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University  
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**Organisational Socialisation:  
A qualitative study of the interplay between the actors in organisational  
socialisation processes at Bane NOR**

Master's Thesis in Change Management

By

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to research the informal and relational organisational socialisation processes and the responsibilities and needs of the different actors involved. Role clarity, social integration, self-efficacy, and knowledge of culture are achieved through informal practices such as interpersonal relationships (Bauer, 2010). The thesis is conducted in collaboration with Bane NOR (BN). In times when onboarding processes are being digitised, it is valuable to investigate how to utilise such resources in an increasingly fragmented world. Remote work and less physical interaction affect the learning process for new employees. Organisations should understand the interplay between the actors that are a part of an onboarding process. Through the statement *How can the conditions for an organisational socialisation process be improved at Bane NOR by taking an explicit and proactive approach to the task?* this thesis will contribute to emphasise the importance of such.

With an exploratory and descriptive approach to the issue, the study is based on a qualitative methodology. Data collection was conducted by interviewing nine informants that represent the different actors that we were studying, which are the new employee, the manager responsible for the onboarding, and the Human Resources (HR). Additionally, we gathered insights from documents and other employees to uncover general considerations linked to the issue. This study is based on a humanistic view of humanity where we view employees as social resources, capable of creating a positive outcome for all.

Literature within the field shows that a solid basis for onboarding practices includes an interplay between new employee characteristics, behaviours, and organisational efforts (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). The thesis is based on Talya N. Bauer and Cathrine Filstad's work on organisational socialisation, Cato Wadel's literature on learning organisations, and Edgar H. Schein's theories on organisational culture. Additional literature includes fields such as physical presence and autonomy as these are factors that are relevant for organisational socialisation at BN.

It is not possible to draw final, general conclusions from such a small sample, but many findings point to trends that are specific to this organisation and for organisations in general. The analysis and results following the empirical data collection point at different approaches

and needs for the onboarding. Our findings indicate that BN could benefit from enhanced learning from the problem owners when deciding on future strategies and processes for onboarding. The managers value their autonomy and the ability to adjust processes to the local needs.

Even though each new employee, manager, team, and organisation have their own characteristics, the basis of an onboarding process is to facilitate social safety and establish solid connections. We would argue that BN could benefit from emphasising individual needs and expectations from the new employees. As we approach organisational socialisation as a learning process happening between the actors, establishing a common basis through role clearance and clarifications of expectations is essential. The findings also show that formalised actions such as sponsor or mentorships and trainee programs are elements of onboarding that could benefit from being formalised processes. These are also increasingly important with less physical presence. The responsibility for socialisation lies between the actors as competent individuals, and the core of the socialisation happens through communication and mutual adjustments.

## Sammendrag

Formålet med denne masteroppgaven er å undersøke uformelle og relasjonelle organisatoriske sosialiseringprosesser, samt ansvaret og forventninger til de ulike aktørene som er involvert. Rolleklarhet, sosial integrasjon, mestring og kunnskap om kulturen oppnås gjennom uformelle praksiser slik som mellommenneskelige relasjoner (Bauer, 2010).

Oppgaven er skrevet for Bane NOR (BN). I tider hvor onboardingsprosesser blir digitalisert, er det verdifullt å undersøke hvordan benytte seg av slike ressurser i en mer og mer fragmentert verden. Færre fysiske møter påvirker læringsprosessene for nyansatte.

Organisasjoner burde forstå samspillet mellom aktørene som er en del av onboardingsprosesser. Gjennom problemstillingen *Hvordan kan forutsetningene for en organisatorisk sosialiseringprosess hos Bane NOR forbedres ved å ha en eksplisitt og proaktiv tilnærming til oppgaven?* vil denne oppgaven bidra til å fremheve viktigheten av dette.

Med en utforskende og deskriptiv tilnærming til problemstillingen, er studiet basert på en kvalitativ metodikk. Datainnsamlingen ble utført ved å intervju ni informanter som representerer de ulike aktørene som vi studerte, som er den nyansatte, lederen med ansvar for onboarding og Human Resources (HR). I tillegg har vi samlet inn innsikt fra dokumenter og andre ansatte for å avdekke generelle hensyn knyttet til problemstillingen. Denne studien er basert på et humanistisk menneskesyn, der vi ser på ansatte som sosiale ressurser, i stand til å skape et positivt resultat for alle.

Litteratur innenfor feltet viser at et godt grunnlag for onboarding inkluderer et samspill mellom nyansattes egenskaper, atferd og organisatorisk innsats (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Oppgaven er basert på Talya N. Bauer og Cathrine Filstads arbeid om organisasjonssosialisering, Cato Wadels litteratur om lærende organisasjoner, og Edgar H. Scheins teorier om organisasjonskultur. Tillegglitteratur inkluderer felt som fysisk tilstedeværelse og autonomi da dette er faktorer som er relevante for den organisatoriske sosialiseringen i BN.

Det vil ikke være mulig å trekke endelige konklusjoner fra et så lite utvalg, men det er mange funn som peker på trender som er spesifikke for denne organisasjonen og organisasjoner generelt. Analysen og resultatene som er basert på den empiriske datainnsamlingen peker på

flere aspekter og behov som er viktige for onboardingen. Våre funn indikerer at BN kan med fordel dra nytte av økt læring fra eierne av problemene før de utvikler fremtidige strategier og prosesser for onboardingen. Lederne verdsetter deres autonomi og muligheten til å tilpasse prosessene til lokale behov.

Selv om hver nyansatt, leder, team og organisasjon har sine egne egenskaper, er grunnlaget for en onboardingsprosess å legge til rette for sosial trygghet og etablere solide forbindelser. Vi vil hevde at BN med fordel kan legge vekt på individuelle behov og forventninger fra den nyansatte. Da vi forholder oss til organisasjonssosialisering som en læringsprosess som skjer mellom aktørene, er det viktig å etablere et felles grunnlag gjennom rolle- og forventningsavklaringer. Funnene viser også at formaliserte tiltak som bruk av sponsor, mentor og traineeprogrammer er elementer innen onboarding som bør være sentraliserte prosesser. Disse er i økt grad viktige med mindre fysisk tilstedeværelse. Ansvaret for sosialisering ligger mellom aktørene som kompetente individer og kjernen i sosialiseringen skjer gjennom kommunikasjon og gjensidige tilpasninger.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

*“A learning organisation is an organisation that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Peter Senge, 2006)*

An organisation is defined as “a system of consciously coordinated personal activities or forces” (Chester Barnard, 1938, as cited in Eriksson-Zetterquist et al., 2015, p. 21). After the covid-19 pandemic, organisations have indeed realised that the future is unpredictable. The enormous challenges we face in these turbulent times are forcing organisations to innovate and re-create themselves (Scharmer, 2011, p. 21). Remote work has forced organisations to adapt and utilise digital resources in new and better ways. As people learn through interactions with others, it can be challenging to create social connections digitally. Research shows that eight out of 10 employees have reconsidered their job after the pandemic (Jordheim, 2022). Employees today place high demands on the aspect of meaning and motivation in their work life. The possibilities are many, and the competition for the best people is high. Within one year, 25 percent of all employees change jobs, and loyalty towards the employee has decreased (Jordheim, 2022). This development tells us that the relationship between the employee and the employer is increasingly harder to maintain. The legal employment contract is only the beginning of a more important contract, which is the psychological contract of the workplace in which you are employed. This contract is what keeps people engaged in the organisation through involvement, motivation and commitment, and it is the first onboarding phase that lays this foundation. Therefore, organisations should ask themselves how new employees become an integral part of the organisation and the existing subcultures, and to what extent they feel connected to the values, mindsets and social norms.

The first phase of a new employment relationship for a new employee can be an overwhelming phase with many new impressions, people, cultural norms, processes, and resources. The new employees' integration phase is defined as the onboarding phase. Bauer (2010, p. 1) defines onboarding as “the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly”. According to Cathrine Filstad (2017), onboarding includes important resources for how new employees can feel motivated and a part of the organisation. Social practice and interaction with colleagues help give new

employees a sense of belonging, and by emphasising the new employees' social learning process, facilitators may better understand what areas to focus on. The aspects of differences between the new employees' needs and expectations are therefore interesting to research.

How new employees learn during the onboarding process determines what they learn. Pedagogy seeks to understand how people learn, what learning is, what one learns and should learn, and how the training can best be organised to achieve the desired, both individually and collectively (Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997, p. 65). It is a matter of measuring and analysing all factors that impact the individual learning processes and understanding the relationship between skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

With a high degree of uncertainty, it is important for the new employee to feel mastery and belonging. The need for social connection is regarded as one of the three basic needs in human existence (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009). When starting a new job relationship in a new organisation, the informal factors creating a connection between the existing and new members are essential to gain a sense of belonging. Varma et al. (2022) argue that the disadvantages of remote work are the inability to learn from colleagues and unfulfilled socialisation. We want to understand the implications of this, and how this is perceived by the different actors in an onboarding process.

## **1.1 Thesis Statement and Research Question**

During the early-stage planning, we found out that we wanted to write about something relevant for many organisations today, where our findings can contribute to a greater understanding of a current issue within a particular organisation. We believed writing about organisational socialisation in collaboration with BN would be both motivating and rewarding, due to the relevance of the research that hopefully could be of importance to the organisation.

The mandate from BN was “How can you make it easier for new employees to get to know the culture, the organisation and colleagues and get a good introduction to work tasks? Which method/model is most effective in this work/process?” (Jernbanekompetanse, 2021). In conversations with our supervisors from BN and UiS, we discussed different approaches to the term and the task. Based on the theoretical groundwork, BNs mandate and our curiosity

regarding the role of the different actors in the organisational socialisation process, we have chosen the following issue as our thesis statement:

*How can the conditions for an organisational socialisation process be improved at Bane NOR by taking an explicit and proactive approach to the task?*

By angling the task in a relational and informal direction, we wanted to look at the experiences of the actors, their actions, and their expectations towards themselves and each other. That way we could research how the informal socialisation process could lay the basis for a solid relationship between the new employee and the organisation. To delimit the task and answer the thesis statement, we examined the following three research questions:

- I. What informal and formal practices and factors should be in place to facilitate learning in a socialisation process?
- II. In what way are the different actors in a socialisation process of new employees responsible for the outcome?
- III. Is physical presence a prerequisite for the new employee to learn to become a part of an organisation?

The thesis statement and research questions presented above, are based on selected literature on organisational socialisation and onboarding, organisational culture, learning organisations and physical presence. The topic is based on the mandate from BN and Bauer's research on onboarding and how new employees learn to become an integral part of the organisation. We had an understanding that HR employees believe that the onboarding process in BN could benefit from an increasingly systemised process, as they experience that the execution of this process varies from division to division, affecting the quality of the socialisation. There is believed to be a gap between today's situation and a reality where all new employees receive effective onboarding where all managers utilise the available support resources, and where HR can trust this process throughout the organisation.

To answer the research questions, we studied onboarding processes in different divisions in BN. We also looked at BN's trainee program and examined what features from this program

BN potentially could learn from and apply in the onboarding of the other employees. Additionally, we discuss what considerations BN needs to take when it comes to resources, locations, time, and the existing subcultures.

