise on health-related challenges and work inclusion adjustments (NAV Employment Counselling) (NAV, 2013). In addition, a separate division in the service department with units in each of the 19 counties has a special expertise on assistive technology and work facilitation for people with disabilities (NAV Assistive Technology and Adaptions). Together, these units play various roles in the implementation of work

inclusion measures depending on the implementation strategies set forth at the Directorate level and the county levels of NAV. The NAV Inclusive Work Place Support Centre and the NAV Assistive Technology and Adaptions are particularly involved in the role of implementing the FG (Riksrevisjonen, 2013).

The Directorate of Labour and Welfare, the county and local NAV offices with municipal partnerships, as well as these specialized units, are all part the NAV organizational field at the mezzo-level of the work inclusion sector. The NAV local offices are where the innovations are put into practice with the intended target groups. We found that the implementation strategies of various work inclusion measures and innovations are planned and operationalized at the organizational level through leadership and communication channels, the integration of information systems, resource allocation, and through prioritizations at the specific NAV county or local office level. Since the FG was made permanent in 2008, a coordinator at the Directorate has been organizing the implementation effort through allocated FG coordinators at each of the 19 county NAV offices. Their responsibility has been to support the implementation of the FG at the local NAV offices in their respective counties (Riksrevisjonen, 2013). Together with other relevant coordinators and leadership at the different levels of NAV, these FG coordinators communicate the intentions of the FG and how it is to be used and prioritized in work inclusion practices at the local level. At the specific NAV county office in the case study, especially from 2012, the FG was communicated from the highest level of leadership as very important, and to be used in all 'work training' cases with a Work First approach, both those that front-line workers followed up internally, and those outsourced to external service providers. The use of FGs at the local NAV offices was monitored by the county FG coordinator, and evaluations of quantity and quality were reported back to the local offices annually in order to provide examples of good FG work, and to make necessary adjustments to the progress.

Contextual influences at the organizational level that we found through the empirical enquiries at the specific NAV municipal office include the way the resources were distributed and prioritized by local leadership, such as the number of service recipients in each front-line worker's portfolio, the organization of work between the front-line workers and the organization of the workers' responsibilities for each service recipient. In addition these include work inclusion practices and collaborations among the front-

line workers, work inclusion measures and service providers usually chosen at this front-line division and the local leader's communication of which performance measures to focus on at any given time. As an example, this specific office had a strong focus on following up people who had been out of work for a long time through the municipal 'Qualification programme'. By trying out different ways of organizing work directed at this target group, communicating a strong focus on this work at a leadership level and providing flexibility in the use of resources in this municipal programme, the office had some very good results for this specific target group. At the time of the case study, the selected division at this local office was organized into two mixed teams, consisting of front-line staff working with the municipal programme and staff working with a state-run 'Work Assessment Support Programme'. The state-run programme was based on a diagnosis-centred and medical assessment of work ability, while the municipal programme was more flexible and targeted people with socio-economic or health related needs for support. The staff in the state-run programme had tight assessment schedules, while the municipal programme was organized in a more flexible way. At this specific NAV office, we found that the front-line staff in the municipal programme had a substantially lower number of service recipients in their portfolio compared to staff in the state-run programme. This meant that staff working on the municipal programme had more time and resources for direct follow-up. The 'Work Assessment Support Programme' workers had tighter deadlines, less time for each service user and tended to more extensively outsource the work inclusion follow-up to external service providers.

4.3. The front-line of NAV
Communication at the various levels of the FG implementation, as well as the evaluation efforts by the FG coordinators and the resources allocated to the different work inclusion programmes, are all examples of contextual influences at the organizational level of the implementation system, which may have a direct or indirect impact on whether front-line staff implement the intended change in their everyday practices of micro-level interactions with colleagues and with the target groups. The specific work situation of the front-line workers had an important influence on the implementation outcome at the end of the line. As the running example shows, the intent at the levels of policymakers, leadership and FG coordinators was that the FG should be used in all types of work inclusion efforts where ordinary employers were

involved in order to formalize the relationship between NAV, the employer and the employee. This also included using the FG when Work First follow-up services were outsourced to external public, non-profit or for-profit work inclusion service providers in order to secure continuity for the employee and security from NAV for the employer. In the preliminary analysis of case-meeting observations and interviews, we found that the practical understanding at the micro-level of when to use the FG was different at the front-line in the specific local office in the case study than centrally intended. The front-line staff described challenging work situations and a strong desire to provide the best services to their service recipients in compliance with the resources available to them. They did not see the practical point of using the FG when outsourcing the follow-up to external service providers. In addition to making sure that the recipients were given a service provider who had the time and resources to follow up, and who was specialized in the field, as well as having access to an extended network of employers, a crucial point of the outsourcing, at least as many front-line workers saw it, was to cut down on their own work load to cope with their demanding work situation. The external service providers had the role of following up the employer and employee, so using the FG for outsourced cases seemed purposeless to the loaded NAV front-line worker. We found this to be the case, especially for front-line staff responsible for the state-run programme.

5. Implications of the contextual complexity for implementation

Factors linked to the innovation to be implemented, its original intentions and use, in combination with contextual factors at all levels of the implementation system, will eventually influence the implementation outcomes at the front-line level of the organization (Moulton & Sandfort, 2016; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). When we analyse the FG as both a public service innovation being shaped by actors at the different levels of the implementation system, and as a new process for delivering a service that needs to be blended with existing practices in the front-line, we see that the innovation itself and the technicalities surrounding it will affect the implementation process and outcome. Moreover, the possibility of incorporating the innovation into everyday practices is dependent upon contextual factors at all levels, especially those directly constituting the specific work situation of the front-line staff. Using the metaphor of the water filtration system (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015), the FG as a public service innovation has been filtered through a work inclusion policy, where several actors with

various interests and authorities moulded its development. Illustratively, market conditions at a macro socio-economic level have created a work inclusion industry consisting of both private and non-profit sectors, adding strong actors in the policy field with diverse authority and interests. The policy field's budgeting structures and political priorities placed on NAV at the mezzo-level of the organizational field cause NAV to continue the outsourcing of work inclusion services to these private and non-profit actors. In addition, the policy intent has been for the FG to be applied, both when using internal follow-up and with external work inclusion providers. When the FG further filtered through the organizational field of NAV consisting of a strong, hierarchical structure and several levels of leadership, focused on in the case study, the intention for the FG to be used in both internal and external work inclusion cases remained. However, at the desks of the front-line staff in the local NAV office, the FG appeared as only applicable with cases of internal follow-up. We found that the original intention at the policy level, and the organizational level for the FG to also be used in outsourced work inclusion cases, did not match the practical application at the front-line level in the study.

The mismatch between the policy intent of the FG and its practical use implies that implementing the FG into the everyday practices of the front-line workers requires an understanding of how the innovation fits into their specific work situations. Understanding the context of the current work situation, and the practices of these front-line workers, may provide insight into factors that influence their decision of which work inclusion methods to use. Compared to the ones working with the municipal 'Qualification Programme', the front-line workers responsible for the state-run 'Work Assessment Support Programme' had a larger portfolio of service recipients, as well as stricter deadlines, thus leaving fewer resources and less time for direct follow-up work with employers and service recipients. The outsourcing of follow-up services to external providers was a widespread practice among these staff members, both because they did not see themselves as having enough time to give good quality follow-up, and because outsourcing services freed up time for them to cope with their own work situation, e.g. in meeting necessary deadlines in the state-run programme. As a result, staff responsible for the state-run programme did not see the point of using the FG for outsourced services. Outsourcing the work inclusion services also implied outsourcing the responsibility of following up and working with the employer, leaving

the FG redundant in the eyes of many front-line workers. The mismatch between the intention of the FG at higher levels of the implementation system, and the way it was practised at the front-line, shows how interests and policy intentions, prioritization and resource allocations at the macro- and mezzo-levels of the system affect the implementation of public service innovations at the operational level where the actual application of the innovation is to take place.

We have provided some insight into the FG implementation system (Moulton & Sandfort, 2016; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015) in the study, including parts of: 1) the wider context at the macro-level of the work inclusion policy field and the policy context of the FG, 2) the mezzo-level of the organizational field of NAV, and 3) the micro-level of the work situations of the front-line staff at a specific local NAV office. This understanding of the context in which the implementation occurs is at the heart of using a critical realist case study approach to explore and explain a social phenomenon. Insights into the history and context of the innovation in focus, and links between these and the context of macro-, mezzo- and micro-levels of implementation, allow us to find feasible causal tendencies or mechanisms that can explain some of the outcomes of the FG in the case study at the local office. By exploring the context at the three levels, the work situations of the front-line staff and the practice of outsourcing, we point to one plausible explanation for why the FG is not internalized at this specific front-line office, namely that the use of outsourcing has an influence on its implementation. We maintain that this analysis demonstrates some of the contextual complexity that needs to be considered when planning and practising implementation work. The front-line exclusion of FGs when outsourcing services is not even close to a complete explanation of the FG implementation outcome at the NAV office in the case study. It does, however, illustrate how contextual factors at the macro- and mezzo-levels of an implementation system impact on its application at the micro-level of case-to-case decisions, which eventually accumulate into its implementation (or otherwise) at the organizational level.

6. Conclusion
We have illustrated how the FG as a specific public service innovation has moved through several levels of leadership, including the political, legislative and then operational levels of NAV, finally ending up in the hands of front-line staff at a local

office. The action of 'carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing, completing' (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973 pp. xiii-xv) has to occur at the micro-levels in the local NAV office, where front-line staff to a greater or lesser degree put the intended change into practice, case by case, in their interaction with the target groups, and in response to the work situation in which they find themselves. To understand implementation outcomes in these complex processes, it is necessary to analyse them in relation to the multi-level, nested contexts, which influence the micro-level processes in the work situations of the front-line staff. In particular, we explored how the outsourcing of work inclusion services at the local office of the case study seemed to compete directly with the application of the FG. This can be understood as a result of the way the FG has been applied by front-line workers to fit their practical everyday work situation, despite the original intentions at central levels of the implementation system. We pointed out that the practical everyday work situation accountable for the mismatch is shaped by decisions about resource allocation, priorities and performance measures at the levels of leadership in the organizational field. As such, we use this as an illustration of the complexity involved in implementation work, and hold that analysing the implementation process in relation to its wider context using a critical realist lens, allows us to understand how the character of the intervention itself, its context and individual decisions by front-line workers may act as causal mechanisms to influence the final outcome. Such an exploratory phase of a case study is of substantial importance in finding explanations for 'why things are as they are' (Easton, 2010, p. 119) in the implementation process, as well as when planning implementation work.

6.1 Limitations of the study and implications for practice

In this article, we have given a narrow account of the inception of the FG and some insights into important features of its implementation system. Several important elements of the innovation process and the implementation system are left out. Also, individual decisions and implementation strategies at the various leadership and coordinator levels of the implementation system are not emphasized. This is primarily to simplify our example used for this article. Our intention is to give a simplified illustration of the importance of analysing the wider context, in addition to the specific work situation into which a public service innovation is to be applied, in order to find explanations for implementation outcomes. To demonstrate this, we discussed: 1) the demands for using outsourced services from the policy and organizational fields, 2) the

demanding workloads and limited resources originating at the organization field, and 3) how the practical experience of the work situation at the micro-level at the front-lines became amalgamated to give one (of many) plausible explanation(s) for the limited implementation of the FG at the NAV office in question. We are not proposing that this is *the* explanation of the FG implementation result at the NAV office in the case study. But it does illustrate the complexity involved in implementation work, and may serve as a reminder to implementation practitioners at all levels to consider the wider context, as well as the specific work situations of front-line staff in their implementation work. As such, we have also provided some tools for analysing the contextual setting by exemplifying our point in the application of the three-level implementation system (Moulton & Sandfort, 2016; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015) in our illustration.