Our thesis is based on a humanistic view of humanity, which in short, is that humans are a subject, a unique self, who has autonomy, responsibility and dignity, both of themselves and for those around them (Rognes 1979, p. 11; Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997, p. 38). Moreover, Rogers (in Rognes, 1979) argues that people are positive, sociable, progressive and sensible by nature. Humans are therefore individuals with unique characteristics, which emphasises that people are social animals who have a need for inclusive and responsible communities in order to live good lives, and to fill their role in the hierarchy through training (Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997). The moral or ethical requirements are made clear by the fact that mankind is an end in itself and a goal of the organisation (Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997). Organisations that have a humanistic view of humanity puts the individual at the centre and point to the solidarity between people as central, which may help create a safe and special bond in an organisation (Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997). Moreover, all actors within an organisation may achieve open will where one can share their input and create learning processes (Sharmer, 2011).

## **1.2 Purpose and Assumptions**

We interpreted the results of the empirical research together with theory-based literature to provide a solid base for the organisational socialisation that we believe BN can benefit from. The purpose of the study is to explore assumptions regarding organisational socialisation in BN, and how the different actors each have an individual purpose in this process, that only exists in relation to the others. We think that this study will be valuable for BN as they will gain knowledge and insight and get a better understanding of what factors that play a central role in such processes, to get a more holistic approach to the term onboarding. Additionally, we hope that this work will help BN and their HR team on their change journey to make decisions based on the employees' actual needs moving forward.

We based our thesis on the following assumptions: *The quality of the organisational socialisation process depends on how the actors act on their responsibilities and the totality of the communication and mutual adjustments in the situation, and The results of the onboarding will vary according to several individual and societal factors, which are difficult*

*to discover and adjust such as subcultures, the actor's values, attitudes, and leadership styles.* This was explored by looking at BN's current onboarding practices and how the different actors experienced them. By getting different views on the situation, and finding out the variation of actual needs of new employees and the responsible managers involved, we hoped to be able to address what should be BN's focus moving forward. The aspect of physical presence was a factor we took into account throughout our research, as we assumed this creates another layer of challenge to the learning process for new employees. Limited research is available within the field, but relevant research is presented in the theory chapter.

### **1.3 Case: Bane NOR**

In this chapter, we will present relevant background information regarding the organisation we are studying. We will cover both basic information and structural changes over the last years that have shaped the organisation as it is today, and how these may have affected the culture. The following information is gathered through open data, and some are paraphrased from the interviews and conversations with employees in the organisation. The onboarding processes in BN will be elaborated on in the findings and analysis chapter.

BN, with approximately 3400 employees, is responsible for the planning, development, administration, operation, and maintenance of the national railway network and property in Norway (Bane NOR, n.d; Bane NOR, 2021a). From January 1st, 2017 Jernbaneverket (an administrative body directly under the Ministry of Transport and Communications), became BN, a State-owned enterprise (Bane NOR, 2016; Bane NOR, 2021a). This also included the ownership of the real estate company Rom Eiendom being transferred from the NSB (Norges Statsbaner) group to BN in the first half of 2017 (Saltnes, 2017). BN's current values are openness, respectfulness, engagement, and innovation, which are fundamental to their work (Bane NOR, 2021a). When recruiting new employees, BN wants its future employees to identify with these values (Bane NOR, 2021b).

Further, BN is organised into four divisions with responsibility for each of its areas of expertise, which are:

- Operations and technology - operates and develops the existing railway, also including the ERTMS-programme
- Development - planning and conducting investment projects for new railway, including large projects like Follobanen

- Customer and market - point of contact with customers
- Real estate - BN real estate administrates and develop property and junction points
- Staff functions - HR, Finance, Security, Communication (Bane NOR, 2020a).

With the new organisational structure as a state-owned enterprise, an increased degree of flexibility was established (Supervisor BN; HR employee 1). However, such changes rarely happen without challenges. New structuring of the divisions, including HR, was in place. The HR employees went from previously having more direct involvement in the recruitment process, to a support function, where the responsibility now lies to a larger degree with the managers in the divisions and departments (Supervisor BN; HR employee 1). As a part of the organisational changes, there was also created a separate recruitment unit within the HR section. After 2017, there has been an increased focus on leadership development through leadership courses, and for better internal communication, regular monthly meetings with the managers have been implemented (Supervisor BN; HR employee 1).

Organisations at the size of BN constantly have ongoing change processes. In 2020, BN began a comprehensive restructuring of the organisation (Bane NOR, 2020b). The purpose is to standardise and simplify processes and prioritise the digitalisation of the railway (Bane NOR, 2020b). BN, just like any other modern organisation, must adjust to digitalisation, which has been an ongoing process for several years. Moreover, BN conducts annual employee satisfaction surveys, as well as several shorter "pulse" surveys. In 2022, they also conducted an employee survey that focused specifically on culture.

Driv is a digital system that was integrated into BN as a part of the process development in the organisation where the modernisation of manual processes was happening. The first resource that was implemented was the document signing solution. Before 2018, all employee contracts were signed physically by pen and paper. The system today includes HR functions such as e-learning (introduction courses), information, communication between the new employee and manager as well as other supporting resources for those responsible for onboarding at BN (Supervisor BN; HR employee 1).

### *1.3.1 Bane NOR's Trainee Program*

BN offers a trainee program for recent graduates. The main goal is to get the graduate to know different areas of BN, and gain insight into what it is like to work in BN (Bane NOR,

2022). The program lasts for one and a half years and takes place through three practice modules, where the trainee gets to know their colleagues and the organisation's partners. The trainee is facilitated with a sponsor and a mentor who will follow their professional and personal development (Bane NOR, 2022). Being a trainee at BN is also meant to give new graduates the opportunity to build a large professional network and further develop themselves towards management, project management or a role as a specialist.

#### **1.4 The Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is structured in six different chapters, where we start by presenting the theoretical framework. Then, we discuss the methodical approach that has been used for our study. Further, we present and analyse our empirical findings, before discussing these together with the relevant theory. Finally, we will highlight key findings from the research in a concluding chapter. Here, limitations of the study as well as suggestions for future research are presented.

## **2.0 Theoretical Framework**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the thesis and is divided into relevant topics related to the thesis problem and our initial assumptions. The purpose of this chapter is to create a solid framework to be able to discuss the empirical findings, by uncovering factors and approaches, which can be linked to an organisational socialisation process, and in the broader picture are aspects that we consider may affect the employee satisfaction at a workplace.

We will begin by explaining the terms onboarding and organisational socialisation as we consider these to be essential in order to be able to answer the thesis statement. Then, we will look at Talya Bauer's theory and present her framework for onboarding, the six C's. Bauer's six C's is described by scholars to be useful to achieve successful organisational socialisation. We have chosen to include Bauer and Erdogan (2011) who describe three core elements within organisational socialisation. These elements can be linked to Bauer's six C's, which will be central to further discussion about how onboarding is achieved through an interplay between the actors.

Bauer has to a large degree an institutional approach to onboarding, but as we believe that



socialisation also is an individual process that happens between people, we saw the need to include other views. Therefore, Filstad's theory of new employees' organisational socialisation will be relevant as much of her theory complements and validates Bauer and Erdogan's theories, and also focuses on individualised approaches. Bauer, Erdogan and Filstad's theories will allow us to look at the differences between formal and informal approaches to onboarding and what implications this may have. We found it appropriate to also include Cato Wadel's work, who understands organisational socialisation as a learning process, which he argues may be achieved through interpersonal relationships. This literature review has been done to delimit and clarify our approach to the problem (Grennes, 2020, p. 19). This has enabled us to create a realistic view of the task and set the theoretical framework for what we relate to the theme.

Further, we include theories regarding the implications of physical presence in socialisation processes, as all the new employees who participated in this study were onboarded during the covid-19 pandemic. Secondly, this will be relevant for future cases as many employees have now adapted to increased flexibility and home office, which affect the socialisation of new employees. Additionally, we have applied Laloux's work on Teal organisations to understand human-centred organisations. Lastly, we will present perspectives and theories within organisational culture, as integration into the organisational culture is essential for new employees to become effective members of an organisation. Here we use Edgar Schein's theories to discuss how becoming a part of the organisational culture requires more time than learning the task and what is expected from the new employee.

## **2.1 Onboarding and Organisational Socialisation**

*“Organizational socialization is defined as a learning and adjustment process that enables an individual to assume an organizational role that fits both organizational and individual needs” (Chao, 2012, p. 582)*

During new employees' process of socialisation within a new organisation, social knowledge and skills are necessary for one to understand their organisational role. Successful early socialisation has been identified by scholars to be of great value for organisations as it reduces stress and ambiguity during the early stages of employment (Solinger et al., 2013, p. 1). Moreover, it enhances performance and allows new employees to start focusing on task performance, which also reduces voluntary turnover. “From a broader perspective, the

socialisation of new employees is crucial to institutional persistence, organisational solidarity, and the reenactment of organisational values and culture” (Parsons, 1951, Selznick 1957, as cited in Solinger et al., 2013. p. 1).

Connie R. Wanberg (2012, p. 17) states that there are important differences between the terms *onboarding* and *organisational socialisation* and should not be used interchangeably. Onboarding is a narrow term, which refers to the specific practices, where an organisation facilitates a new employee during the first day on the job (Wanberg, 2012, p. 18). Here organisations give a warm welcome, provide a mentor or clarify roles and responsibilities. Wanberg further argues that organisational socialisation is a broader term, which may also include onboarding, but further encompasses the learning, information seeking and other processes during the socialisation of new employees. According to Georgia T. Chao (2012), the process of new employees within an organisation has been widely adopted and research within the field has been fragmented, meaning that there is not one specific definition of the process.

However, we chose to use the terms organisational socialisation and onboarding interchangeably in our thesis as we understand both onboarding and organisational socialisation as a learning process, which includes both formal and informal practices to facilitate new employees’ adjustments. We, therefore, found Bauer and Berrin Erdogan's (2011, p. 51) definition appropriate to our thesis: “Organisational socialisation, or onboarding, is a process through which new employees move from being organisational outsiders to becoming organisational insiders”. The process of learning is something that “happens” rather than an attribute that “is” (Solinger et al., 2013, p. 2).

### 2.1.1 Bauer's Six C's

Bauer’s framework initially consisted of four C's including compliance, clarification, culture and connection, but has since 2010 extended to six Cs, adding confidence and checkback (Iversen & Øhrn, 2022). The six C's are described to be the building blocks for successful organisational socialisation to inoculate against turnover, improve performance and increase job satisfaction (Bauer, 2010). It is important to keep in mind that the six phases are constant ongoing processes that affect socialisation at the same time even though they are presented separately in this paper. All six areas are important, but some will have greater potential to create positive results for an organisation. Following are the six C’s.

### *Compliance*

Compliance is described as an introductory level. This first phase covers how the organisation facilitates the new employees with basic organisational knowledge of rules and regulations (Bauer, 2010, p. 2). This phase also includes getting all the practicalities in place, such as providing the new employee with a cell phone, laptop, or key card and giving access to digital systems. Therefore, compliance deals with how the organisation transfers basic, formal laws and rules within the organisation.

### *Clarification*

Clarification refers to the details and content of the current employment relationship. This phase is about how the organisation ensures that the new employee is aware of what their job entails, the norms for conducting their task, and expectations of achievements (Bauer, 2013). Clarification is an important role as it includes several features where role clarification refers to what, when, who and how to get the tasks done. Bauer emphasises that the sooner new employees understand their tasks and the job they are going to do, the quicker they will become productive members of the organisation. Some of the responsibility may also lie with the new employee, to be proactive, and let the organisation know if anything is unclear.

### *Connection*

Connection may be viewed as one of the most important aspects of onboarding, as it affects the organisational outcomes such as job satisfaction, turnover, motivation, and work effort (Bauer, 2013). The outcome depends on how the organisation facilitates the new employee with building networks and interpersonal relationships. Focusing on this aspect may contribute to new employees adapting to the environment and feeling a sense of belonging. This is necessary for not only establishing ties with colleagues but also necessary to be able to deliver good results (Bauer, 2010). It is during this phase that unseen informal practices start taking place between the actors.

### *Confidence*

It is important that the organisation helps the new employees with building confidence (Iversen & Øhrn, 2022, p. 2). Although organisations may not be able to facilitate employees feeling better about themselves, they may by focusing on the new employees' values and encouraging them to involve themselves at work, help new employees build confidence.

According to Iversen and Øhrn (2022), building confidence may also be achieved by addressing that the new employee is doing a good job and getting a feeling that he/she made the right choice by starting to work at the selected organisation.

### *Culture*

Culture is about how the new employee should be integrated into the organisational culture. Bauer (2013) emphasises that organisations, similar to humans, have different personalities, manners, needs, and expectations. The quicker the new employees understand the overall culture and subcultures within the organisation such as the norms and values, may increase the new employees' chance of long-term success within the organisation (Bauer, 2010, p. 9). It is important that new employees feel a sense of belonging and a part of the social environment, which may be achieved by engaging colleagues.

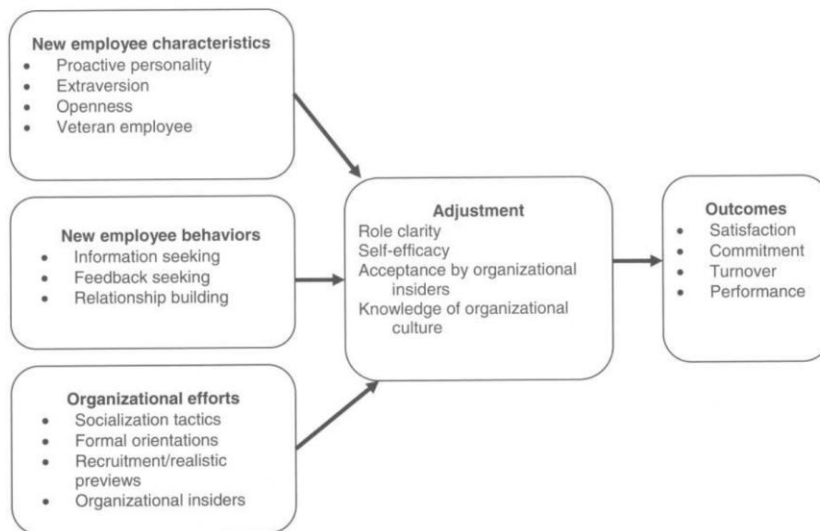
### *Checkback*

Lastly, it is important that the organisation continuously do checkbacks about how the new employee experiences their onboarding. The new employee is then able to provide the organisation with feedback on how closely the various measures are followed and if they have been beneficial (Iversen & Øhrn, 2022). This may lay the groundwork for good communication between the manager and the new employee, as it can make him/her feel seen and improve the internal processes, if it is followed up on.

## **2.1.2 A Model of Organisational Socialisation**

According to Bauer and Erdogan (2011), successful organisational socialisation of new employees has a balanced interplay between new employee characteristics, new employee behaviour, and organisational effort. New employees' individual differences such as personality, background, and previous experiences are believed to affect their adjustment to the organisation, which can affect the outcome of the process. Additionally, organisations' participation in the socialisation process may also have a great impact on the outcome. This is illustrated in the model Figure 1.

**Figure 1:**



*Process model of socialisation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, p. 52).*

Developing an organisational socialisation program that works well for everyone can be challenging as “one model fits all” does not exist. The process depends on both the organisation and the new employee to actively engage in order for it to succeed. According to Bauer and Erdogan (2011), the actual social process takes place in the adjustment phase. While new employees' characteristics and behaviours and the organisations' effort lay the groundwork, it is in the adjustment phase where the integration takes place. We will describe the three phases in more detail to better understand the different aspects of how the model works.

#### *New employee characteristics and behaviour*

New employees' characteristics such as individual differences, background and personality traits play a critical role in the organisational socialisation process. According to research, new employees with certain personality traits are more likely to adapt more quickly to the organisation than others (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, p. 52). Individuals with a proactive personality tend to have greater motivation to learn and a desire to control their environment and develop social networks, which will help them gain a better understanding of the organisational culture. Bauer and Erdogan (2011) argue that new employees who have a cultural understanding and are motivated to learn will enhance the likelihood of an effective socialisation process. Moreover, new employees that are extroverts, who are more outgoing and open, will show higher levels of adaptability.

New employees with such personality traits search for information and feedback, find solutions rather than threats, and are good at building social networks. Creating effective relationships with colleagues is an important resource for new employees' own socialisation and well-being. Finally, people with previous experience with being a new employee within an organisation might have an advantage when it comes to adaptability (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

Filstad (2017) also highlights the significance of individual differences in organisational socialisation. Individual differences that come from the new employees' characteristics and previous knowledge, will impact the individuals development of meaning, how it gathers information and its learning. Filstad also argues that organisational socialisation is a prolonged process, and getting to know the organisational culture takes time, but nevertheless is completely necessary.

#### *Organisational efforts*

There are several ways for an organisation to facilitate new employees' organisational socialisation process. Some prefer a structured and systematic approach, while others apply more informal approaches (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Research on socialisation tactics have been compiled by various scholars. Van Maanen and Schein (1979, as cited in Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, p. 54) originally defined six dimensions of socialisation tactics as “[...] (a) collective versus individual socialisation, (b) formal or informal, (c) sequential or random training steps, (d) fixed or variable sequencing of training, (e) serial or disjunctive tactics in terms of insider help with adjustment, and (f) investiture or divestiture with divestiture asking new employees to give up their prior self”. These have been further classified by Jones (1986) under institutionalised and individualised tactics and later mentioned in Filstad (2017).

An organisation may, using institutionalised tactics, facilitate organisational socialisation through systematic step-by-set programs to teach new employees about their role, the organisations' norms and how they are expected to behave. New employees who work in organisations where there is a focus on individualised tactics, have to take a more proactive role in the organisational socialisation process, with the use of individual and informal approaches. Bauer and Erdogan (2011) discuss the strength and weaknesses of the different tactics and states that newly graduates who experience institutionalised socialisation tactics

tend to have a more positive job attitude and a better understanding of the organisation compared to those who experience individualised socialisation tactics.

Bauer (2010) argues that new employees that are appointed a mentor are more likely to adapt quickly to the working environment in the new organisation and to achieve success. Bauer (2010, p. 11) refers to a study that shows that new employees are more likely to learn about the organisation and internalise the new role if they are facilitated with a mentor during the onboarding process. Their main task is to offer advice, guide and help the new employee adapt to the working environment and understand their role in the organisation. The mentor should assess the new employee's situation and needs so that one can expand their perspective and be helpful during the development process.

We find it necessary to also mention Wessons and Gogus (2005) study, presented in Bauer and Erdogan (2011, p. 55). Wessons and Gogus point out that the outcome of formal tactics may vary if one is to participate in a formal orientation day through digital resources. The empirical finding in Wessons and Gogus study showed that those who participate in an orientation day through digital tools have been shown to have a lower understanding of the job position and of the company. This is an important factor to include, especially today where more and more people have adapted to remote work. According to Bauer and Erdogan (2011), different formats of orientations may therefore not substitute for each other, and further state that onboarding programs should be formally documented, communicated to all members of the organisations, consistently applied, and tracked over time.

#### *Adjustments and Outcomes*

Adjustments refer to how the new employee manages to become a part of the organisation. Bauer and Erdogan (2011) refer to four success factors: role clarity, self-efficacy, acceptance by the organisational insiders, and knowledge of the organisational culture. These concepts are considered highly related to the positive outcomes of organisational socialisation, which contributes to satisfaction, commitment, turnover, and performance.

### **2.1.3 Three-phase Socialisation Process**

Regardless of complexity and diversity, organisational socialisation most often appears as an adaptation process in which new employees engage in the organisations' social and cultural reality (Filstad, 2017). Organisational socialisation does not only consist of various elements.

It also functions as a learning process consisting of different stages. The stages of socialisation say something about where the new employee is expected to be in the organisational socialisation process and what follow-up is needed. Filstad (2017) refers to Feldman's (1981) three stages of organisational socialisation that new employees must go through to become effective members of the organisation: anticipatory socialisation, accommodation, and establishing phase.

The first stage, anticipatory socialisation, is the phase before the employment begins where the individual forms expectations and makes decisions regarding the employment. This phase is about developing pre-socialisation and assumptions through their expectation of the organisation, and what the new employee themselves want to contribute with. New employees will make up their minds about the organisation and raise expectations for their new workplace before they begin. Therefore, it is important that the organisation provides proper information about the organisation. Some organisations have formal measures during this phase, such as trainee programs (Filstad, 2017), which, if done right, has shown to be a great success when it comes to facilitating new employees to strengthen their feeling of mastery and self-esteem.

The second stage is accommodation, where the individual first meets the organisation and attempts to become a part of it through learning new tasks, establishing interpersonal relationships with co-workers and clarifying their role in the organisation. A lot of this stage is informal and the responsibility to learn lies with the employee itself. The organisation should be aware of these informal learning processes and how the employee can get access to colleagues as important sources of knowledge (Filstad, 2017, p. 27). When it comes to formal learning, Filstad argues that arranged socialisation tactics can be important, as it gives signals about what the organisation values as important for how the new employee's learning processes should be and how they can access sources of knowledge. An example of this is a sponsor or mentoring scheme, which is the facilitation of formal relationships with selected colleagues.

According to Filstad (2017), a sponsor's role is meant to be a short-term arrangement. A sponsor should be a person with short experience within the specific organisation who recognises the challenges of the new employee. A mentor is often a person who is older and has more experience than the new employee who will pass on their knowledge, experience,



and values that they have accumulated over the years. Moreover, new employees will also become role models. They can, with their previous experiences, be their own role model, other new employees may be role models, and a new employee may become a role model for established colleagues. Learning is therefore rational and not a one-to-one relationship (Filstad, 2017).

The final stage is the establishing phase. We understand this phase as the role management stage, where the individual is establishing their position in a group within the organisation as well as understanding demands and expectations. It is about having the ability to adapt to the culture, norms, and values. New employees who master work tasks, succeed in their role together with colleagues, who begin to act, think, and feel like an integral part of the organisation are decisive to achieve effective organisational socialisation (Greenhaus et al., 2010 in Filstad, 2017).

## **2.2 Organisational Culture**

Organisational culture is a wide term that has been defined by several scholars throughout the years. Therefore, we found it necessary to define it and create our own understanding of it, to be able to apply it in this specific context. Edgar H. Schein and his work *Organisational Culture & Leadership* from 1985 has for many laid the groundwork for future research in the field. We found it reasonable to base our theories on his work, and supplement them with Wadels, Bangs and Kaufmann & Kaufmanns work.

Schein defines organisational culture as “[...] the pattern or system of beliefs, values and behavioural norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness” (Schein, 2017, p. 6). Schein is illustrating organisational culture through artefacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. This three-level understanding of culture makes us better understand a new employee's journey on the cultural aspect of the socialisation process, as well as becoming humble towards the research field when conducting the research. We will elaborate on this in the methodical chapter.