6.2. Implications for further research

In this article, we have focused on a limited illustration of one possible mechanism explaining the implementation outcomes of the FG at the specific NAV office in the case study. This mechanism, in line with a critical realist approach, cannot be seen in isolation from other mechanisms that combined will provide a more complete explanation of the implementation outcome (Wynn & Williams, 2012). It will be fruitful to tease out other plausible explanations for the implementation outcome in this specific NAV office, in addition to analysing the roles of the FG coordinators and leaders at various levels of the organizational field, and the roles of the front-line staff in this specific implementation process. We propose that using an in-depth explorative single case study of a specific public service innovation, particularly explored through the lens of a critical realist case study, is of substantial value for researching innovation and implementation processes as complex, multi-levelled and dynamic without 'underemphasiz[ing] the interactions between the different levels' (Wong, 2005, p. 2) of the implementation system (Moulton & Sandfort, 2016; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). We maintain that similar studies may be repeated for new insights into various policy fields; or for the purpose of comparison could be conducted with different public service innovations in the same contextual setting, or with the same public service innovation in different contexts.

Endnotes

1. See appendix for an organizational chart (NAV, 2016).

2. The translated name, 'Facilitation Guarantee' from the Norwegian 'Tilretteleggingsgaranti', is somewhat limited. The Norwegian name implies both making any necessary adaptations in the work place, as well as facilitating the relationship between the employer and the employee. In the following, we call the Facilitation Guarantee FG for simplification purposes.

3. The report also resulted in a call for an evaluation of the FG by the Control Committee of the Norwegian Parliament, eventually leading to a revision process of the FG from 2014, and ending in a revised version put into effect on 1 January 2016. This case study is focusing on the implementation process of the FG up until the revised version was put into effect.

4. Among the reasons for the revised FG of 1.1.2016 was a tidying up of the jungle of work-inclusion measures that have grown forth in the last few decades.

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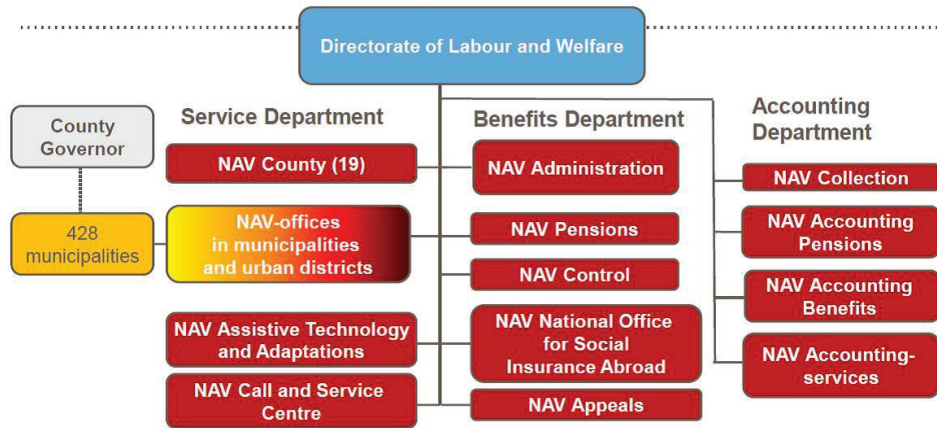
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Appendix

Organisational chart for NAV

Directorate of Labour and Welfare

County Governor

428 municipalities

Service Department

- NAV County (19)
- NAV-offices in municipalities and urban districts
- NAV Assistive Technology and Adaptations
- NAV Call and Service Centre

Benefits Department

- NAV Administration
- NAV Pensions
- NAV Control
- NAV National Office for Social Insurance Abroad
- NAV Appeals

Accounting Department

- NAV Collection
- NAV Accounting Pensions
- NAV Accounting Benefits
- NAV Accounting-services

■ + ■ = the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service

■ + ■ + ■ = the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration

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Article II (withheld from online publication)

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Article III

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Resistance-driven Innovation?
Frontline Public Welfare Workers' Coping with Top-down Implementation[1]

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ABSTRACT

Employee-based innovation researchers point to the important role of welfare workers in public service innovations. Bureaucratic and New Public Management inspired managerial agendas, still widely present in Nordic welfare organizations have been tied to an increase in feelings of inauthenticity and use of coping strategies by welfare workers. At the same time, post-NPM principles of collaboration and service tailoring are more in line with professional values of welfare workers. Drawing on a critical realist informed case study comprising qualitative interviews and observations in the Norwegian public welfare and employment services, we describe types of revision and resistance practices used by frontline employees when faced with top-down implementation instructions, linking them to different types of innovations. The article adds to literatures on employee-based innovation by conceptualizing resistance practices as value-motivated resistance-driven innovation that may have a function of calibrating public value creation in welfare organizations submerged in bureaucratic and NPM-inspired managerial regimes.

Introduction

Could coping strategies used by frontline welfare employees to resist centrally initiated implementation instructions be conceptualized as a type of employee-based innovation, potentially benefitting the organization that initiated the implementation instructions in the first place? A significant role of Nordic public welfare organizations is to provide essential welfare services to citizens. For several decades, public sectors in Western nations have been affected by the influence of overlapping governing paradigms (Kamp et al. 2013; Torfing et al. 2016), followed by ever-increasing focus on the innovative capacities of the public sector and the important role of innovation in solving the 'wicked problems' of society (Hartley 2005). As a result, considerable

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amounts of innovation in policy, services, and frontline work processes have been initiated by central levels of government with the intention that they be implemented top-down and disseminated at the frontlines of public service organizations. However, the gap between the intention of centrally initiated implementation instructions and their actual application or lack thereof in the practice field is a puzzle at the core of much academic interest (Hill & Hupe 2014). Understanding the conditions and the practices of the employees at ground levels in public welfare organizations are vital for implementation studies. It is at this level of organizations that new policies and services meet the target groups and are meant to be applied. Public workers perform their work-tasks under the constraints of bureaucracy, scarce resources (Lipsky 1980) and with constant instructions to implement centrally initiated new work processes and documentation routines (Thunman 2016). Such instructions, inspired by remnants of a New Public Management (NPM) in a bureaucratic managerial regime in much of the public sector, represent a significant part of the daily work of staff at the frontlines of Nordic welfare services and are found to weaken professional autonomy and the workers' opportunity to make choices according to professional ethics and values (Kamp et al. 2013).

Literatures emphasizing employees' sense of autonomy (Ackroyd & Thompson 1999) and dignity (Karlsson 2012) as crucial factors in employees' work life, hold that employees' reactions to managerial instructions that do not give them the possibility to exercise their autonomy in accordance with their professional dignity, may lead to organizational misbehavior and resistance. Resistance and coping strategies in Lipsky-inspired (1980) policy implementation studies are often problematized as causing deviations from managerial intention. To the best of our knowledge, however, the questions of whether and how coping strategies, in the form of resistance by frontline workers in dealing with top-down implementation instructions may be conceptualized as employee-based innovation, are scarce. Several bottom-up innovation literatures focus on invisible or improvised innovations that emerge from work practices among employees in general (e.g., Ellström 2010; Smith 2017) and frontline public employees specifically (Fuglsang 2010; Lippke & Wegener 2014). These often emphasize learning as a core prerequisite of such practice-based innovations. Employee-driven innovation literatures highlight the role of intentional innovation activities driven by employees (Høyrup 2010). They often focus on the role of management in facilitating employee-driven innovation. However, innovations in work practices by workers coping with everyday work challenges may also be counterproductive to managerial goals. This echoes the findings of Lipsky-inspired scholars on coping strategies of resistance among what he calls 'street-level bureaucrats'. Whereas, in much innovation literature, explicit, planned, and managerial-friendly innovation activities have been in focus, this article attempts to add to literature on employee-based innovations that emerge from practice and work routines and that are seemingly counteracting managerial intentions. Our findings support the academic interest in how to achieve intentional implementation at ground levels (Hill & Hupe 2014). By turning the dilemma around, we propose that coping strategies used by frontline workers to resist certain top-down implementation instructions may be conceptualized as a value-based resistance-driven innovation, a complementary type of employee-based innovation that emerges as a by-product of coping and creates value for the core mission of the organization. This alternative take on employee-based innovation suggests that value-driven work adaptions may be a core function of innovation among employees in certain circumstances, just as learning is in others.

We study these possibilities through a qualitative, critical realist informed case study (Easton 2010). The study explores the top-down implementation process of a specific work inclusion method called the Facilitation Guarantee (FG) within the Norwegian Employment and Welfare Services (NAV). This article mainly draws on the part of the case study that explored the reception of the FG in a selected frontline office of NAV through observations of case meetings and semi-structured interviews with frontline workers and their local leaders during a 4-month period in 2015. The focus was the frontline workers' reflections upon their work situations, as well as their experience and reactions to top-down implementation instructions the previous years. Drawing on a critical realist informed methodology (e.g., Danermark et al. 2001), the empirical findings at the office were analyzed in the light of the wider contextual understanding that the full case study provided. The aim of this article is twofold. First, it is to present types of coping strategies by frontline employees when dealing with a constant flow of implementation instructions that informants categorized as belonging to a 'documentation-regime'. Second, it is to analyze these types of coping strategies through a lens of employee-based innovation theories and to discuss the potential of conceptualizing resistance practices as a complementary type of employee-based innovation that is value-motivated and that has a function of potentially calibrating public value creation in public service organizations submerged in documentation regimes. We have structured the article as follows. We first elaborate our conceptual framework. We then present the research methodology including the case setting and selection. Next, we present our empirical findings, analyzing the frontline workers' coping strategies and discussing their innovative potential. We conclude with some final remarks, contributions, and theoretical insights of the article.

Conceptual framework

Management principles, professional values, dignity, and coping strategies

Incorporating contextual factors into the analysis of implementation practices at the frontline of public welfare services is crucial for understanding how and why frontline workers respond to top-down implementation instructions in the way they do (Hupe & Buffat 2013). The work situations of employees in frontline positions in public service organizations are infused with complexities of societal and organizational pressures and expectations (Schott et al. 2015). It has been suggested that western public welfare sectors, and the public and academic debates on welfare systems and governance, are increasingly moving away from NPM principles of performance management and market-based efficiency orientation (Lægreid & Christensen 2007). Post-NPM trends have been noted (Fossestøl et al. 2015), which emphasize employee-driven service innovation, collaboration, user-participation, and coproduction as important agendas for meeting the changing demands for welfare services (Torfing et al. 2016). In the midst of this, however, Nordic public welfare organizations often still contain elements of both traditional bureaucratic and market-based NPM managerial principles (Kamp et al. 2013). For example, high demands from top-levels of welfare organizations to implement NPM-like documentation and registration procedures at the operational levels are strongly present in the sector

(Fossestøl et al. 2015; Thunman 2016), as is the standardization of services in line with bureaucratic principles (Kamp et al. 2013).