According to Schein (2017), artefacts are organisational attributes that can be seen, felt, and heard by the observer, such as offices and facilities. This also includes the observed behaviour, structures, and processes of how people interact. The observer of an organisation will struggle to understand the meaning behind this level, without asking questions. It is

dangerous to infer deeper assumptions from artefacts alone, as these inevitably will be projections of our own cultural background. When a new employee has been in the group long enough, the meaning of the artefacts will gradually become clear, and the espoused beliefs and values will appear.

Espoused values are ideals, goals, and values in an organisation (Schein, 2017). These may or may not be congruent with behaviour and other artefacts. “If the beliefs and values that provide meaning and comfort to the group are not congruent with the beliefs and values that correlate with effective performance, we will observe in many organisations espoused values that reflect the *desired* behaviour but are not reflected in *observed* behaviour” (Argyris & Schon, 1978, as cited in Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 20). Schein explains that espoused beliefs and values often are so abstract that they might be mutually contradictory. For an outsider, it may also be hard to understand the whole picture of the culture through these hidden beliefs and values. Therefore, one should understand the basic assumptions.

The final level, the often taken-for-granted basic assumptions, are unseen and not actively defined in everyday interactions between the members of an organisation. These are implicit assumptions that determine one's behaviour, perception, thoughts, and feelings (Schein, 2017). If a basic assumption is strong in a group, the members will find behaviour based on another premise inconceivable. Culture at this level tells the members of a group- who they are, how to behave towards each other, and how to feel about themselves. This level is the reason why changes in culture are to a larger degree anxiety-provoking.

### **2.2.1 Adaptation of Culture**

When new employees are onboarded into a new organisation, they have a “history” of data available to decipher the leader’s real assumptions. Due to this, the socialisation process is to a large degree embedded in the organisation's everyday routines. Schein (2017) argues that this is where the cultural assumptions are learned, and not through courses and indoctrination sessions.

Another element that Schein (2017) is highlighting of key importance is the term “shared”. This is also what makes culture so complex. As an outsider wanting to understand a culture in an organisation, one must understand what kind of shared learning has taken place, over what span of time and under what kind of leadership. The culture of a group is this accumulated

shared learning that over time has become the correct way to perceive, think, feel, and behave in relation to problems.

According to Schein (2017), when recruiting, founders and leaders generally find attractive candidates who are mostly alike present members in style, assumptions, values, and beliefs. The implicit assumptions are, to different degrees, dominating the recruiters' perceptions of the candidates. An argument for using recruiters from outside the organisation is that these embedded mechanisms will not interfere with the judgement.

### *2.2.2 Shaping of Culture and Organisations*

Wadel (2021) presents different views on how one may understand the term organisational culture and how it is shaped. Terms such as norms, values, basic assumptions, and perceptions of reality are widely used to describe the core of organisational culture. He argues that the popular literature emphasises the outer aspects of an organisational culture, which is the management's spoken values and rituals in the organisation. Wadel continues by stating that no matter how one understands the culture, it is constructed and shaped by humans (2021, p. 108). The question is if shaping and reshaping culture within organisations happens unconsciously and by itself, or if it can consciously and systematically be changed? Wadel concludes his article by saying that organisational culture appears to be more complex and less controllable than some argue that organisational design is.

Scharmer (2011) developed Theory U to better understand the sources from which all social management is constantly created. The challenges many organisations have faced during the pandemic have forced organisations to adapt and change. Scharmer believes that with collective leadership capacity, organisations may create a future of great possibilities. Theory U attempts to explore leaders' blind spots as he believes one often knows little about the inner place, the source from which one operates. For this to be successful, Scharmer (2011, p. 21) argues that one should ask themselves "*who are we? Why are we here? What do we want to create together?*". The management in organisations can by the use of Theory U learn how to reveal where problems originate from, and how one may be able to start planning the process for change.

### *2.2.3 Subcultures in Organisations*

Schein (2017) states that any group that has a shared task, constant membership and a common history of co-learning will have its own subculture. This exists within the culture of the organisation. Bang explains subcultures as a subgroup of the members of an organisation that communicates with each other and identifies as a distinct group in the organisation that shares the same challenges (Bang, 2020, p. 28). He argues that these subcultures can be a source for strength or a destruction for an organisation. Conflicts may arise, and Bang mentions conflicts between organisational subcultures that have been merged due to mergers and acquisitions as a common issue (2020, p. 36-37). He then argues that a decisive factor is the quality of the integration process.

We find Schein and Bangs work on organisational culture essential to have as a “common ground” when researching a field such as organisational socialisation. Awareness about subcultures that evolve individually within an organisation is essential when researching this field.

### **2.3 Learning in Organisations**

Within the theories presented so far, both formal and informal tactics are important during the organisational socialisation of new employees. Cato Wadel (2002) argues that learning takes place in all types of organisations, and often occurs between members of the organisation. Thus, not all organisations are as learning organisations than others. Wadel (2002) claims that learning takes place in interpersonal relationships, which are based on the interaction between individuals. Learning relationships are based on trust, as well as being motivated to teach each other. Further, these interpersonal relationships for learning can lead up to learning organisations. Wadel (2002) uses the term learning relationship in his theory. Wadel (2002) also claims that most of the learning conditions that are created will be informal. These are learning relationships that employees enter on their own initiative. "Such informal learning conditions can be supported by formal learning conditions, but formal learning conditions will never be able to replace the informal ones." (Wadel, 2002, p. 31-32). A learning culture that is largely informal is difficult to grasp as it is a hidden part of the organisation. According to Wadel, listening is a central, communicative skill, and is a big part of a team's work and growth.

In March 2020, Norway shut down due to the consequences of covid-19, and among other measures, home office was imposed. Physical meetings were replaced with virtual meetings, and the casual chats over the coffee machine disappeared. According to Iversen and Øhrn (2022), employers found themselves at a crossroad and had to quickly rethink how to maintain employees' productivity and motivation while reaching organisational goals. As the pandemic has evolved, organisations have welcomed their employees back into the workplace. Thus, attitudes towards productivity at home offices have changed, and people have become used to increased flexibility. This has led the way to more organisations opening up for employees to work from other places than from the physical office.

If learning happens largely between organisational members, how is it then possible for new employees to learn about their role, build interpersonal relationships and become a part of the organisational culture with absence of physical presence? Rodeghero et al., (2021) conducted a survey of 267 new employees who were onboarded remotely during the covid-19 pandemic. Remote work means working away from the physical office (Rodeghero et al., 2021, p. 41). Before the pandemic, remote work has been positively spoken about as it provides work autonomy, flexible schedules, and reduced interruptions. However, Rodeghero et al., (2021) argues that traditional remote work cannot be compared to remote work as a consequence of the pandemic. This is due to the challenges that occurred due to covid-19 where everyone was socially isolated. Key findings from their study exposed that the majority of new employees within their sample experienced challenges such as communication and collaboration difficulties, and difficulties regarding building network and interpersonal relationships with their team (Rodeghero et al., 2021)

Etienne Wenger's social learning theory is a conceptual framework that can be used to view and talk about situations in a new light to create new ways of learning (Wenger, 1998). The four processes he presents are practice, identity, meaning, and community (Wenger, 1998, p. 5). Humans learn through doing, belonging, becoming, and experience. His theory places great emphasis on interpersonal learning through social interactions. According to Wenger, humans are social beings, and in order to acquire knowledge, one should take an active part in the world they are within. This means that all agents within an organisation can adapt to each other through relational interaction and collaboration. Wenger's view on learning shed a light on aspects that we previously have discussed from Filstad's different stages of socialisation. The informal organisation and attempts by the agents themselves to make

things work through voluntary, responsible, and communicative action may improve organisational socialisation.

According to Schein (2017), what new members in a group are taught by the existing members of a group in a socialisation process are the shared cognitive frames that guide the perceptions, thoughts, and language. These habits of thinking and mental models are transferred to new members, and when researching culture, this learning process is one of several that defines the culture in an organisation. However, what is at the heart of a culture is not revealed to new employees (Schein, 2017). This happens only when they gain permanent status in the group over time. Schein also states that to reach those deeper levels of assumptions, one should observe and interview both new employees and “old timers” to understand these shared assumptions.

#### **2.4 Autonomy at the Workplace**

Kaufmann and Kaufmann describe employee autonomy as “control of and responsibility of your own work situation” (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, p. 112). Autonomy is an important factor for motivation at work, and both within and between organisations, the degree of autonomy varies greatly. Ryan and Deci (2006) explains self-determination, or human autonomy, as regulation by the self, whereas its opposite, heteronomy, refers to controlled regulation, or regulation that happens without self-endorsement. They also argue that facilitation of autonomy, where regardless of the potential employees have to choose how to act, social controls, evaluative pressures, rewards and punishments can constrain or entrain behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2006, p. 1566).

Frederic Laloux invented in his book *Reinventing Organizations* from 2014 the term Teal Organizations, which is an organisation that is based on workers’ self-management. He argues that in successful Teal Organizations, support functions such as HR should provide guidelines, but not impose rules or decisions. These should only be in action when employees request their support. Based on his case example from the Dutch organisation Buurtzorg, these roles should give advice when asked but are not involved in the decision itself. He claims “[...] because the team members make the decision themselves, they are emotionally invested in making the recruit successful.” (Laloux, 2014, p. 72). The reason why staff functions are heavily used in organisations today is that they give the executive management a sense of control. However, people often find creative ways around rules and procedures, or

simply ignore them. Therefore, Laloux claims that trust should be embraced, where the executive management should trust that they can give up a strong sense of control. A common problem with centralised decision-making is the lack of information to manage the specifics. This leads to employees losing their freedom and productivity eventually slows down (Fishman, n.d., in Laloux, 2014, p. 89).

“When organisations are built not on implicit mechanisms of fear but on structures and practices that breed trust and responsibility, extraordinary and unexpected things start to happen” (Laloux, 2014, p. 83). Self-management brings the principles that account for successful free-market economies inside organisations. Even though not all employees are suitable for such freedom- such principle has been revealed to be successful in most business cases Laloux has researched.

## **2.5 Summary of the Theory Chapter**

We have in this chapter presented theories that give us a knowledge base to answer our research questions, and to conclude on our thesis statement. We understand organisational socialisation as a learning process, where a new employee is starting a new job both on an individual and institutionalised level. This covers how a new employee will learn to understand organisation norms and values, their task and responsibilities, and how to build social relationships to become a part of the organisational culture is essential.

Bauer’s approach focuses to a large extent on what the organisation's role is and the importance of institutionalised processes. We therefore found it valuable to include Filstad and the three phases that the new employee goes through, as this focuses on all roles involved. We included an introduction to Wenger's social learning theory, as his view on learning underscores the importance of the invisible learning mechanisms happening between the people involved. Laloux’ work on self-management emphasises the importance of developing organisations where the different actors are involved through decentralised decision-making. Our understanding of the cultural mechanism involved is based on Schein, Bang and Wadel. Schein also emphasises the term shared learning, and we understand that individuals in an organisation are all in relation to each other, and even though one has specific tasks to do, their outcome affects the surroundings.

### **3.0 Method**

We will in this chapter present what methodical steps we have done to be able to present a paper that is based on solid research. The first step was to prepare the research design. The guidelines for the research design describe what the research is about, who should be investigated, where to investigate and how the research project should be carried out (Grenness, 2020, p. 36). In order to answer our thesis statement, we needed to get insights into the current onboarding practices in BN. As outsiders of the organisation, we did not know how these current practices were today. Who we needed to collect information from are employees in the HR department who have developed the current onboarding resources and processes available, managers who are responsible for carrying out the onboarding procedures of new employees and trainees and new employees themselves who recently have been a part of an onboarding process.