Frontline workers in welfare services are often inclined to abide by values and ethical standards of their profession (Kjørstad 2005; Thunman 2013; Tummers et al. 2009). Frontline workers, in the field of social work, are for examples inclined to abide by the value of 'service' based upon the ethical principle that 'social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems' (NASW 2017). This can be seen in a desire to provide individualized and tailor-made services for their recipients and are important bases for how welfare workers perform their work. This may possibly collide, however, with bureaucratic rationality (Kjørstad 2005) and management principles that favor standardized solutions, quantifiable outcome measurements, and constant implementation demands and new ways of working (Kjørstad 2005; Schott et al. 2015; Tummers et al. 2009) that are not necessarily adding to the value of 'service'. The contextual conditions brought by management reforms that have characterized public sectors of Western nations for decades are found to weaken professional autonomy and the workers' opportunity to make choices according to professional ethics and standards (Kamp et al. 2013). The reduction of employee autonomy threatens the important sense of dignity at work (Karlsson 2012). A stem of literature that emphasize the workers' sense of autonomy (Ackroyd & Thompson 1999) and dignity (Karlsson 2012) as crucial factors of work satisfaction claims that the workers' reactions to a mismatch between their sense of autonomy and dignity versus managerial principles may lead to organizational misbehavior and resistance. Seen in this light, bureaucratic and NPM-style managerial pressures that characterize the work environment of frontline staff in Nordic welfare services are likely to come into conflict with their professional standards of work ethics and values. This may lead to an experience of not being able to deliver according to their professional values at work, opposing their sense of autonomy and thereby dignity in that work, and consequently may lead to resistance (Karlsson 2012).

In this paper, we see this potential experience of mismatch between professional values and managerial instructions in the light of the policy implementation literature of Lipsky's (1980) dilemma of the 'street-level bureaucrat'. Street-level bureaucrats are the frontline workers who interact directly with the public they serve, and make decisions about providing services to the citizens, putting new policies into action. Lipsky (1980) emphasizes how they use discretion and coping strategies when dealing with demanding clients and scarce organizational resources. This leads to staff 'adjusting' centrally induced policies, which gives them a role as the 'actual' policy makers who heavily influence the implementation outcome. Lipsky and scholars after him have established an array of behaviors that frontline staff uses for coping with these restraining factors in their work environment. The concept of 'coping' is often associated with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984, p. 9) constructive or adaptive strategies to tolerate or minimize stress or conflict. Seen in the context of managerial pressures characterizing the work environment of frontline staff that is likely to conflict with their work ethics and values, coping strategies may be used for upholding these values and thus their dignity at work. Coping strategies, such as resisting standardization, documentation, and registration demands, can thus be described as frontline workers' coping with the discrepancy they face between their own values/ethics and the managerial demands to their work (Thunman 2016). This may be discussed in light of resistance as a consequence of

the workers' fundamental need to claim their professional dignity (Karlsson 2012) and autonomy (Ackroyd & Thompson 1999) in such an organizational setting.

Innovation theory and employee-based innovation

Coping strategies among 'street-level bureaucrats' are often seen as problematic to the intended implementation outcome in Lipsky-inspired literature. Research on employees' role in innovation processes, however, often does not problematize this issue. Rather, it focuses on types of innovation initiated at ground level, such as employee-driven innovation (Høyrup 2010) bricolage and invisible innovation (Fuglsang 2010), practice-based innovation (Ellström 2010), work(er)-driven innovation (Smith 2017), and barriers and facilitators of such innovations (T. Wihlman et al. 2014). Central criteria in definitions of innovation are that innovation relates to a specific change that is new for those involved and that the idea is put into practice (Fuglsang & Pedersen 2011). In addition, the new practice should lead to, or at least be intended to lead to, some kind of value creation or improvement at the system level for it to be defined as innovation (Fuglsang & Pedersen 2011), and specifically to public value creation in the case of innovation in the public sector (Hartley 2005). Employee-driven innovation specifically has been defined 'as the development and implementation of new organizational forms, service concepts, modes of operation, and service processes in which the ideas, knowledge, time, and creativity of employees are actively used' (Klitmøller et al. 2007; referred by T. Wihlman et al. 2014, p. 162).

The definition above shows how investigations into the innovation practices of employees view bottom-up innovation as important for improvement work in organizations, and implicitly sees the critical creative potential of ground-level employees (Amundsen et al. 2011). It also illustrates an inherent view that employee-driven innovation is something management is actively aware of and it highlights the role of management in facilitating such innovation. Whereas literature on how to facilitate employee involvement in innovation have focused on explicit and planned innovation activities, some scholars highlight employee-based innovation in day-to-day work that is not deliberately facilitated by management. Lippke and Wegener (2014, p. 379) describe the concept of 'everyday innovation', arguing that 'innovative potentials are extensively bounded in work situations where problems must be solved and new needs emerge'. Such practice-based innovation is tied to learning as part of the work practice of employees (Ellström 2010, p. 28). Frontline staff take part in invisible innovations in their everyday work by 'bricolaging' through the adjustment of organizational protocols and 'intended ways of doing things' necessary for solving the situation at hand (Fuglsang 2010, p. 74). As such, public sector employee-based innovation emerges incrementally as a by-product of the workers' day-to-day learning and solving of their work-tasks, and especially when this leads to new practices, which add to the value of the organization they serve. Yakhlef and Essén (2013) illustrate empirically how care workers cope with the demands of their work and link the care workers' 'in-situ bodily practices of resistance' toward tensions of bureaucratic rules and requirements, to a type of practice innovation (Yakhlef & Essén 2013). By doing so, they propose an innovative potential in resistance practices that may be counterproductive to managerial goals. The study does not link such resistance practices and bodily innovation practices to literature on

employee-based innovation, but the results are supportive of Lipsky's theorization that the coping behaviors of street-level bureaucrats make it possible for public bureaucracies to meet long-term goals (Lipsky 2010, p. 15–25 referred to in Thunman 2016). We see here the theoretical possibility of establishing a link between resistance that is seemingly counterproductive and employee-based innovation, which, in the long run, may create value to the organization. In this article, we specifically ask if a conceptualization of frontline workers' practices to resist top-down implementation may be an alternative type of employee-based innovation, driven by the inherent need to follow professional ethics and values in the frontline workers quest for professional autonomy and dignity in their work in bureaucratic and NPM-inspired public welfare organizations.

Research methodology

To understand the way frontline public service workers respond to top-down implementation instructions in their everyday work situations, we draw on a qualitative, critical realist informed case study. A key purpose of using a critical realist case study is the inherent opportunity to study a phenomenon comprehensively and in depth (Easton 2010) by 'discovering the underlying structures and mechanisms that account for some particular phenomena of interest' (Fligstein & McAdam 2012, p. 192). In the following, we discuss the case selection and background and describe the data collection and analysis process that culminated in the empirical findings, which lay the foundation for this article.

Research context

As in other Nordic countries, Norwegian employment policy has a major focus on work as a means to welfare for everyone and a political goal of providing work inclusion services to help people with needs of facilitation to enter into and maintain employment in the regular labor market. This focus results in the creations and recreations of innovative policies and new work inclusion procedures to be implemented by the Norwegian Employment and Welfare Administration (NAV), which is the public agency in charge of providing welfare and work inclusion services to Norway's citizens. NAV is the result of the largest public reform of recent times in Norway, integrating the public employment service, social insurance, and parts of the municipal social services into one (Christensen et al. 2014). In line with the general trend of overlapping managerial traditions in the Nordic public sector, researchers have found that NAV's managerial agendas hold contradictory logics, including principles of central administration through standardization, performance measuring, and detailed documentation instructions as well as principles of flexibility and local autonomy 'with a comprehensive set of means to develop coordinated services for users' (Fossestøl et al. 2015). These overlapping managerial logics may be seen to influence how the continuous flow of implementation efforts of new innovative policies and work inclusion methods from central levels of government are delivered to the operational level of the organization, including in the increased introduction of using standardized methods and documentation procedures.

Among the many work inclusion measures intended to be implemented in NAV, the FG was selected for further investigation in the case study. The FG is a processual tool

initiated at political levels with the intention to ensure an trustworthy and efficient col-laboration between employers, job seekers, and NAV, associated with managerial princi-ples of collaboration and tailoring for the individual. The FG was described as a contract that captured contact information, follow-up plans, and rights and responsibilities of the collaborators, administered by the NAV frontline worker. As a consequence of a critical report by the Governmental Audit Committee in 2012, stating that the FG had not been implemented as expected, focused implementation strategies were set into action nation-wide from 2012. The implementation strategies of the FG included the use standardized paper contracts for vast groups of recipients, registration procedures for performance evaluations, documentation and statistical purposes, and seemed to link more closely to managerial principles of bureaucracy and NPM. Despite heightened managerial imple-mentation efforts, frontline staff had only taken the FG into practice to a varying degree in local offices at the start of the case study in 2015 (Høiland & Willumsen 2016).

Being part of a larger case study with the aim to generate knowledge for a deeper understanding of mismatches between centrally directed intentions of policy measures and its implementation at the operational level of public service organizations, the part of the case study that this article is reporting on focuses on the reception of the FG among frontline staff at a specific public employment office. The office was selected because it had notably high numbers for the use of the FG from mid-2013 to the begin-ning of 2015. The office had received continuous evaluations and feedback from the provincial FG coordinator on statistical results and specific use at the office, and had had a designated person who guided the frontline staff hands-on for a period of several months. However, throughout 2015, the rate of using the FG dropped in line with the withdrawal of these implementation efforts. This, we theorized, seemed to indicate that the FG had not been internalized as a natural practice among the frontline staff respon-sible for work inclusion of the FG's target groups. During the interviews with frontline staff at the office, other work inclusions strategies and measures also stood as central to the theme of the study. An example was a strong emphasis on the documentation requirements of the usage of a strategy called Job Matching (JM). JM was a way of matching service recipients to available jobs in the computer systems and then register-ing the procedure in a specific way in that system each time. This was required for all service recipients, but seemed to have reclined in the same way that the FG had reclined. Both the FG and the JM work procedures involved standardized usage and registration procedures that came on top of the core work tasks of the frontline employees. Because of the strong association with JM among the informants while talking about implemen-tation instructions and practices of the FG, we also included empirical material on the JM implementation instruction into our analysis.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection and analysis were inspired by a critical realist informed case study approach (Easton 2010). There were two interconnecting phases. The first was an exploratory phase using method-triangulation including document studies of internal documents and statis-tical reports and 21 semi-structured interviews of 16 informants distributed at various levels of the organization, from national to provincial to municipal levels holding leader-ship and coordinator positions. The intention was to gain a contextual understanding by

exploring the implementation system of the FG. The second face was a descriptive and explanatory phase and had the purpose of exploring how frontline staff at the case office perceived and acted on the implementation instructions of the FG and to discuss possible explanations. It drew upon the contextual understanding that was gained during the first phase, and used various qualitative methods for further insight. These included one-to-two hour long semi-structured, in-depth interviews of 11 informants in frontline positions in the selected frontline employment office, supplemented with observational data from office visits, and 24 case- and department meetings and during a 4-month period in 2015. Altogether, the case study included 948 pages of transcribed interviews, 49 pages of observational notes, and 78 relevant documents. This article mainly draws on frontline employee data collected during the second phase of the case study.

The informants consisted of a balanced blend of men and women in the age-span of 30s–60s with educational backgrounds mostly from social work, health, and administration. Most informants were very open about their work situation, providing enthusiastic and often emotionally rich descriptions of their experiences. To protect the anonymity of the informants, interview quotes are not tied to demographic information such as gender or age, and all informants are identified as 'she', although both genders were well represented. Dialects and individual jargons that may identify specific informants are masked by the English translation of the quotes, which also helps protect anonymity. The thematic guides of the interviews evolved slightly during the process of data generation as our insight deepened. The main topics of the interview guides significant for this article include the informants' personal experiences of the implementation of the FG, descriptions of a normal workday and routines, as well as reflections on solving a specific case vignette of a service recipient who was likely to be in the target group for the FG.

In line with a critical realist informed approach, the findings emerged in a constant dialogue and through continuous analysis of the empirical data and theoretical ponderings (Belfrage & Hauf 2017). Each interview and case meeting observation were followed by memo writing and elaborated on during the continuous analysis process (Belfrage & Hauf 2017). Each interview was transcribed verbatim, reviewed together with the observation notes and relevant documents, and coded in the qualitative analysis computer software, Nvivo. The coding process was done in an eclectic inductive and deductive manner, using certain theoretical assumptions but focusing on open coding and systematizing and conceptualizing the data into theory-oriented themes as the analysis progressed (Belfrage & Hauf 2017). During this process, themes of resistance toward certain implementation instructions stood out, as well as themes of overwhelming work situations, professional values, and standards, and the importance of prioritizing work-tasks that answered to these standards. These themes were explored through various theoretical lenses (Belfrage & Hauf 2017). In the following, we present the findings of how the frontline workers in the case study reacted to implementation instructions that did not adhere to their professional and personal values.

Case study analysis and findings: Coping with implementation instructions in a context of contradicting managerial principles

The office division in focus consisted of frontline staff responsible for work inclusion services for people who had complex and specific needs of facilitation and follow-up for

socioeconomic or health-related reasons. The frontline work situation can be described as demanding with an overload of a wide variety of indispensable work-tasks. They consisted of multifaceted tasks within the core services of the frontline division including requirements posed by legislation such as processing incoming welfare applications to secure income according to strict deadlines and set evaluation procedures, as well as direct follow-up of service recipients and potential employers in accommodating work inclusion services. These work tasks were considered by the frontline workers to be matching professional values of social work mainly oriented toward solving the needs of the service beneficiary (NASW 2017). They were also considered to be in line with the core mission of NAV, 'to provide opportunities to people'. In addition to this core work, tasks consisted of handling a constant flow of implementation instructions in the form of new work inclusion methods and priorities, new procedures in information technology, and new or varying focuses on registration and documentation procedures. These were considered distractions to their core work tasks:

> There is always too much to do here. I could work 24–7, no problem (laughs). And if you already have too much that needs to be done, and then you are instructed to do *work tasks that do not feel right*… that is… spend valuable time… It gives frustrations in the workday. Not positive one might say.
>
> — Frontline worker

The informant captures the busy work situation as well as the importance of sticking to work tasks that *feel right and are in line with the 'service' value*. Having to follow instructions that do not feel right, and in consequence having to down-prioritize the work tasks that are in line with the sense of the workers' inclination of serving the end-users, triggered a frustration that may be connected to a lack of professional autonomy and dignity (Ackroyd & Thompson 1999; Karlsson 2012). Frontline workers in the case study emphasized a need to prioritize among their work tasks according to what they considered important and matching their sense of values and ethics of social work. This influenced how they reacted toward the implementation instructions in focus. Instead of the centrally envisioned way of applying the FG and JM as instructed, frontline staff revealed that, despite their feelings of loyalty to their managers, they often prioritized what they considered valuable work tasks over such top-down implementation instructions (Høiland & Klemsdal forthcoming). They disclosed four main coping strategies that will be described in the following and later discussed in relation to their innovative potential.

Adjusting

The first and most conciliatory practice we found among the frontline employees was a practice of adjusting the instructions according to their professional discretion. This happened when the frontline workers revised the instruction of how and when to use it, not standardizing it as ordered. Adjusting the instructions, we found, was used to cope with conflicts between the implementation instructions and frontline workers' autonomy of assessing appropriate work inclusion processes for the individual service recipient. Frontline workers, for example, saw a purpose in complying with the implementation

instruction of JM registrations to some extent, but only when deemed necessary in their direct work with the service recipients:

> They require you to do it [Job Match]. In all cases… But I've done it when I feel it's natural to do it. (…) Many of the conversations you have, the person is so far from work, and… you. It's not natural to match and talk about job positions when it's simply not useful for a long time. So far, I'm far from using Job Matching in all my follow-up conversations. Where it is natural, I do it.
>
> — Frontline worker

The instruction was to use JM registrations for all service recipients regardless of their situation and relevance of getting a job. Instead, this staff member only applied the procedure as instructed when she determined that it would be purposeful and useful for the service recipient in line with a professional inclination to tailor services, taking away the elements of the instructions that were perceived as disturbing and unnecessary. The standardized protocol of using it for everyone was thus adjusted to instead only using it for those considered being likely to benefit from the procedure, in line with values of social work. Another frontline worker similarly described that her reason for not using the FG for everyone as instructed was that such standardized procedures did not feel right but artificial:

> Because we [already] have a good dialogue on email, phone, and meetings and when needed… So then, I feel it would be a bit artificial if I suddenly said: 'Yes but we could also use a Facilitation Guarantee.' Unnecessary and artificial.
>
> — Frontline worker

Adjusting the FG instructions so that its application was in line with tailoring services for the individual emerged as a coping strategy. Adjusting the instructions as seem fit, afforded time to focus on the core work-tasks in the follow-up processes, as well as avoiding what they considered unnecessary and artificial procedures that they worried could jeopardize the important one-on-one relationships with their service recipients and employers. Adjusting and revising the instructions thus led the frontline workers to deliver work inclusion services according to their professional discretion of what the service recipient needed in line with the social work value of 'service'. Coping by adjusting the implementation instructions to match their professional standards of delivering services provided a way to keep their dignity and autonomy of their profession at large.

This revision practices in our study may be viewed as counterproductive to the managerial strategy of implementing standardized registration and documentation procedures. However, the workers' motivations to adjust the instructions were not to resist the instructions specifically, but rather to incorporate them into their practices when deemed useful and not destructive to their service recipients, thereby improving the work inclusion service itself. Adjusting the instructions to fit the needs of service recipients can be linked to tailoring the services in question while interacting with and thereby directly benefitting the end-user. It can thereby be linked to the concepts of bricolaging (Fuglsang 2010) and 'everyday innovation' seeing that 'innovative potentials are extensively bounded in work situations where problems must be solved and new needs emerge' (Lippke & Wegener 2014).

In the following, three other coping strategies are presented that did not have the purpose to improve the work inclusion services of FG and JM directly, but that instead were directed against the implementation instructions themselves.

Down-prioritizing

The first practice of directly resisting the implementation instructions was that of resistance through downprioritizing them among all the other work-tasks and agendas.

> I see it in a way as a structural problem in NAV. Because we have so much to keep up with. A lot. We try to do it all, but we barely land one thing, and they put the pressure in one place for two weeks… But then you don't have (…) the desire, capacity, maybe perseverance to keep the pressure up all the way all the time. So, it wears off naturally. No one talks about [a similar measure] that was very much emphasized two years ago. VERY MUCH. There were no words for how important it was. And it IS important. But when the pressure of ONE thing wears off, using it ALSO wears off.
>
> — Frontline worker

The quote illustrates what the informant experienced as a demanding work situation with an overload of work-tasks, including continuously being instructed to focus on new areas to implement for limited periods of time. She elaborates how this made it difficult to stay dedicated and to recognize what was actually to be prioritized in the long run. Using 'the new' wore off when managerial focus wore off, indicating implementation halt. Downprioritizing or even forgetting seemed to be a natural way to deal with this myriad of new focus areas and instructions coming down to them from central levels of NAV. Downprioritizing was widely done to instructions perceived as only a means to 'satisfy the system'. How and why is illustrated in the following quote:

> There are too many focus areas. And when a new focus-area is presented, you let go of the old. And then there is the time pressure and all that. That you have the things that you always do and have to do and always will do, and then you have ten things that you have to do to satisfy others, or a system, a registration procedure or whatever. And those do not necessarily feel important, so they get down-prioritized when another of those focus areas comes along.
>
> — Frontline worker

This informant also draws a picture of a work situation consisting of an overload of implementation instructions on top of an already busy workload of core tasks 'that you always do and have to do and always will do'. These core work-tasks of following up service recipients and application processing were deemed more important than the implementation instructions that were seen as 'ten things that you have to do to satisfy others, or a system, a registration procedure or whatever'. The downprioritization was done in line with what the employees considered important in their work, showing that they drew on their professional discretion and autonomy to prioritize what work-tasks to focus on. Viewing both the FG instruction and the JM registrations as doing 'extra "stuff" to the system for it to be registered and measured' for statistical purposes only, a

frontline worker clearly spelled out what she considered to be the purpose of her work: 'I prioritize client follow-up and necessary proceedings of applications and so on - those things that ARE my job'.

Downprioritizing top-down instructions that they considered not to be their 'actual job', nor as adding to NAVs mission of public value, can then be seen as a way of coping by resistance, helping the frontline workers to be true to their professional values, as well as what they consider to be the true purpose of the organization they work for.

Tricking

The coping strategy of tricking directed at the documentation and registration procedures in question consisted of frontline workers doing as instructed while the implementation effort was high on the case office's managerial agenda. However, because the instructions were perceived as a 'necessary evil' to 'satisfy the system' stealing valuable time from their core work tasks, the orders were only carried out by following through the instructions on the surface. This was, for example, done by using shortcuts to save time by 'clicking buttons' to produce 'good numbers' in the computer system giving the appearance that the implementation demands were met. A frontline worker describes the process:

> I just tick it, right, that's the button. Then I'm done. So I've done it in a way, but in reality I didn't actually do it (…) because… Really, I should have gone in and looked at the matches of available positions at the job market that came up for that service recipient. [I'm] not interested in what matches I get. Only that I'm able to tick it, so I'm … now I'm deadly honest!
>
> — Frontline worker

Instead of talking to the service recipient about the matches from the JM procedure as centrally intended, the frontline worker honestly described how she often saved time by just 'clicking the buttons' in the computer system to produce the numbers required for statistical purposes. She distinguished between 'just clicking buttons' and 'actually doing it' (following the instructions to job match and to share the resulting matches with the service recipient when seen fit). Importantly also, frontline workers often revealed that this tricking practice was only carried on for as long as the particular instruction was in focus at the case office. As soon as the instruction was not prioritized at managerial levels, they stopped doing it at all:

> We consider all those target-score-things as just nonsense, we even joke about them … We had piles of target-scores that we were supposed … so we got really good at Job Match one month. Then the month afterwards, we stopped. Then someone joked about it later: 'Well, aren't you registering Job Matches?' I answered the colleague: 'No! Job Matching? Didn't we finish that?' (Laughing) And it's a bit like that. We have finished the Facilitation Guarantee as well. It was never we who did it … we just clicked the buttons.
>
> — Frontline worker

The quote shows a serious undertone through a witty illustration of how this type of resistance had become shared practice among staff. We can infer through the

description that these specific implementation instructions were just two of many, and that this led frontline workers to create this strategy of tricking - reluctantly following through as long as necessary, but stopping the registration and documentation procedures as soon as the focus changed. It had become a joke among staff: 'that was what we did last month… now we are doing this', showing resistance toward the specific new registration procedures but, even more so, resistance toward what staff considered constant, useless, top-down implementation instructions being added to their already crammed workload, stealing time from what they considered the core mission of their work. Tricking the system by cutting corners, mechanically 'clicking buttons' and waiting for the current instruction to give way to the next round of 'button-clicking', they tried as best they could to create shortcuts to have enough time for what they considered the core work-tasks of their job in NAV in line with, for example, the values of 'service' in social work. Driven by a motivation for 'true' value creation, this practice of resistance may be counted among the resistance types directed against managerial instructions.