We conducted semi-structured interviews to create interaction and dialogue with the interviewees (Thagaard, 2009). Such a phenomenology approach will help us understand BN's onboarding practices from the interviewees' own perspective. Kaufmann and Kaufmann emphasise the awareness of the subjective experience between individuals that can go through the same experience, but due to motivation, previous experience and competencies experience them differently (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, p. 112). We tried to encourage the interviewees to give us a precise description of their knowledge, experiences, and feelings about the onboarding practices at BN (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The meaning of such an approach was to understand what the onboarding practices consist of, how it is carried out and how trainees and new employees experience the onboarding and their own role in this. All nine interviewees work at the head office in Oslo. During the early stage of planning, we wanted to use observation to retrieve and support our data, but we chose to exclude this due to the limited time frame of the research project. An onboarding process goes over several months, which means that we would have to observe new employees over a longer period in order for us to get meaningful data through observation. Interviews were therefore our primary method for collecting data.

#### **3.1 Case Study**

In our thesis, BN represents the case of the study and the empirical data are delimited hereafter. We used a descriptive design to describe social phenomena from reality



(Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). We completed in-depth interviews, all conducted within the frame of our case. We had to take into consideration both time, resources, and access when researching our case. The case is limited to selected divisions within BN, all based at their head offices. We chose this case based on a mandate from BN. We found BN's case interesting and were highly motivated to get the chance to do research within this organisation, as BN is a large and complex organisation where we could challenge ourselves.

The geographical limitations should also be addressed. We are both based in different cities than where the head office of Bane NOR is located, so observation and physical interaction with the case we studied were limited. However, the digital possibilities we have today with video meetings, digital sharing of data, screen sharing etc. has been helpful and made our research possible to complete.

### **3.2 Qualitative Research Interview**

For our data collection, we chose a qualitative approach with a combination of semi-structured interviews and informal meetings (primary data) to get the depth we needed. Qualitative research design is based on in-depth understanding, context-related, and context-dependent, as well as proximity to informants (Krumsvik, 2014). We wanted to get in-depth knowledge about the experiences, actions, needs, values, and surroundings of the employees at BN. We also based our analysis on secondary sourced data, such as open-source data, employee surveys, annual reports, and internal documents that we got insight to through our contacts.

We believed choosing a qualitative method would give us deep insights into the context we researched. We understand, however, that a mixed method would give additional validity to the research and believe this could be beneficial to do in possible future research. Research interviews as a method help us to uncover social patterns in individuals and groups (Krumsvik, 2014). The purpose of the research was to understand the different roles involved in onboarding, and therefore getting insights into how the current practices are perceived and carried out by both managers and new employees was important. Through semi-structured interviews, we received information about the informants' experiences, attitudes, and reflections about organisational socialisation. A semi-structured interview is defined by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 6) “[...] as an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the

described phenomena”. Therefore, it is not an open everyday conversation, nor a closed questionnaire. Our interview guide focused on the individuals' role, expectations, and needs in organisational socialisation.

At the beginning of our research, we wanted to compare the onboarding practices in different divisions at BN. However, we understood that new employees have certain needs regardless of division, organisation, or location. The interviews we conducted do not represent specific subcultures within BN, even though there are certain differences between the divisions such as structure, purpose and culture. These changes were also affected by time limitations for our research project. To get a holistic view of the situation, we still needed insights from the different actors involved. We interviewed HR employees, division managers, and new employees with different lengths of experience in order to find out how they perceive their role and their experience during the onboarding process.

There are several possibilities for sources of errors from interviews (Dalland, 2007). If the questions are unclear, the informant may misunderstand the questions. Also, the notes, recordings, transcription, lack of concentration, and forgetfulness are possible sources of error. The informants could leave out important information, consciously or unconsciously. We were therefore aware of not being too certain on behalf of the data, and to be conscious of such possibilities of error throughout the process.

We are conscious of the fact that this method will not give a solid and complete conclusion. However, it will open up for further discussion around the case of informal onboarding, and change processes in BN. The insights can also open up for new thoughts and ways of working in other organisations facing similar challenges. Digitalisation and adapting to new ways of working is something happening everywhere.

### **3.3 Selection and Recruitment**

To get insights from employees with different relations and approaches to onboarding, we chose to conduct nine individual semi-structured interviews. This number of informants was based on the need for a variety of insights, as well as a realistic approach due to the limited time to do a thorough analysis, and discussion of the data collected. We argue that the size of the selection is in line with the purpose of the study, which was to gain insight into how employees and managers perceive, and experience the current socialisation processes at BN.

We did a strategic selection of candidates for our interviews (Thagaard, 2009). We requested to interview two employees that had recently been a part of the trainee program, two new employees who had not been through the trainee program, and two managers responsible for the onboarding of new employees. Additionally, we wanted to interview two HR managers to understand how processes and responsibilities are viewed from their point of view. These three selected groups all have a key role in our study. A criterion that we decided together with our supervisor at BN was to get empirical insights from different divisions at BN. This was because we wanted to get a broader insight than from only one division in terms of validity and the cultural aspect. We ended up with a total of nine interviewees, as shown in Table 1. Because of the broad approach to our research questions, we needed to have a varied selection of informants. If we were to conduct a study based on a more narrow research question, we could have done a homogenous selection where we for example only interviewed new employees.

Our sample consists of 4 males and 7 females all in the age group between 18-55. This was not a prerequisite, but rather a natural selection. It was not a prerequisite that the newly employees had been onboarded hybrid, but naturally, this was the case as the covid-19 situation had been present since February 2020. However, it was important for us that the employees and managers had been onboarded or had onboarded someone within the last 1-2 years, for them to have a good memory of their experiences.

We consulted with our supervisor at the University regarding applying to NSD (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata) (Universitetet i Stavanger, 2022), and as we conducted some interviews digitally we applied to NSD. No personal data were stored, but we communicated via email and wanted to be compliant according to the regulations. The informants were informed about the purpose of the research. We communicated via email and shared the information document and consent form (Appendix 1) after agreeing on a time and date for the interview. The consent form was signed by the interviewees and returned to us digitally.

We were satisfied with the selection and number of informants, as they represent the different viewpoints we aimed at obtaining. A limitation of the selection is that our supervisor chose some of them for us, where she could choose informants that shared her view of the problem. This was however our best option and a natural way to get in touch with informants.

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Length of work experience</b>
Informant 1	Trainee and new employee	Short
Informant 2	Trainee and new employee	Short
Informant 3	HR employee	Long
Informant 4	HR employee	Long
Informant 5	New employee	Short
Informant 6	New employee and manager	Long
Informant 7	New employee	Long
Informant 8	Manager	Long
Informant 9	Manager	Long

**Table 1:** Selection of informants

Additionally, we conducted informal meetings digitally with employees who our supervisor and interviewees at BN believed would help us get a broader understanding of the organisation, and the HR systems and processes that were in use. These are hereafter referred to as “HR employee 1” and “HR employee 2”. Our supervisor at BN is referred to as “Supervisor BN”.

### **3.4 Designing the Interview Guide**

There are several important aspects to consider when designing an interview guide (Thagaard, 2009). We had to decide if the interviews should be characterised by structure, freedom, or something in between. We believed semi-structured interviews would allow us to

ask questions related to set topics and have the flexibility to follow the interviewees' stories and ask the questions in the order we found suitable. We spent a great time getting familiar with the theoretical background before designing the interview guide. This provided us with time to gather sufficient knowledge about the research topics for us to prepare solid research questions based on our assumptions and theory, as we were to analyse the interviewees' experiences with a basis on the relevant theory. We prepared the interview questions in advance and in relation to our thesis statement and research questions before they were sent to NSD.

We created separate interview guides for the different roles. The key themes were the same, but some of the questions were angled to fit the respondents' role. All the interview guides included key questions and follow-up questions, because we wanted detailed and complementary information. Some questions were open questions, as we wanted to get to know what each interviewee first thought and what they emphasised without too much guidance from us. We designed the first questions to be more general and neutral with the aim to create a safe atmosphere. We hoped this would make it easier for the interviewees to open up and answer questions about their experiences and opinions. During the process, we also made minor changes to the interview questions as we learned how we should and should not state the questions to make them understandable.

### **3.5 Conducting the Interviews**

We conducted individual interviews to be able to obtain deeper insights of the employees' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. Our supervisor at BN assisted with arranging the date, time, and place for the interviews. We got the opportunity to visit BN's head offices in Oslo where we managed to conduct four in-person interviews. The five remaining interviews were conducted digitally using Microsoft Teams video collaboration resources. As we did no audio recording, we were able to use Microsoft Teams and still be compliant with UiS guidelines for personal data processing (UiS, 2022). Meeting physically makes the atmosphere and conversation more relaxed. However, we did manage to facilitate good discussions digitally as well. As the ongoing covid-19 pandemic has been present for the last two years, the employees we interviewed seemed comfortable with using digital video resources and we had no technical issues disturbing the interviews.

We were both present where one was the main interviewer, while the other was the main responsible for taking notes. The notes from the interviews were safely stored. We started the meetings by informing the interviewees about the structure, anonymity, and the purpose of the meeting. During the conversation, we added casual comments and follow-up questions, both because it felt natural to do so, and because we wanted to pay attention to details when they answered our questions. This often made the conversations not go in the direction that we first thought it would. We experienced that some of the interviewees tended to mainly talk about the formal processes in onboarding. It therefore became necessary to follow up with more specific questions about the informal and social aspects of onboarding.

If we had treated each informant identically, we would have made them equal and thereby perhaps made invisible the differences between them (Widerberg, 2010, p. 225). We wanted to understand how the interviewees related themselves to socialisation, and what they initially thought of when discussing the theme. Therefore, we did not follow the interview guide to the point, but rather adjusted it to the direction the interview took.

When conducting the interviews, we had Otto Scharmer's (2009) theories in mind. His words "open mind, open heart, open will" inspired us to aim at listening on a deeper level to pay attention to the invisible dimension of our social actions. We wanted the interviewee to feel safe and that they could share what they had on their mind in a safe space. Presencing, the generative flow where there is a blending of sensing and presence, means to connect from the source of the highest future possibility, and to bring it into the now (Scharmer, 2009). To do this, we had to put aside our own worries and thoughts. We were conscious about talking in a casual manner where this was in its proper place, and sensing the different personalities where we aimed at verbally meeting the interviewee where they were. We were aware of the principle of the interview as a learning process. When conducting the interview process, us as interviewers aimed at being responsive, understanding, and not judgemental. When asking the new employees "is there anything you thought could have been better in the onboarding process" we were worried that they would not share their honest opinions. However, the chance for this occurring will always be present. We wanted to create a space where the interviewee went above speaking from what they thought we wanted to hear, to a place where they could share their views, and reflect where they could see themselves as a part of the whole. This was also a core purpose we took into the analysis of the data.

### **3.6 Qualitative Analysis**

After conducting the interviews, we were left with a large amount of raw data. Through the analysis process, the raw data will give meaning through interpretation, which will further develop into descriptions of findings that explain what we have investigated. This analysis will finally be discussed based on theory and our interpretation of the empirical findings.

“The analysis process is also a messy, time-consuming, non-linear, creative process with room for much doubt, a process that will bring order, structure and meaning of all collected data” (Ryen, 2002, in Grennes, 2004, p. 178). Before beginning the work on our analysis, we spent time exploring what method we were to choose for the upcoming work. This study has a deductive form of analysis where we test already known theories against the empirical evidence we have gathered.