Rejecting

The coping strategy that most obviously may be labeled as a form of resistance in the case study was that of purposefully rejecting the standardized and documentation oriented implementation instructions of the FG and JM: Frontline employees explained that they were already working in the collaborative manner intended, but that they rejected using the FG the way instructed through paper contracts and documentation procedures. A frontline worker described how she was already routinely using this 'new' collaborative work process in her service provision:

> The Facilitation Guarantee I feel that I'm already doing, just I do not do it inside the system… but according to its intention that I understand is that they should know who I am, and what I can offer both employer and user.
>
> — Frontline worker

She rejected doing the FG 'inside the system' by omitting the paper contract to be filled out with the new employer and service recipient and thereby not having it registered into the IT-system for statistical purposes. Similarly, frontline workers in the study used their business cards to show their availability to the new employers, not seeing the point of registering 'even more paperwork'. The frontline workers thus alleged to be using the collaborative method of being available to the employer as part of their routines, abiding by the intention behind the FG. They saw the additional FG procedures as unnecessary and not useful to the target group. The only purpose for following such artificial instructions would be for it to look good in NAVs statistics. This was not something considered important enough and therefore rejected by staff through eliminating the corresponding registration and documentation procedures.

  Another example of resistance by mere rejection was the tendency among frontline workers to simply 'wait it off'. This was exemplified by accounts of an often-narrated office policy to have weekly meetings for reporting on how many times staff had registered or documented certain instructions in focus, such as the JM registrations:

> [It] was mostly the same people who showed up in the meetings and reported the numbers. But half (…) eeh … sabotaged it, you can say. They saw it as nonsense. And I agree. (…) many were not as active … and would drag their feet just sitting there waiting for it also to pass.
>
> — Frontline worker

The description of nonparticipation in office meetings as 'sabotaging' by frontline workers demonstrates a strong need in frontline workers to cope with constant new implementation instructions. Frontline workers saw it as necessary to 'wait off' instructions in order for them to pass, sometimes not registering the procedures at all and not even showing up for the meetings. The same practice of 'waiting off' can be partially tied to the trickery practice discussed previously. By just 'clicking off' the JM registrations to get good statistics, some frontline workers were delivering 'tricked' numbers for these weekly meetings that they knew would fade away anyway. Outright rejection of the registration and documentation instructions of the implementation efforts was thus also used as a coping strategy to remedy what frontline workers experienced as a problem at the system level of the organization contradicting their core purpose of working in NAV. Interviewees' comments strongly implied that they questioned the public value creation of such implementation practices coming from central levels of NAV.

> What's the point… well of course there is a point, but you think in a way… how important is it? Am I really going to spend my time on this? All 'this' I just call 'nonsense'. But yes, it is good for statistics and to measure how well we perform.
>
> — Frontline worker

Informants in the frontline decisively avoided spending their limited resources on something that they did not consider to improve the quality of services to the service recipients. When providing numbers for statistical purposes was seen as the only purpose of the implementation instruction, rejecting of the instructions was motivated by instead spending the time right and creating value for the service recipients and thereby protecting what they considered the main purpose of the organization. A frontline worker further reflects on the managerial agenda of the implementation instructions:

> [M]aybe they [management at central levels of NAV]do not know that we are actually quite good. That we work quite well with people. That we are well educated. Not with the intention of getting rich, but with the intention of meeting people in a good way. Because that is what I do, the best I can.'
>
> — Frontline worker

This echoes a sentiment that we found to be emerging throughout the data: that frontline workers had an impression that the 'system' or leadership at 'distant levels' in NAV did not comprehend the professional competence and the basic values that the frontline workers possessed, and that they therefore kept measuring performance through documentation and registration procedures that seemed pointless and contrary to what was their 'actual job'. This may illustrate the alienating effect of NPM-like principles on frontline employees, threatening professional autonomy at a microlevel (Kamp et al.

2013; Tummers et al. 2009), and depriving them of their sense of dignity in their work (Karlsson 2012).

The result of this alienating effect can especially be seen in these three last resistance strategies of downprioritizing, tricking, and rejecting, all directly opposing the implementation instructions and revealing what may be conceptualized as a type of innovation. This kind of innovation emerged, then, as a result of employees' resistance practices when prioritizing core work tasks over work tasks that they considered to distract them from delivering services according to their professional discretion, thus protecting their autonomy and dignity at work. The resistance strategies may be seen to eventually add value to both service recipients, who become less defrauded of valuable time for tailoring, and to the organization that are kept more aligned with its core mission of providing work inclusion services to citizens. Below, we further the discussion of how these seemingly counterproductive strategies may be conceptualized as carrying innovative potential.

Discussion: Resistance as value-driven, employee-based innovation?

In Nordic welfare organizations that are known to be complex with competing and even contradictory managerial principles and work instructions (Kamp et al. 2013) and with the street-level bureaucrats' dilemma of never-ending demands from service recipients and constant restrictions in time and resources (Lipsky 1980), work-tasks need to be prioritized. Thunman (2013) examines the implementation of NPM-ideas with regard to the effects on welfare workers' feelings of work-related stress. She finds that being prevented from realizing ones self-value at work, in welfare services submerged in NPM-ideas, may lead to feelings of inauthenticity. Theoretical developments on organizational misbehavior (Ackroyd & Thompson 1999; Karlsson 2012) hold that the lack of autonomy and dignity at work is an important reason for misbehavior in organizations, such as resisting managerial instructions. Our frontline informants may be seen as showing a need to cope with the lack of autonomy that the implementation instructions imposed through inflicting time away from performing their job according to, for instance, their 'service' value so important for them to imply by in order to feel a sense of authenticity and dignity in their work. They coped by revising and resisting the implementation instructions that they did not consider to live up to their core mission at work. The motivation behind these coping strategies were to save time for what they considered 'their actual and core work tasks' to deliver individualized and appropriate services to the service recipients and employers. These motivations came from a clear commitment of frontline staff to provide services in line with their professional values and what they considered the authenticity of their work, thus allowing them to focus on the work-tasks that matched what they regarded as the purpose of their job. Because staying true to value creation on a personal, professional, and even organizational level motivated the revision and resistance practices, we propose viewing them as value-driven work practices to cope with managerial principles that contradicted their inherent feeling of authentication, autonomy, and dignity in their work.

We found that these four coping strategies of adjusting, downprioritization, tricking, and rejecting had become collective practices among frontline workers in the case study.

Coping with implementation demands, which appeared to counter their professional values, and then communicating their prioritizations with their colleagues, such as joking about what is or is not on the agenda for the time being, we propose may be understood as 'innovations that start[ed] as small intrinsic and interactive adjustments [and] le[a]d to the exercise of new practices and routines' (Fuglsang 2010, p. 74). These kinds of employee-based innovations that emerged from our data are not the same as the employee-driven innovation from management literature that are usually initiated and purposely facilitated by management (Høyrup 2010). Rather, they arose from work practices when dealing with day-to-day problem solving. Smith (2017, p. 114) uses the concept of work(er)-driven innovation as 'socially derived practice of developing new and better ways of doing things in and through engagement in work'. He emphasizes the incremental innovations that emerge from practices and routines of work through the negotiation between the workers, their work-tasks, and the demands of their workplaces as well as the occupational practice of the particular sets of work activities in question (Smith 2017).

We expand on the idea of connecting welfare workers' resistance practices against tensions of bureaucratic rules and requirements to a type of practice innovation (Yakhlef & Essén 2013), which is important for the value creation also at the system level (Lipsky 1980). As summarized in Table 1, we choose to classify the four coping strategies into two subcategories in order to more clearly depict two different types of innovations. The coping strategy of 'adjusting' we place in the subcategory of value-driven revision practices that are simply aimed at improving the new measures to fit each service recipients' cases. The three other types: 'down-prioritizing', 'trickery', and 'rejection' we place in the subcategory of value-driven resistance practices that counteract the managerial instructions directly. We suggest that these two subcategories may be conceptualized as two types of employee-based innovations that emerge from practical attempts to solve problems when encountering continuous new implementation demands in conflict with values and professional standards of the employees at the operational level of the organization. Both of them can be described as a 'tendency to think of new and better ways of doing things and to try them out in practice' (Fagerberg 2005, p. 1, cited in Smith 2017) – a notion widely used to define innovation. Conceptualizing revision and resistance practices as employee-based, value-driven innovations, also tie them to the important role of value creation as drivers of public service innovation (Wegener 2016).

We therefore suggest that the first subcategory of coping strategies as a type of value-driven revision, developed to cope with the standardized instructions not matching the case-to-case discretionary judgment of frontline workers, can be conceptualized as the type of employee-based innovations already widely documented in the field, such as 'bricolaging' (Fuglsang 2010), practice-based innovation (Ellström 2010), and everyday innovation (Lippke & Wegener 2014). These are all drawing on how employees innovate implicitly to fit the day-to-day situation of various needs of their job, including that of tailoring services for the recipients. In our study, we found that the staff's decisions to adjust the FG and JM registrations, such as not using JM registration procedures if the service recipient had more pressing issues to deal with before he was ready for work, had become collective practices surfacing in many interviews.

We further suggest that the second subcategory of coping strategies, that of value-driven resistance practices of downprioritizing, tricking, and rejection, all directed against the implementation instructions themselves, may be conceptualized as a different type of innovation. This type of innovation is also employee- and value-based, but

it arose from directly countering management-driven implementation instructions in order to instead prioritize tasks in accordance with their professional values. Describing a workplace context of continuous streams of new implementation instructions of work-tasks belonging to managerial agendas not matching their professional values, the frontline workers in the study responded by resisting the instructions to save time. Thus, the resistance strategies can be considered value-driven and bricolage based, but where the implementation instructions are honed, not to improve the new measure per say, as in the other innovation type above, but instead with the purpose of prioritizing the core work tasks for the best of their service beneficiaries as a whole.

We found these filtering and honing mechanisms to be very important for the frontline workers in ensuring a dignified performance of tasks in the context of work-overload, and an overload of new measure-productions. The innovation practices were motivated by the staff's need to stay true to their personal, professional, and what they considered organizational values. These thereby emerged as coping strategies to deal with their already overwhelming work situation of limited resources (Lipsky 1980), the feelings of inauthenticity (Thunman 2013), and lack of autonomy and dignity (Ackroyd & Thompson 1999; Karlsson 2012) inflicted upon them by contradicting managerial agendas. Where the first type of innovation had a function at the organizational level of improving services through adjusting instructions to tailor the services for the individual beneficiary, the resistance-driven type of innovation may be seen to have a function at the organizational level to potentially calibrating value-creation in the organization.

Table 1 Overview of coping strategies and corresponding innovation types

Coping strategy	Adjusting	Downprioritizing	Tricking	Rejecting
Subcategory	**Value-driven revision practices**	**Value-driven resistance practices**		
Employee-based innovation type	E.g. **bricolaging** (Fuglsang 2010)	**Resistance-driven innovation** Result of value-driven resistance practices counter-acting managerial instructions		
Innovation function at organizational level	Improving services through tailoring for individual beneficiaries	Making time for core-tasks potentially calibrating value-creation in organizations		
Innovation function at individual level	Coping strategy to maintain autonomy and professional dignity (Ackroyd et al. 1999; Karlsson 2012) based upon professional values.			

Final remarks

The study suggests that resistance practices that are rooted in prioritizing professional values in the meeting with certain managerial demands may be conceptualized as resistance-based innovation. Our findings show that 'innovation potential may be present while managers or politicians mistakenly conclude that an innovation policy has failed' (Wegener 2016, p. 116). As such, the function of innovation as 'value creation' becomes significant. If the definition of innovation includes 'value creation' at the system level of the organization (Ellström 2010), and here particularly public welfare organizations

whose mission is to provide services to citizens, is it the case that employee-based practices can only be viewed as innovations if they add to managerial goals of the organization? There are many reasons for politicians and managers to introduce new measures to improve public service provisions other than instrumental considerations about efficiency. But what if the implementation instructions endorse documentation and standardization above what frontline workers consider the true purpose of their services? When welfare workers face implementation instructions that are out of line with their professional priorities and feeling of authenticity and dignity to their work, and they react through honing and filtering mechanisms that directly counter managerial goals of policy implementation, can one say that they are still adding to public value?

Frontline workers described the organization as 'flourishing' with demands from the registration and documentation regime. If ever-new implementation instructions from central levels of the organization interfere with the frontline workers' abilities to deliver services that adhere to their values and professional standards and what they consider the values of the organization, we suggest that their use of resistance as coping strategies can be conceptualized as a value-driven employee-based innovation to help calibrate the system. We thus contend that the frontline workers used value-driven innovation practices of resistance and that these may eventually function as calibrators for the public value delivery of the organization by diminishing the use of time and effort to follow standardized documentation instructions not necessarily valuable for the target group any way. As such, the dilemma of implementing policy-induced instructions from central levels of government to the 'ground floor' of public welfare organization (Hill & Hupe 2014) may be turned around. The dilemma could rather be to question the usefulness of developing ever new top-down instructions and measures to solve the 'wicked problems' of the welfare state, instead of giving the professionals at the frontlines, who deal with these problems in their everyday work, the flexibility, time, and resources they need to find creative solutions one case at the time.

The article contributes to the practice- and employee-based innovation field in that we are proposing a complementary innovation type that is specifically attributed to outright resistances practices, not specified in the well-documented employee and practice-based innovation, such as the adjustment of protocol and bricolaging (Fuglsang 2010). We contend that this resistance-driven innovation type emerges as a by-product of value-motivated coping strategies against managerial instructions that do not match the ethics and professional standards of frontline workers. Using the lens of public service innovation as value-creation, we suggest that this type of employee-based, value-motivated and resistance-driven innovation may eventually have an important function of calibrating toward public value delivery, despite strong influences of the standardization, registration, and documentation trends of bureaucratic and NPM managerial principles that are still found in public welfare organizations in Nordic nations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Letters of approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

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Vår dato: 16.12.2014   Vår ref: 40694 / 3 / AGL   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 11.11.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

40694	*Innovasjon i offentlige velferdstjenester: samarbeid på tvers for bedre overganger mellom utdanning og arbeid for personer med behov for komplekse og langvarige tjenester*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Gry Cecilie Høiland*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.10.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Audun Løvlie

Kontaktperson: Audun Løvlie tlf: 55 58 23 07
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

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

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Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 40694

Prosjektet gjennomføres i samarbeid med IRIS. Universitetet i Stavanger er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Personvernombudet forutsetter at ansvaret for behandlingen av personopplysninger er avklart mellom institusjonene. Vi anbefaler at det inngås en avtale som omfatter ansvarsfordeling, ansvarsstruktur, hvem som initierer prosjektet, bruk av data og eventuelt eierskap.

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet. Det legges til grunn at det utformes et tilsvarende informasjonsskriv til surveydelen.

Det behandles enkelte opplysninger om tredjeperson. Det skal kun registreres opplysninger som er nødvendig for formålet med prosjektet. Opplysningene skal være av mindre omfang og ikke sensitive, og skal anonymiseres i publikasjon. Så fremt personvernulempen for tredjeperson reduseres på denne måten, kan prosjektleder unntas fra informasjonsplikten overfor tredjeperson, fordi det anses uforholdsmessig vanskelig å informere.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Universitetet i Stavanger sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

For survey benyttes Survey-xact som UiS har avtale med om hvordan personopplysninger skal behandles, jf. personopplysningsloven § 15.

Det vil også bli benyttet en transskriberingsassistent som databehandler for prosjektet. Universitetet i Stavanger skal inngå skriftlig avtale med transskriberingsassistenten om hvordan personopplysninger skal behandles, jf. personopplysningsloven § 15. For råd om hva databehandleravtalen bør inneholde, se Datatilsynets veileder: http://www.datatilsynet.no/Sikkerhet-internkontroll/Databehandleravtale/. Personvernombudet ber om kopi av avtalen for arkivering (sendes: personvernombudet@nsd.uib.no).

Forventet prosjektslutt er 01.10.2017. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:
- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette lydopptak

Vi gjør oppmerksom på at også databehandlere (transkriberingsassisent og Survey-xact) må slette personopplysninger tilknyttet prosjektet i sine systemer. Dette inkluderer eventuelle logger og koblinger mellom IP-/epostadresser og besvarelser.

Hvis det blir aktuelt med oppfølgingsstudier vil datamaterialet lagres videre etter avtale med deltakerne.

From:	"Audun G. Løvlie"
To:	Gry Cecilie Høiland
Subject:	Prosjektnr: 40694. Innovasjon i offentlige velferdstjenester: samarbeid på tvers for bedre overganger mellom utdanning og arbeid for personer med behov for komplekse og langvarige tjenester
Date:	16. mars 2015 14:13:00

BEKREFTELSE PÅ ENDRING

Viser til endringsmelding datert 12. mars 2015.

Personvernombudet har registrert endring av metode til dokumentanalyse, individuelle intervjuer, gruppeintervjuer og observasjon, samt endring av utvalg til NAV-ansatte og NAV-dokumenter av type målstyringsdokumenter, prioriteringer og interne rutiner og retningslinjer.

Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet, vi registrerer også endret prosjektslutt til 1. september 2017.

Vi har også registrert endring av tittel og formål, samt prosjektomfang: at IRIS ikke lenger er samarbeidspartner.

Vi vil ta ny kontakt ved prosjektslutt.

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--
Vennlig hilsen/best wishes

Audun Gabriel Løvlie
Rådgiver/Adviser

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
(Norwegian Social Science Data Services)
Personvernombud for forskning
(Data Protection Official for Research)
Harald Hårfagres gate 29, 5007 BERGEN