As Grennes (2004) argues, the main purpose of the qualitative method is to focus on understanding, in relation to quantitative analysis, which to a larger extent contributes to valid and reliable explanations. A phenomenological approach is a scientific theoretical methodology that is based on interpretive analysis where one aims to gain insight into human behaviour in a specific context, to understand a given phenomenon. Throughout the process, we aimed at being aware of our pre-understanding upon analysing the data. We did the analysis during 3-4 weeks, with solid breaks in between so that we would get the chance to view the analysis with fresh eyes. The mind is constantly interpreting our surroundings and impressions. To determine what is meaningful or not, we must “look up” and see the results of the data material in a larger context (Grennes, 2004, p. 181). We did this by going back and forth multiple times where we interpreted, created meaning, and asked critical questions regarding our own analysis of employee surveys and interviews. We conducted digital meetings frequently and worked separately in between. To get our individual reflections to move freely when analysing, we first worked together, then presented what we had done, before we got the chance to give feedback and discuss together to find repetitive patterns.

As we wanted the interviewees to describe their experiences with the socialisation process in BN, we were aware that their memories might have faded, and not all details from the process were mentioned. This is a limitation with all qualitative research, that we never know the full truth. Informants share their subjective thoughts and experiences, and us as researchers should take this into account when analysing the data.

After completing the interviews and starting to work on our analysis and discussion, we realised that there were some aspects of onboarding that we missed to ask to a sufficient extent. This included questions about checkbacks, feedback and autonomy. Additionally, we should have asked the new employees about what actions they had done personally to socialise and get to know their colleagues, to better understand their attitudes towards proactiveness. We could also have used follow-up questions to a larger extent where it was necessary in questions regarding how the processes were, and how the managers related to specific aspects of the process and resources available.

### *3.6.1 Transcription*

During the interviews, one of us was in charge of writing down as much as possible from what the interviewee shared throughout the interview. By doing this we translated the interviewee's oral language into a written language (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 204). The person who was conducting the interview was then able to concentrate on the dynamics of the interview, whereas the other person was able to concentrate on taking extensive notes and transform the data to written language (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 205). We spent some time after each interview going through our notes while we still had the interview fresh in mind to limit the chance of forgetting important information. Due to the purpose of the study and the time and resources available, ourselves and our supervisor at UiS believed this was a sufficient strategy of transcribing the large amount of interview material, related to the reliability of our research, if done right.

### *3.6.2 Coding*

The next step in the analysis process was coding, which consisted of systematising and simplifying the data material we had gathered from the interviews (Oppen et al., 2020). Before we created the interview guide, we had become familiar with the theory around the topic and wrote down concepts that we wanted to investigate. Initially, these concepts were onboarding, socialisation, hybrid office, organisational culture, physiological well-being, turnover, needs, and autonomy. During the process of working on the thesis, we found it necessary to change some of the concepts. The concepts we do look at throughout this thesis are onboarding and socialisation, learning, culture, physical presence, connection, needs and autonomy. When conducting the coding of our data, we decided on selected categories to sort our data and to uncover repeating patterns, similarities and differences between the informants. Moving on to the analysis, we developed topics based on our research questions



and concepts to present both our findings and our analysis, all based on central aspects of the onboarding at BN.

### **3.7 Ethical Guidelines**

When executing research projects such as this, the relationship between the researcher and the person being interviewed is sensitive. Therefore, several ethical and moral questions were considered as these are our guidelines for how we should act and how we should relate to the outside world (Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997, 42). An important ethical principle is that the person who is interviewed should not be harmed by the participation. Our view of humanity expresses our fundamental perceptions of our surroundings (Hammerlin & Larsen, 1997, p. 13). We view our informants as capable, and further on we are aiming to understand their behaviour as such. We as researchers, must show respect for the interviewees' boundaries and not provoke their understanding of the topic (Thagaard, 2009). According to Brinkman and Kvale (2015), the four areas traditionally discussed in relation to ethical guidelines are informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the role of the researcher in social research. We will hereby discuss these topics, what ethical actions we have done during the interview process, and how we have handled the data material.

#### *Informed consent*

Informed consent is an important research ethics principle which entails informing the research participants about what the research is about, the purpose of the study and design, as well as potential risks and benefits from participation in the particular project (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). We contacted the participants via email where we introduced ourselves, the study and its purpose, and attached the information letter. Our information letter also informed about voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study at any time, as well as confidentiality and anonymity. Before each interview, the participant agreed to participate by providing a written, informed consent.

#### *Confidentiality*

The informed consent included a described confidentiality, ensuring private data identifying the interviewees would not be disclosed (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). Additionally, we went through the information before starting each interview to ensure that the participant understood what participating entailed.

### *Consequences*

An interview may often lead to interaction and openness between the interviewer and the interviewee, which may cause the interviewee to share things that he or she later might regret. As researchers, we are responsible to reflect on the consequences that may occur during the interviews. The interviews in this study focused on collecting information about employees' experiences and knowledge about the onboarding practices at BN. We did not aim to go in-depth on a personal level and the information we collected was therefore not particularly sensitive. However, their experience with onboarding is personal, which the participants might not want to be linked back to. We therefore anonymised all participants when presenting our findings. All data was deleted after the research, in line with NSD's guidelines and regulations, to ensure that all data collected from this study will not be misused.

### *The role of the researchers*

The role of the researcher is crucial for the overall quality of the product. In addition to treating the participants with respect, we as researchers must also consider the scientific quality of the knowledge presented in the study (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). The findings in our thesis must be precise and representative of what we are studying. This means that the results are controlled, checked and validated as thoroughly as possible. If there are weaknesses to any of our data, we must aim to address this.

## **3.8 The Quality of the Study**

The two concepts that are particularly applied when describing the quality of a study are reliability and validity. Through their various properties, they help to ensure research credibility (Thagaard, 2009, p. 198). Within research interviews, we as researchers become a part of the interaction and the data that emerges. This form of data collection requires that the research conducted, and the results we have emerged are valid and reliable. We will, therefore, reflect on the concepts of validity and reliability and link them towards the research that has been done.

Validity within qualitative research means that the study satisfies current standards for what characterises a good study, and that we have researched what we aimed at actually researching (Grennes, 2020, p. 72). Validity is about how the data is interpreted and if the interpretation of the data represents the reality of the study (Thagaard, 2009, p. 201). Thagaard emphasises the term transparency to strengthen the validity of a research. As we

did not record the interviews, both of us analysed and coded the notes, before discussing it together. This was to make sure both our views and interpretations were done without the interference of the other. We learned later during our study that we could have strengthened the validity of the data by involving the interviewees during the interpretation of the data. This could make sure we understood the data correctly. However, we believe that we have interpreted the data truthfully due to the theoretical basis, and because we focused on transparency, and utilised the strengths of being two researchers. To strengthen the validity of our study, we use the literature as a basis of our findings, to be able to examine the relationship more clearly between the empirical data and the research focus phenomenon (Johannessen et al., 2016, p. 232). Additionally, our supervisor at BN read through the paper along the way and provided feedback and correction to the data presented.

Reliability is about exploring the extent to which the format of the research study is reliable and trustworthy (Thagaard, 2009, p. 198). Thagaard claims that with a high degree of reliability, another researcher can use the same method at a different time and get the same results in their study. This is however difficult to achieve in qualitative research. As we conducted semi-structured interviews which is a highly flexible method, we cannot argue that other researchers would get the exact same results. We did take measures to strengthen the reliability, such as aiming at not asking leading questions. As we do not have any previous relationship with the interviewees, we hope that the interviewees answered us honestly and not what they thought we wanted to hear. We are however aware that this is difficult to know for sure. As outsiders with no previous relation to the organisation or the interviewees, we were able to remain objective parties. The disadvantage is that we might not ask the right questions to provide the best possible data, because we did not have much knowledge of the situation or the environment. Also, the transcription of the data may lead to subjective reliability, as taking notes and turning the spoken words into written language is challenging.

The researcher can strengthen the reliability by giving the reader a description of the context of the research and the steps we have done in the process (Johannessen et al., 2016, p. 233). We did extensive note taking and summarised after each interview. We decided to exclude recording our interviews due to the volume of interviews we were planning on conducting and the timeframe of the thesis. For us to not include recording could have positive and negative implications of the study. The recording could have an impact on the data that emerge if the participants limit what they share of their own opinions and views. Contrary, if

we did record our interviews then we may have been able to listen to the tapes afterwards and hear if some of the questions were misunderstood and make sure we wrote down everything that was said. Further, recording would also allow us to hear their tone of voice, which could have an impact on the message of the content. In hindsight, we see the advantages of doing recordings as it could give us more precise data for our analysis. We are however positive about how we worked with the material during and after the interviews, and we are sufficient to call this research reliable.

When working with a material over time, there will be a risk for researchers to become biased where we might “see what we want to see”. Particularly when looking for causal relationships, this is something to be aware of. According to Daniel Kahneman (2011, p. 243), the human brain tends to jump to conclusions from little evidence and ignore absent evidence. As we collected our data through qualitative data collection, we were aware that we only get insights from a small number of participants. When working with this data, it is easy to look for evidence that supports our assumptions, as well as forgetting to consider evidence that we did not ask for. To avoid such, we were critical of our own interpretations before, during and after the analysis.

#### *The basis for Generalizability and transferability?*

To state that the interview findings are reliable, researchers must validate on whether the results primarily apply to the study object and to what degree it can be transferred to other organisations, contexts, or similar situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In our case, this is the experience and view of the participants in organisational socialisation practices at Bane NOR. In the field of organisational studies, the large amount of literature tells us that the area of research is of interest for many. As we have applied a qualitative research method, the results will never be completely generalisable. We believe however that the study is relevant and can be transferred to other organisations for increased understanding of the actors' needs during onboarding processes. Our research is limited to one organisation only, and even though the work environment and people involved will be different in other organisations, the challenges new employees are facing when it comes to being onboarded in a hybrid workspace is not limited to BN.

## **4.0 Findings and Analysis**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the empirical material and analyse it to determine what is meaningful in the data that is collected. We chose to combine the findings and analysis in one chapter, as this creates a clear distinction between the data from the interviews, and what our analysis and assessment of it was (Thagaard, 2009). As a groundwork for our analysis, we structured our findings using categories based on our research questions.

The following chapter starts by presenting how the organisational socialisation process is executed in BN, as well as presenting strategic HR resources and processes in BN. Further on, we present the empirical data collected from interviews and other documents. By analysing the data from the perspectives of the different actors, we were able to explore the differences between them. Thereafter, we view them all in relation to each other in the discussion chapter. We can therefore reflect on organisational socialisation and how this is a learning process between actors with different perspectives and needs.

#### *4.1.1 Culture and Organisational Changes in BN*

As mentioned, BN has during the last years been through a restructuring and merging of organisations, which insights from employee surveys show that it has affected the stability within the organisation, and that it has affected the employees' trust in the management. When conducting the interviews, we understood from several of the interviewees that the restructuring had caused challenges, and that the culture varies within BN, with different subcultures between the divisions. The well-being satisfaction of the employees varies as well from division to division, according to the employee surveys.