Tlf. direkte: (+47) 55 58 23 07
Tlf. sentral: (+47) 55 58 81 80
Faks: (+47) 55 58 96 50
Email: audun.lovlie@nsd.uib.no
Internettadresse: www.nsd.uib.no/personvern
```

From:	Trine Anikken Larsen
To:	Gry Cecilie Høiland
Subject:	Prosjektnr: 40694. Innovasjon i arbeidsinkluderingstjenester: samhandling og implementering i Navs front-linjer
Date:	22. mai 2018 13:07:28

BEKREFTELSE PÅ ENDRING

Hei,

Jeg viser til endringsmelding registrert hos personvernombudet 22.05.18.

Vi har nå registrert at ny prosjektslutt er satt til 30.06.18 og at ny tittel på prosjektet skal endres til: Frontline policy implementation in public organizations. A social analysis of the 'how and why' of implementation gaps

Vi har også registrert e-postadressen gry.hoiland@me.com.

Personvernombudet forutsetter at prosjektopplegget for øvrig gjennomføres i tråd med det som tidligere er innmeldt, og personvernombudets tilbakemeldinger. Vi vil ta ny kontakt ved prosjektslutt.

Med vennlig hilsen

Trine Anikken Larsen
Seniorrådgiver | Senior Adviser
Seksjon for personverntjenester | Data Protection Services
T: (+47) 55 58 83 97

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS | NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data
Harald Hårfagres gate 29, NO-5007 Bergen
T: (+47) 55 58 21 17
postmottak@nsd.no   www.nsd.no

Universitetet i Stavanger
Samfunnsvitenskapelig fakultet, Handelshøgskolen, Senter for
Innovasjonsforskning
4036 Stavanger

Att: Prosjektleder Gry Cecilie Høiland

Deres ref:	Vår ref:	15/1951	Vår dato:	25.3.2015
		Saksbehandler:		
		Knut Brenne		

**Dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten i forbindelse med forskningsprosjektet
«"Innovasjon i arbeidsinkluderingstjenester: samhandling og
implementering i Navs front-linjer»**

Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet viser til søknad mottatt pr e-post 16.3.2015,
samt senere tilleggsinformasjon pr e-post.

Sakens opplysninger

Prosjektet inngår som oppgave i søkerens doktorgradsstudium ved Senter for
Innovasjonsforskning på Handelshøyskolen ved Universitetet i Stavanger.

Oppgaven er beskrevet slik:

a) Prosjektets problemstilling

For at tiltak og strategier for arbeidsinkludering initiert fra politisk og
øverste ledernivå skal implementeres lokalt, må håndteringen av strategien
tilpasses det enkelte NAV- kontor, den enkelte tjenesteyters
arbeidshverdag og den enkelte brukers og arbeidsgivers behov. Hva
fremmer og hemmer muligheten for tjenesteytere som arbeider i front-
linjen i NAV til å drive den praksisnære innovasjonen dette innebærer?
Formålet med studien er å utforske den institusjonelle konteksten for
arbeidsinkludering i NAV og å utforske hva som fremmer og hemmer
tjenesteyterne i å drive innovasjon/implementeringsarbeid i sine
hverdagspraksiser i arbeidsinkluderingsarbeidet med unge mennesker med
funksjonsnedsettelser.

b) Prosjektets formål/nytteverdi

Funnene i studien er ment å gi en dypere forståelse av hvorfor målrettede
tiltak og strategier implementeres eller ikke, der det virkelige arbeidet

faktisk skjer, og slik bidra med kunnskap til målsetningen om å få flere unge med funksjonsnedsettelser ut i jobb.

Informasjonen innhentes fra NAV-ansatte i Rogaland: fylkeskoordinatorer i NAV Rogaland og kompetanseenheter som NAV ARK, NAV Hjelpemiddelsentralen og NAV Arbeidslivssenter, og dessuten fra to lokale Nav-kontor, der ledelse og NAV-veiledere er i fokus. Det er også aktuelt å intervjue relevante personer i Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet.

Det skal gjøres intervju og gruppeintervju. Det er også behov for å være observatør på fagmøter der Nav-veiledere diskuterer ulike bruker-saker for å komme frem til løsninger (bruker er ikke tilstede). Hensikten er å observere samhandling og underliggende mekanismer for valg og handlingsmønstre. Det er også behov for å få tilgang til interne dokumenter i NAV som målstyringsdokumenter og prioriteringer og interne rutiner og retningslinjer i Nav. Prosjektet ønsker innsikt i NAV-ansattes/lederes erfaringer og refleksjoner rundt samarbeid i saksbehandling, bruk av skjønn rundt avgjørelser om bruk og implementering av arbeidsinkluderingstiltak for unge mennesker med funksjonsnedsettelser.
Prosjektet ønsker å få kontakt med aktuelle NAV-medarbeidere (navn, alder, stilling og arbeidsplass i NAV, antall år og arbeidserfaring) i NAV via sentral og lokal NAV-ledelse i Rogaland.
Prosjektet skal ikke ha tilgang til identifiserbar informasjon om NAVs brukere.
Det skal ikke brukes dokumenter om enkeltbrukere av NAVs tjenester.

Søker/prosjektleder ønsker også ekstern tilgang til NAVs interne system Navet (som ikke skal inneholde personopplysninger om NAVs brukere), for raskt å kunne finne kontakter og annen informasjon uten å belaste NAV for øvrig.

Prosjektperioden er oppgitt til 21.11.2014 - 1.9.2017.

Prosjektet er meldt til NSD/personvernombudet, som i brev 16.12.2014 og 16.3.2015 (svar på endringsmelding) har funnet at behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Rettslig utgangspunkt

Det rettslige utgangspunktet for taushetsplikten er forvaltningsloven § 13, jf arbeids- og velferdsforvaltningsloven § 7 og lov om sosiale tjenester i NAV § 44. Taushetsplikten er ikke til hinder for at opplysninger brukes når behovet for beskyttelse må anses ivaretatt ved at de gis i statistisk form eller at individualiserende kjennetegn utelates på annen måte, jf forvaltningsloven § 13a nr. 2.

For at det skal kunne gjøres unntak fra taushetsplikten i forbindelse med et forskningsprosjekt, må det foreligge et gyldig rettsgrunnlag. Dette innebærer enten gyldig samtykke fra de personene som er omfattet, jf forvaltningsloven § 13a nr 1, eller dispensasjon fra taushetsplikt til forskning, jf forvaltningsloven § 13d.

Side 2

Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet er delegert avgjørelsesmyndighet etter forvaltningsloven § 13d første ledd til å kunne dispensere fra taushetsplikten til forskningsformål for så vidt gjelder opplysninger i saker på vårt ansvarsområde.

Vurdering

Når det gjelder involvering av NAV-ansatte til intervjuer/gruppeintervjuer og søkerens tilstedeværelse på fagmøter, forutsetter vi at dette er samtykkebasert og i tråd med tilbakemeldingen fra NSD/Personvernombudet. Videre legger vi til grunn at disse punktene i prosjektet skal gjennomføres uten at prosjektet gis tilgang til personopplysninger (jf personopplysningslovens § 2 nr 1) om NAVs brukere.

Vi legger videre til grunn at heller ikke opplysningene som ønskes utlevert gjennom dokumenter og statistikk skal omfatte personopplysninger om NAVs brukere, men kun informasjon som ikke inneholder noen individualiserende kjennetegn om disse brukerne.

Opplysninger uten individualiserende kjennetegn om NAVs brukere kan i utgangspunktet utleveres uten hinder av taushetsplikten, jf forvaltningsloven § 13a nr. 2.

I forbindelse med de beskrevne prosjektaktivitetene er det imidlertid en viss risiko for at taushetsbelagte personopplysninger om NAVs brukere utilsiktet kan komme fram. Vi må vurdere denne risikoen i forhold til reglene om taushetsplikt.

Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet er etter en helhetsvurdering kommet frem til at det er rimelig å gi slik dispensasjon som det er søkt om, da det er liten risiko for at enkeltpersoner kan identifiseres. Personvernhensyn antas å være tilstrekkelig ivaretatt slik opplegget er beskrevet.

Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet gir dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten under forutsetning av at følgende vilkår overholdes, jf. forvaltningsloven § 13d annet ledd:

- Prosjektet gjennomføres i samsvar med prosjektbeskrivelsen og det gis kun dispensasjon for bruk av de opplysninger det søkes om til dette prosjektet.
- Vilkår i tilbakemelding fra NSD/Personvernombudet overholdes.
- NAVs deltakelse er helt frivillig, og arbeidet med prosjektet må ikke gå utover etatens primæroppgaver.
- NAV-enhetene sentralt og lokalt i Rogaland avgjør selv hvorvidt de vil medvirke til undersøkelsen, hvilke NAV-medarbeidere som deltar og utstrekningen/formen på medvirkningen, samt hvilke dokumenter som kan utleveres. Det forutsettes at alle medarbeidere deltar på frivillig basis, etter samtykke.
- Det er viktig å få fram for alle involverte at det i prosjektet eller i tilknytning til prosjektet ikke skal hentes ut, brukes, beskrives eller drøftes opplysninger som kan knyttes til en enkeltperson (jf

Side 3

201

personopplysningslovens § 2 nr 1) blant NAVs brukere. Dette må fremkomme tydelig i kommunikasjonen med de berørte NAV-ansatte, før intervjuer og møter starter. Spesielt er dette viktig i forbindelse med gruppeintervju/fagmøter som kan tenkes å medføre faglige diskusjoner de data fra enkeltsaker om NAV-brukere kan bli nevnt på identifiserende måte, selv om det ikke har vært meningen.

- Prosjektet gis ikke innsyn i enkeltsaksmapper eller registre med personopplysninger om NAVs brukere.
- Søker/prosjektleder gis ikke ekstern tilgang til Navet slik det er søkt om.
- Rapport eller annen publisering av undersøkelsen må ikke inneholde personidentifiserbare opplysninger. Vi legger til grunn at forekomster under fem medfører fare for personidentifisering.
- Forsker og prosjektmedarbeidere er pålagt taushetsplikt om alle opplysninger som fremkommer i forbindelse med undersøkelsen og som er underlagt taushetsplikt etter arbeids- og velferdsforvaltningsloven § 7 og lov om sosiale tjenester i NAV § 44, jf forvaltningsloven § 13 e.
- Ingen andre enn forsker og oppgitte prosjektmedarbeiderne skal ha tilgang til materialet.
- Forskeren må påse at opplysningene oppbevares slik at de ikke kommer uvedkommende i hende og alt materiale som ikke er anonymisert og der identifikasjon kan være mulig, må oppbevares innelåst eller tilsvarende elektronisk sikret.
- Alt materiale som ikke er anonymisert skal slettes senest ved prosjektslutt.

Dette vedtaket kan påklages innen 3 uker fra mottakelsen av brevet, jf. forvaltningsloven § 29. Klagen fremsettes for Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet som forbereder klagesaken til klageinstansen.

Med hilsen
Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet
IKT-avdelingen
Sikkerhetsseksjonen

Terje Andre Olsen
seksjonssjef

Knut Brenne
seniorrådgiver

Appendix 2 – Letters of invitation and consent, sample.

"Innovasjon i arbeidsinkluderingstjenester: implementeringsprosesser i Nav – fra ledelses- til veiledernivå." NSD prosjektnr: 40694. Prosjektleder: Gry Høiland, gry.c.hoiland@uis.no, mobil 40213370

Invitasjon til deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt. Jeg er i gang med en doktorgrad i samfunnsvitenskap med spesialisering i ledelse som er finansiert av Regionalt Forskingsfond Vestlandet. Min bakgrunn er fra sosiologien med fagfokus på arbeid, organisasjon og velferdsstat. Jeg er under utdannelsespermisjon fra NAV HMS Rogaland, og er nå tilknyttet Senter for Innovasjonsforskning ved Universitetet i Stavanger.

Prosjektets bakgrunn og formål. Forskning har vist at arbeidsinkluderingsstrategier fra politisk nivå for unge mennesker med redusert arbeidsevne blir tatt i bruk i mindre grad enn intendert. For at nye tiltak og strategier initiert fra politisk og øverste ledernivå skal implementeres lokalt, må håndteringen av disse tilpasses det enkelte NAV kontor, den enkelte tjenesteyteres arbeidshverdag og den enkelte brukers behov. Formålet med studien er å utforske 1) konteksten rundt implementeringsprosesser i NAV, 2) hvordan ledelse i NAV på ulike nivå i organisasjonen jobber for å implementerer en spesifikk arbeidsinkluderingsstrategi (tilretteleggingsgarantien) i sin organisasjon, og 3) hvordan den enkelte veileder utfører den intendert endringen i sin arbeidshverdag. Hva fremmer og hemmer muligheten for ledere og veiledere i NAV til å drive den praksisnære innovasjonen det innebærer å endre arbeidspraksis som intendert?

For at jeg skal kunne utforske dette feltet i min doktorgrad, trenger jeg å snakke med medarbeidere og ledere på ulike nivå i NAV, Direktorat og Departement. Jeg spør deg om å delta fordi du innehar eller har innehatt en stilling som gjør at du besitter informasjon og erfaring som er relevant for studiet.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien? Deltakelse innebærer en samtale på opptil 2 time med stipendiat om implementeringsprosessen rundt tilretteleggingsgarantien fra så langt tilbake som du har innsikt i frem til i dag og fremover. Du vil motta en samtaleagenda når møtet vårt nærmer seg. Samtalen registreres ved lydopptak (dersom ok) som etterpå transkriberes.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg? Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Kun jeg som stipendiat, veiledere og en transkriberingsassistent vil ha tilgang til data, mens personopplysninger som kobler data til deg som person, kun vil være tilgjengelig for meg selv i form av en navneliste/koblingsnøkkel som lagres innelåst og separat fra øvrig data.

Deltakerne i studiet vil anonymiseres og innhold vil bearbeides slik at det ikke skal være mulig å kjenne vedkommende igjen i publikasjoner basert på data.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 1.10.2017. Dersom det ikke planlegges oppfølgingsstudier på dette tidspunkt, vil datamaterialet anonymiseres ved prosjektslutt, ved at koblingsnøkkel makuleres og lydopptak slettes. Dersom det planlegges oppfølgingsstudier som gjør det gunstig å benytte datamaterialet igjen, blir deltakerne forespurt om tillatelse til å fortsatt oppbevare data som beskrevet over og informert om ny dato for endelig anonymisering og sletting av lydopptak.

Frivillig deltakelse. Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert og lydopptak slettet.

Tillatelser. Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS. Den er også godkjent av Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet i vedtak mars 2015.

Kontaktinformasjon. Har du spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Gry Høiland, mobil 40213370 eller gry.c.hoiland@uis.no

PS: Samtykkeskjema under kommer jeg til å ha med for signatur på samtalen.

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

☐ ☐	**Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju/samtale** **Jeg samtykker til at samtalen blir tatt opp på lydbånd**

Jeg er informert om at jeg har mulighet til å trekke meg når som helst uten noen begrunnelse som beskrevet over.

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

----
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 3 – Interview guides

Interview guide sample phase 1

Hovedtematikk for intervjusamtaler om tilretteleggingsgaranti og ny tilretteleggings- og oppfølgingsavtale.

Leder/koordinator nivå

- o Personlig bakgrunn: utdanning, yrkeserfaring, karriere, stilling og arbeidsoppgaver i direktoratet.
- o Om implementeringsprosesser generelt: enhetenes (dep, dir, fylke, kontor) rolle i prosessen, målstyring, føringer, ulike satsinger mm
- o Om elementer i konteksten som påvirker utforming av satsinger og strategi for implementering.
- o Om TG: formål, innhold målgruppe, historikk og status.
- o Historikken i TGs implementeringsprosess og bakgrunn for «ny TG»
- o Eventuelt

Interview guide sample phase 2.

1. Om **karrieren** i Nav og bakgrunn.
2. Om **arbeidshverdag** på avdelingen.
   - Fokus på arbeidsbelastning (portefølje), arbeidsoppgaver
   - Bruke **vignetten – innblikk i arbeidshverdag**
     i. **arbeidsprosessen** for å løse denne i dag,
     ii. mulig løsning i dag og hvorfor
3. **Om arbeidsgiverkontakt** og **TG** på avdelingen
   - Innhold:
     i. Fokus på arbeidsgiverkontakt over tid på avdelingen (historisk)
     ii. eks: bruk av tilretteleggingsgaranti vs outsourcing eks "arbeid med bistand" – hva gjør at du bestemmer deg for det ene eller det andre?
     iii. Informantens tanker om TG – innhold, målgruppe,
   - **TGs rolle på avdelingen**
     i. Status i dag - teammøter forankret?, lederfokus,
4. **Implementeringsprosessen TG**: Hendelser og perioder viktig for informanten – hva ble gjort
     i. individnivå, motivasjon??
     ii. gruppenivå, normer? teammøter
     i. organisasjonsnivå, eks andre strategier som har blitt fokusert på
     ii. markedsnivå
5. Hvordan **løse vignette over tid** baset på funn (før TG ble fokusert og mens TG ble fokusert på)
   - Å bestemme seg for å bruke TG i en sak: fremmer og hemmer?
   - Hvordan **prioriterer** du i en hverdag der mye krever oppmerksomhet?
   - Kontekst og situasjon vs prioritere og velge å bruke TG eller ei.

Appendix 4 – Vignette

Mann, 27 år gammel, bor i Stavanger.
Single, leier kjellerleilighet hos foreldre.

CV:
UTDANNING Fullført vgs. over 5 år
med særlig tilrettelegging i
lærlingperioden 2005-11
IKT service medarbeider fagbrev 2011-14

ARBEID
Perioder med engasjement i diverse IT-
kundeservice stillinger

Kompetanse:
Engelsk (godt muntling og skrftlig) og norsk (morsmål)

Oppsummert arbeidsevnevurdering
- IKT-servicemedarbeider (innebærer drift og vedlikehold av nettverk og software i tillegg til brukerstøtte og service).
- Er svært interessert i programmering og data.
- Har ikke hatt fast arbeid siden fullført lærlingeperiode. Han har noen perioder med ulike typer IKT-engasjement innen IT-brukerstøtte og service som han har fått tilgang til via familie, men får ikke forlengelser etter engasjement løper ut / prøvetid er over.
- Mottar nå arbeidsavklaringspenger siden 2015.
- Målsetningen er å komme i et langvarig og stabilt arbeidsforhold.

Oppsummert fra spesialisterklæring:
- Diagnose asperger syndrom.
- Har slitt en del med angst og stress i nye arbeidssituasjoner, særlig når han må forholde seg til mange kunder og stort arbeidspress.
- Har utfordringer med å fungere i uoversiktlige og sosialt uforutsigbare situasjoner og har derfor erfaring med nederlag i det å stå i en stilling.

Tiltaksbehov:
- Har behov for stabilitet og forutsigbarhet i arbeidssituasjonen, klare og strukturerte arbeidsoppgaver og forståelse for at han ikke skal trenge å forholde seg til mange mennesker.
- Asperger syndrom er en medfødt tilstand, men ved god tilrettelegging antar man at det kan være både mulig og positivt for mange med diagnosen, inkludert bruker, å være i arbeid.
- Han ønsker selv å jobbe.

Behov for bistand fra NAV:
- Vil ha behov for bistand fra NAV pga redusert arbeidsevne og behov for tilrettelegging som beskrevet. Behov for tilrettelegging i jobben går utover det som kreves av tilrettelegging av arbeidsgiver etter arbeidsmiljøloven.
- Tiltak som kognitive hjelpemidler vurderes som aktuelle.

Arbeidsmarkedsforhold:
- Det finnes en arbeidsgiver som kan være interessert i å tilby arbeidspraksis.

Appendix 5 – Observation guide

Mal for observasjonsnotater

Observasjon nr

Lokasjon:

Tidspunkt:

Tilstede:

Min plassering:

- **Tema for møtet/innhold**

- **Om taushetsplikten.**

- **Status rundt bordet**.

- **Saker**

- **Evt spesifikke person-observasjoner**

- **Om samarbeid med andre instanser**

- **Om interaksjon**

- **Om innarbeidet praksiser**

- **Om kultur, normer, logikker**

- **Jargon**

- **Ulike tiltak:**

- **Om min tilstedeværelse og opplevelse**

- **Handlingsrommet:**

- **Særlige inntrykk / oppsummering**

- **Videre oppfølging:**

Appendix 6 – Document overview

Arbeidsinkluderingsfeltet
1. Activation policies in Norway OECD 2009
2. Stortingsmelding nr 9 (2006-2007): Arbeid, velferd og inkludering
3. Stortingsmelding nr 46 (2012-2013): Flere i arbeid
4. NOU 2012:6 – Arbeidsrettede tiltak
5. NOU 2010:5 – Aktiv deltakelse, likeverd og inkludering. Et helhetlig hjelpemiddeltilbud
6. OECD Mental Health and Work in Norway

NAV eksterne evalueringer
7. 2015 Rapportarbeidsformidling NAV
8. AFI rapport 2016 tiltaksbruk i NAV
9. Et NAV med muligheter. Sluttrapport Ekspertgruppa 2015
10. Mæland. Tønnesen & Paulsen (2014) Mål- og resultatstyring i NAV: fra nasjonale mål til lokal praksis. Bacheloroppgave Høgskolen Stord/Haugesund
11. Evaluering Jobbstrategien 2014 SINTEF

NAV målstyring og rapporter
12. Langtidsplan 2015-2018
13. NAVs årshjul plan og målarbeid
14. Plan- og budsjettprosessen 2016
15. Oversikt Mål og disponeringsbrev på fylkesnivåulike dok

Departementsnivå
16. Prop. 39L endringer i arbeidsmiljøloven og sosialtjenesteloven inkl ny TG
17. 2013 fra dep Tildelingsbrevet
18. 2010 fra dep Tildelingsbrev

Direktoratnivå
19. 2009 dir Virksomhetsrapport
20. 2013 dir Vedlegg 2 Utfyllende rapportering delmålene
21. 2014 dir Vedlegg 1 Særskilt rapportering
22. 2013 dir Hovedrapport
23. 2012 dir Vedlegg 4 Utfyllende rapport på delmålene
24. 2008 dir Virksomhetsrapport utdrag
25. 2008 dir Virksomhetsrapport
26. 2012 dir Virksomhetsrapport
27. 2010 dir Virksomhetsrapport DEL II-V ENDELIG
28. 2011 dir Virksomhetsrapport Del 2-4
29. 2015 dir Vedlegg 1 Særskilt rapportering 1. tertial
30. 2014 dir Årsrapport
31. 2011 dir Virksomhetsrapport Del 1
32. 2015 dir Virksomhetsrapport 1. tertial
33. 2010 dir Virksomhetsrapport DEL I
34. Diverse statistikk for resultatoppnåelse TG nasjonalt og fylkesvis

Fylkesnivå
35. Oversikt Mål og disponeringsbrev på fylkesnivå
36. 2011 Mål og disponeringsbrev til fylkene

37. 2010 Mål og disponeringsbrev til fylkene
38. Om Mål og disponeringsbrev fra intervjuer
39. 2013 Mål og disponeringsbrev til fylkene
40. 2014 Mål og disponeringsbrev HMS
41. 2014 Rammestyrte virkemidler til fylkene
42. 2014 Endelig mål og disp til fylkene
43. 2015 Mål og disp til Fylkeskontorene
44. 2015 til fylke Endelig MD-brev Tjenester
45. 2015 Foreløpig mål og disponeringsbrev til fylkene
46. Registerdata for NAV Fylket og variasjon mellom lokale kontor forperioden 2012 – 2015 for å kartlegge omfanget av tilretteleggingsgarantien.

Lokalkontornivå
47. 2013 Mål og disponeringsbrev til nav kontorene i fylket
48. Diverse statistikk for resultatoppnåelse på det spesifikke kontoret

Arbeidsprosedyrer ved arbeidsinkludering NAV lokal kontor
49. Prosedyre brukere
50. Oppfølgingsstandarden NAV veiledere
51. TG-prosedyre arena
52. Eksempel TG NAV-R
53. Eksempel TG arbeidssøker NAV-R
54. Eksempel TG kun oppfølging NAV-R
55. Eksempel God TG NAV-R

Stillingsbeskrivelser diverse koordinatorer
56. Arbeidslivscoach
57. Fylkeskoordinator Tilretteleggingsgarantien
58. Fylkeskoordinator Jobbstrategien

Tilretteleggingsgarantien (TG)
59. TG opprinnelse IA 2006
60. TG i IA avtalen 2006 VEDLEGG 4 – notat fra arbeidsgruppe før forsøksordning
61. Original TG skriv vedlegg 4 ia-rapport_24._mai_2006-webversjon
62. Utdrag om TG fra IA-avtalen 2014
63. Garantibevis for tilrettelegging 2007 Vedlegg 5 - stortinget.no
64. Tidlig TG historie og evaluering av tilretteleggingsgarantien forsøksprosjektet 2008
65. Evaluering av IA-avtalen 2010-2013
66. 2013 Riksrevisjonen
67. Hva er Tilretteleggingsgarantien presentasjon
68. Gammel til eksiterende TG 2008
69. Innstilling til Stortinget fra Kontroll og konstitusjonskomiteen om TG
70. Ny TG 2016
71. Høring fra dir om endringer arbeidsmarkedstiltak 2015
72. Høringssvar NHO - Forslag til forenklinger og endringer i regelverket om arbeidsmarkedstiltak

Tilretteleggingsgarantien Implementeringsstrategi

73. Svarbrev NAV fylke til riksrevisjonen
74. Kommunikasjonsstrategier fylke til lokalkontor
75. Kommunikasjon TG i tilbakemeldinger til NAV kontor
76. Diverse kommunikasjon via mail fra direktorat til fylket og fra fylket til kontor
77. TG samlinger
78. Om TG fra NAVET

Appendix 7 – Coding cycles and representative quotes

1. Structure - agency

Overlapping coding cycles		
1st cycle: coding of empirical data	**2nd cycle: coding for emerging themes**	**3rd cycle: coding for theoretical constructs and explanations**
− Wanting to be loyal to service recipients and potential employers. − Wanting to be loyal to NAV s vision of providing opportunities − Wanting to be loyal to management − Feeling of inadequacy, incapacity	Adherence to professional values of social work and a need for dignity and authenticity in work	Agency/Agentic concerns and values that trigger coping mechanisms
− Wanting to provide services in a timely and just manner and provide individualized follow up	Performance achievement according to professional standards of social work	
− Caseloads − Intake procedures to respective programs, − Application processing and degree of economic urgency − Service recipients' follow-up rights in the two programs.	Restricted time and resources	Structure/Situational contingencies that trigger coping mechanisms
− Shifting implementation instructions of work inclusion methods − New information technologies and tools − Several and new registration and documentation procedures	Continuous flow of implementation instructions and top-down pressures	
See 1st order work tasks and managerial principles in coding table on institutional logics below	Work tasks and managerial principles associated to 3 logics: craft, industrial production, administrative accountability	

2 Institutional logics

Overlapping coding cycles		
1st cycle: coding of empirical data	**2nd cycle: coding for emerging themes**	**3rd cycle: coding for theoretical constructs and explanations**
Associated managerial principles: – Focus on collaboration, user-involvement, individualization of services Associated work tasks: – Individualized tailored work inclusion services and collaboration for better services. – Close follow-up of service beneficiary and employer.	Logic of craft	Institutional logics potentially used as tools for dealing with implementation instructions
Associated managerial principles: – Standardization of services, efficient production. Associated work tasks: – Processing applications and requests within set deadlines and according to standards. – Income securing. – Using IT programs to keep track.	Logic of industrial production	
Associated managerial principles: – Focus on documentation and reporting on goal achievement. Associated work tasks: – Documentation and registration procedures for measuring-purposes. – Following implementation instructions.	Logic of administrative accountability	

3   Coping mechanisms

Overlapping coding cycles		
1st cycle: coding of empirical data	**2nd cycle: coding for emerging themes**	**3rd cycle: coding for theoretical constructs and explanations**
– Overwhelming work situations – Need to **create** order – Sorting work tasks – Need to **adhere** to certain values – Some **work** tasks match values and some don't. – Work **tasks** valuated according to how they match – Work **tasks** prioritized accordingly	Classification, valuation and prioritization of work tasks	Coping mechanisms triggered by certain agentic concerns and situational contingencies
– Adjusting **devaluated** work tasks – Down-**prioritizing** devaluated work tasks – Tricking **with** devaluated work tasks – Rejecting devaluated work tasks	Using resistance strategies to cope with devaluated work tasks	
– Need to be **loyal** both to service users and employer/management – **Discrepancy** in loyalty when resisting work tasks – **Explaining** why one work task is more important than in other in that situation	Justifying using resistance strategies	