With the organisational changes happening, new values were introduced, and the organisation had a goal to become more innovative. From being a rigid state-owned organisation, BN would have to change and perform more trust-based leadership that cheers on engagement and creativity. To manage this, structural and cultural changes must be in place. According to several of our informants, the restructuring process was met with scepticism from many of the employees. We learned that some former employees from Jernbaneverket or Rom Eiendom were hesitant about the organisational changes. Some did not identify with being an

employee at BN, even after 3 to 4 years of the reconstruction. These challenges are acted on from the management side. A survey that focused on culture specifically was conducted in 2022. This showed that the employees at BN wanted less control and more focus on innovation. It also revealed that there was a low degree of trust towards the corporate management, based on a big gap between expectations and reality. HR employee 1 told us that they have a goal to execute supportive and goal-oriented leadership strategies.

It is clear that BN experienced a high degree of resistance toward change. One may argue that hiring new people will be helpful to face these cultural issues that have evolved. This is because new employees do not have the same attachment to BN's history, and can challenge the established narrative, which was a thought HR employee 1 shared. However, new employees may be affected by such negativity and scepticism internally, which we will elaborate on later.

The yearly employee survey from 2021 shows that the employees score well on supportive management in areas such as feedback and acknowledgement. They also have goal-oriented management. However, they score somewhat below the benchmark on decision making and goal setting. According to HR, it is challenging to be managing several divisions, and an organisation with a long history. The divisions are all depending on each other, although with sparse resources, and a focus on a collaboration this area scored somewhat low on the survey.

#### *4.1.2 Onboarding Processes in Bane NOR*

In the introduction chapter, we presented general background information about BN, such as their company's history, values, and onboarding process. We will now elaborate on the onboarding processes and resources used through our empirical findings from HR.

According to HR employee 1, Driv has been a somewhat standardised system since it was implemented in 2020. The system has not previously been created for much user involvement, as HR has not had enough internal resources allocated to the project to do as much customisation as they wanted to. Over time, more and more features have been added to Driv. It is a work-in-progress to make the system more user-friendly and to a larger degree automated, as well as dealing with technical challenges. As a part of Driv, there has been developed an onboarding module, which was released at the beginning of 2022. This is a communication resource with extended features to help facilitate the onboarding phase for the

new employee and the responsible manager. HR informant 4 said that they believe this is an easy resource to use for managers and new employees, and stated that it has been a much-awaited module from the managers. They were, however, concerned that it would not live up to their expectations. HR informant 3 finds this digital system somewhat difficult to navigate.

According to HR employee 1, when a person has been offered and accepted a job at BN, an employee from the HR department provides the new employee with access to Driv. Here, the new employee must fill out personal information about themselves. HR then has to approve the information and move it to BN's intranet, Banenettet. When the information has been added to Banenettet, the manager receives an email, which informs him or her that the new employee is ready for onboarding. As Informant 3 says, HR works mostly towards the managers at BN, and not directly with the employees.

According to HR employee 1, the responsibility now lies with the manager to further facilitate the new employees' onboarding process. In the onboarding module in Driv, the manager can communicate with the new employee by sending welcome emails and providing him or her with e-learning courses, information videos and access to suggested checklists for the onboarding. This is, however, up to each manager themselves, as HR does not monitor what the managers do or not. HR employee 1 continued to explain that it is positive if the manager does some additional voluntary actions in Driv, and add these on to their own checklists for the onboarding process. HR employee 1 explained that they initially wanted more of the managers' onboarding tasks to be compulsory, but decided not to do so.

Some formalised onboarding practices are supposed to be provided to all new employees. Four times a year, the orientation day "Ny i Bane NOR" is held, arranged by HR. Our supervisor at BN experienced that the corporate management focused a lot on the orientation day and believed it is important for the new employees to receive information about the organisation and to meet the corporate management and colleagues. Informant 8 on the other hand said he/she did not think these are as essential in the socialisation process.

HR employee 1 continued explaining that their goal is that everyone shall receive the same quality of the onboarding, but that the HR can only do so much. They cannot manually supervise the division managers, and they must be able to trust the managers. What they can

do, however, is to continue communicating with the division managers about the value of the effective socialisation of new employees.

HR informant 4 said that onboarding for them means getting the new employee as quickly as possible to stand on their own feet with their tasks. They also emphasised that, although it is central to getting to know BN on an organisational level, it is also important that new employees early on get to know the division and the team as this is where they are going to spend their time.

HR problematises the fact that it is up to each individual manager if the onboarding is effective or not. Therefore, some believe that increased control will solve this. Suggestions to this are to a larger extent fixed and structured programs prepared by HR. HR Informant 4 said that the biggest problem is that the managers do not follow the checklists, and use the system provided differently as they have a short-time view of the onboarding process.

Regarding the role of the mentor or sponsor, HR Informant 4 said that this role is important, but also comes with a high risk if the mentor or sponsor teaches the new employee bad habits or insufficient in the systems or its tasks. The same informant explains that they do not gather any feedback, specifically from the new employee regarding their onboarding experience, nor from the managers.

## **4.2 New Employees' Onboarding Experience**

### *4.2.1 Experiences From the Trainee Program*

BN's trainee program is managed and organised by the HR department. It starts off in August each year, with a three-week start-up phase for the trainees to gain social networks and to get a better understanding of BN before starting to work within their first practice module. Our trainee informants were able to attend the three-week start-up phase physically as the country was not in lockdown at the time.

Trainees at BN get a lot of information about the organisation early on. Feedback from the evaluation of the start-up phase of the program implies that the majority of the 11 trainees were pleased with how they were welcomed by all actors and areas of the organisation. Some of the trainees have been able to join meetings and work together with their supervisor and mentor before being given the responsibility to try working on their own. Moreover, the



majority express that they felt their supervisors understood how critical this early stage is for the new employees and facilitated and guided them hereafter. The evaluation further implies that some trainees were grateful that their supervisor and colleagues chose to be present at the office, whereas others present a different experience, where the majority of their colleagues work from home.

One of the trainees stated in the evaluation that he/she finds it easier to learn when others are present at the office, as it makes it easier to ask questions as they appear. This trainee continued explaining that he/she gave feedback about their negative feelings towards less physical presence. Their supervisor took action, which gave positive results as more people from the team started to work from the office. He/she wrote that if people are still able to freely choose to work from home when working in module two, then he/she thinks it is a good idea to encourage the supervisor or other colleagues to choose to be physically present for at least a few days a week. It is reasonable to assume that the managers involved listen to the feedback from the new employees if concerns are raised, as they show consideration for them.

The evaluation of the trainee program has a scale from 1 (*low score*) to 5 (*high score*). The overall experience of the start-up phase during the first two weeks scored 5. The questions regarding the e-learnings and start-ups in the first practice module scored 4.5. This implies that the majority of the trainees had an overall good experience in the first weeks at BN, and what seems to be the biggest concern was the case of less physical presence when started working in module 1.

Trainee informant 1 expressed the kick-off to be the highlight of the start-up phase at BN. Trainee Informant 2 expressed a similar experience and said that the start-up phase would have been more challenging if they did not get the opportunity to connect with the other trainees. He also gave credit to the responsible for the trainee program to facilitate good follow-up along the way.

The results from the evaluation survey are in line with what our informants have shared. We see that overall, the new employees are satisfied with the program. This implies that the expectations were met.

#### *4.2.1 Physical Presence*

After the authorities introduced a national order for home offices, working from home and communicating through digital resources became the new normal. Trainee informant 1 described his/her experience of being trained through digital resources during module 1 to be effective. It was more the socialisation that did not go so well. Trainee informant 1 missed people being physically present at the office as she, in the beginning, felt that he/she was forgotten.

Trainee informant 2 told us that when he/she started the first day of work in module 1, few of his/her colleagues were present at the office. Although they were allowed to be back at the office, many from the team chose to work from home. It was important for informant 2 that there was another trainee working in the same department, as he/she found it difficult to reach out and ask for help from the people working from home. New employee informant 5, expressed similar thoughts that there were few colleagues present at the office when they started working there. Informant 1 felt that it was difficult to get in contact with other colleagues and that it took some time before he/she felt included. Informant 1 expressed having to be patient as he/she in the beginning had to wait to be assigned job tasks because of his/her colleagues being too busy with their own tasks. Informant 5 said it was more the young adults who did not have kids that wanted to be physically present at the office, where their manager had a lot of focus on having everyone physically present. The manager imposed set days where everyone had to be physically present at the office.

New employee informants 7 and 6 provided us with different experiences of being new employees during the pandemic. Informant 7 started working at BN during the lockdown, but did not get to meet his/her colleagues including the manager on the first day on the job at the office. His/her manager gave information about the division and its setup before being provided with a computer, key card, different accesses, etc. Informant 7 expressed that he/she appreciated that most of their colleagues were present that day. Although, after national orders for home office were dissolved, informant 7 kept working from home as he/she enjoys this better than being at the office. Further, informant 7 expressed having a more productive day at work where he/she is not interrupted as much as he/she would be when being present at the office. Informant 7 did however explain that he/she understands the importance of some physical presence and said that the ideal solution for him/her would be a 50/50 physical presence and home office solution.

Informant 6 expressed that although the pandemic set its limits on onboarding, did not find his/her own onboarding to be difficult due to their previous experiences. Informant 6 believed his/her onboarding in such circumstances would have been more challenging if he/she was to step into a new and unfamiliar role. He/she told us their manager chose to be physically present at the office and therefore chose to do the same, while his/her colleagues chose to work from home. Although, he/she told us that the team and him/herself are used to a hybrid working method, there were some challenges with communication and minor language barriers while using digital resources. The team had regular morning meetings where they tried to work out the best way of working together, to create a sense of belonging even though everyone worked individually from home.

Although new employees do have a responsibility to reach out and ask for help, this may be uncomfortable if one has not met or been introduced to colleagues. Informant 2 believes that managers should be more aware of what this means and how important it is for new employees that people are physically present. He/she further told us that they had one-to-one conversations relatively often with his/her manager, especially about this topic. Even though everyone still could freely choose to work from home or not, their manager encouraged everyone to be physically present.

As mentioned, one of the things BN has focused on is the orientation day “Ny i Bane NOR”. Informant 5 told us that they had an overall good experience with this event. When we conducted the interviews, Informant 7 had not attended BN’s orientation day yet, and Informant 6 told us that they attended the orientation day quite late after starting at BN. The orientation day is something that BN wants new employees to participate in physically, which may explain why some had not attended this day from the start during covid-19.

We can see that there are similarities in the onboarding process between trainees and new employees. We understand from the data that the experience with less physical presence between the new employees varies to some extent. All new employees need some sense of belonging. However, the importance of physical presence in relation to a sense of belonging seems to vary between the informants. It is reasonable to assume that some new employees find it difficult to reach out and ask for help. Communication is crucial for the employees to be able to cooperate, learn and support each other. Being physically present may help to

achieve connections between colleagues and managers. Contrary, we see that being able to freely choose between working from home and at the office have been beneficial for those who want to do so. It was the new employees with long work experience who highlighted the benefits of being able to work from home. This could imply that the need for physical presence may vary between age and previous experience.

#### *4.2.2 Sponsor and Mentorship*

We interpret that there are different understandings of the roles of a sponsor, mentor, and supervisor at BN. In the manager checklist, it is stated that they should “designate a mentor/sponsor” to the new employee. After this, it is up to the manager to what degree it will facilitate and follow up on this relationship. If a new employee is not assigned a mentor, then this becomes the manager's responsibility.

Informant 5 told us that their sponsor was very helpful and felt comfortable with reaching out and asking for help at any time - from both the sponsor and manager. He/she further expressed an appreciation for this solution, especially since he/she is the only person at BN with this specific role.

Informant 1 said they had a sponsor and a mentor but not to the extent they needed or expected and said there was no structured plan for check-ins with these. The informant felt that their mentor did not understand their need of having someone to discuss work-related things with. He/she told us that he/she was provided with few tasks when they first started working at BN, which made the whole process difficult. With limited meetings with colleagues at the office, it was experienced as difficult to get the follow up on work tasks.

Informant 2 told us he/she was assigned a sponsor and a mentor. The informant had conversations with their mentor every other week where they talked about things that are challenging during the first couple of months. Informant 2 did, however, express that there was an unclear distribution between the manager and sponsor and that it was difficult to know who to contact within different situations. He/she wished the manager would make this clearer during the early stages of the onboarding process.

Informant 7 was not facilitated with a sponsor. What was new to him/her was learning the new systems, which he/she had to figure out herself as these systems were new for everyone

at BN. Informant 6 was also not facilitated with a sponsor. He/she started in a newly created role at BN as a manager. The informant was facilitated with training through Microsoft Teams and digital courses and felt they received good insight into what was expected of him/her.

It seems that the informants have different experiences when it comes to sponsors and mentors, where some new employees feel as if the role of the sponsor or mentor is somewhat unclear. Facilitating a new employee with a mentor may be even more important in the case of less physical presence, especially if no one is working at the office. This could help with gaining confidence. It is reasonable to assume that if a sponsor or mentor does not fully know the importance of their role and does not take it seriously, then this support can be more harmful than helpful for a new employee. Managers and/or HR should therefore communicate the importance of their role, especially towards socialisation to help facilitate new employees' onboarding experience.

#### *4.2.3 New Employees' Self-effort*

Informant 7 told us that as a new employee one must always take responsibility for figuring out some tasks on their own. He/she further explained that he/she felt that all new employees do not get the exact same training and that one must ask their manager or colleagues to set aside time to help. He/she explained that his/her manager provided space to learn from mistakes and from each other. Informant 7 told us that everyone was very open and helpful but that he/she as a new employee also had to respect other people's time and try to figure out tasks before asking for help.

Informant 5 expressed that if a new employee does not get to know or meet colleagues face to face, the new employee has a responsibility to reach out for help via digital resources.

Informant 1 proactively took responsibility to invite other new employees to join social activities together with other new trainees. According to these findings, we see that many of the new employees understood their role as active participants in the socialisation process.

#### *4.2.4 The Overall Experience*

Both the trainee informants expressed that they enjoy working at BN and that the overall onboarding has been a good experience (Informants 1 & 2). Informant 2 told us that as a

trainee you get a very good onboarding where you get to know your colleagues, who are welcoming, and you get to impact which work tasks and projects you want to work on. He/she feels that there is space for new employees to give feedback and that the manager will facilitate accordingly. Informant 1 thinks BN takes good care of new employees and has since day one looked forward to going to work. They both do, however, express that there could be improvements in some areas such as colleagues and mentors taking more responsibility for the new employee and understanding the importance of being physically present at the office during such a vulnerable process.

Informant 7 told us he/she has had a great experience at BN so far, where his/her colleagues and managers are friendly, who have each other's backs, and who focus on learning from each other. He/she said there is no sense of competition. Informant 7 further described the organisational culture to be good, where colleagues have lunch together. His/her colleagues and manager have made him/her feel welcomed and included. Informant 7 further talked warmly about their manager being “cool” and “chill”, who contributes to a good work environment. Informant 7 also cherished that their manager expresses to have full confidence and trust in his/her employees. In addition to this, the informant's manager is good at providing plenty of information and guidelines.

Informant 6 said that he/she experienced a great work environment at BN where there is room to speak up and that there is a short distance between managers and employees. He/she believes that the division he/she is working within is very unique and has not experienced anything like it in any previous work. He/she feels that there is room to have different backgrounds, ages etc. He/she further tells us their manager has played a critical role, who seems to know and set aside time for each and every one. Furthermore, Informant 6 told us that they are very happy with their manager and have witnessed that not everyone in other divisions has the same feeling towards their managers. He/she said that if one does not feel safe to speak up then the organisation loses some value, which may cause challenges, such as getting people motivated and involved in a change process.

We find it reasonable to assume that physical presence is an important factor for all participants. The majority want to be able to decide whether to work from home or the office. It also seems that the manager does not want to force their employees to be physically present at the office or at home.

Although there may be room for improvement at BN, it seems that the majority of our informants are satisfied, which may be due to proactiveness and one's ability to adapt. We see some differences between the needs of those new employees that have previous experiences with other organisational cultures and socialisation, compared to recent graduates entering their first corporate position. This means that individual follow-ups and communication from managers are very important. Moreover, as Informant 2 told us, the manager must see each new employee and show that they genuinely care.

### **4.3 Division Manager's View on Organisational Socialisation**

#### *4.3.1 Socialisation*

Informant 9 said that, as a division manager, you are to some degree passive to the decisions that are made centrally at BN by HR and such. When you also are a busy manager, the quality of the onboarding may vary. All informants in manager roles mentioned formal measures such as getting a computer and logins and knowledge about the resources early on when talking about onboarding.

As responsible for the socialisation of a new employee, Informant 9 thinks that one should be aware of the personality of the new employee. Is he/she quiet and restrained or more outgoing? Then one should adjust the amount of follow-up the employee needs when it comes to socialisation. They also mentioned that they created an onboarding plan and a to-do list for the onboarding himself.

Manager Informant 8 on the other hand, tells us that he/she believes that checklists may be a good thing to have, but compassion towards people is a more central aspect of a good onboarding. If the connection with the manager is good, as well as the social part with the rest of the team, that is what matters the most. He/she also reflected on the fact that caretaking from a manager might not be something one reflects on too much on a regular basis. What he/she on the other hand has reflected on, is the openness within the team. Further on, when reflecting on socialisation, they believe that becoming a part of the culture in an organisation is something that happens over time.

Informant 8 also talks with us about the company's values, and how these are reflected together with the employees in the annual employee interview. However, for him/her it is more important what each individual has within themselves, and that anyone feels as if they can ask them about anything, both personally and work-related things.

Manager Informant 6 wants to create a close-knit group, to get a feeling of belonging. He/she is also aware that some new employees need more follow-up than others, and that one's own previous experience plays an important part in how you experience the onboarding phase.

It seems as if there is a common emphasis on formal measures in a start-up phase when a new employee starts in their new job, as these are “must-haves” for all. The managers are still aware of the importance of socialisation, as well as the fact that each individual is different, and they believe that one cannot have a “one size fits all” approach. From this data, we find it reasonable to view the managers as competent, human-centred employees. However, due to external circumstances such as limited time and lack of physical presence, which we will elaborate on below, some can feel as if they do not reach their full potential as a manager responsible for the onboarding.

#### *4.3.2 Physical Presence*

Informant 9, who has employed one person during his/her time at BN, says that he/she finds the covid-19 situation somewhat challenging. The previous employee he/she hired was done digitally with Microsoft Teams due to the covid-19 pandemic. Quickly after the new employee started, they met physically at the offices. He/she believes that one can clarify much digitally, such as professional competence, but a level of body language is missing when communicating across the screen.

Informant 8 tells us that informal socialisation with the team has suffered during the pandemic. They felt a bit sorry for some of the new employees that started their work relationship from home. To make this phase better for the new employee, they got a sponsor from the same team and the manager made sure to call the employee from time to time to check in with them.

Both Informants 8 and 9 said that they think it will be more flexible with home office and at-office in the future. This means, according to Informant 8, that the manager must follow up



and be even more consciously present. Informant 6 believes that when you have a lot of individual assignments as an employee, not being socially together can impact the team negatively. They do, however, think that working in a hybrid world is something one gets used to.

All managers understand the challenges of less physical presence in the onboarding phase for the new employee. During the covid-19 pandemic, everyone has felt the challenges that the lockdown has caused. As caring human beings, they all understand how difficult this phase can be, and are trying to facilitate alternative socialisation methods digitally.

#### *4.3.3 Expectations Towards HR*

Informant 9 experiences that there is a lot of support from HR at BN. Further on in the interview, he/she says that a lot of the organisational socialisation process is up to themselves as managers and that HR has been available but is not experienced as very proactive and follows up by saying that there could have been more follow-up from HR's side. Findings from Informant 8 support this and said that he/she is more concerned with taking responsibility for themselves and using common sense so that the employee will feel included. Informant 6 does feel as if they are provided with plenty of resources, but the degree of follow-up from HR varies.

We view the managers as if they are mainly concerned about how they themselves do their job of welcoming new employees. HR is supposed to be a support for the managers, which they are perceived as. This emphasises the view we have on managers as independent human beings and HR as a support function in BN.

#### *4.3.4 Experience with Support Resources*

In one of the divisions, the team of managers procured their own app with a checklist for the onboarding process, informant 9 informed us. They were, however, not allowed to keep using this app. The reason for this was somewhat unclear. After the app was confiscated, informant 9 said that it now is up to each individual manager when it comes to how they will carry through the onboarding for the new employees. The same informant tells us that he/she has not heard about the new onboarding module in Driv. This could be because he/she has not hired anyone since the module was released. He/she does however use Driv for employer conversations, courses, organisational maps, and such. Informant 8 has neither used Driv to

any extent but knows that they will use it in the future for employer conversations. They find it positive that more of the system will be collected in one, instead of using several systems in the future.

Informant 6 mentions that not all points in the checklist are necessarily being done. There is nobody making sure these are done either. Driv is being used but is not automated enough, and a lot of “back and forward” steps have to be made, which causes frustration. HR employee 1 said that when releasing the new onboarding module in Driv early in 2022, they had posted an article on Banenettet, to inform all managers that there was now a new way to welcome new employees in BN.

Both the amount of use, understanding, and the manager's satisfaction with Driv seem to vary. When implementing new features and systems, communication about the guidelines and benefits is essential. It is reasonable to believe that the communication about the implementation from HR to the division managers is not completely in place. This could be due to the onboarding system being new when we conducted the interviews, and not completely in place. The managers are viewed as solution-oriented managers, as they create their own checklists or processes adjusted to them and their divisions for how they execute the onboarding of new employees.

#### *4.3.5 Self-determination and Autonomy*

Informant 8 told us that they experienced a high degree of freedom at BN. There is what he/she calls freedom under responsibility, and a lot is up to each individual manager. This comes naturally, and he/she continues by saying that people are all different and therefore things are solved in different ways. Informant 6 has a similar view and feels as if there is not much guidance from the corporate management on what management style to use, which is good because everyone has their own style and works differently. Informant 9 also said that there is a high degree of self-determination as a division manager and that there is a quite flat structure. There is however an understanding that one still has to deliver. Informant 9 also experiences the structure in the division he/she is in as quite flat, that there is a low level of conflicts, and has a culture he/she enjoys, where they as a team can talk about different things.

According to this, it seems that overall, the managers we have interviewed feel as if there is a high degree of autonomy and that they appreciate this. Viewing this in the light of how the managers take responsibility for the socialisation process, this way of managing an organisation creates independent employees, which is in line with BNs values of openness and innovation. They get the freedom to adjust to their team and department.

#### **4.4 Summary of Findings and Analysis**

We have in this chapter presented the findings from our empirical data and analysed them to create meaning and understand the bigger picture of organisational socialisation at BN. A new employee receives individual onboarding depending on what division and team he/she is onboarded in. The manager is a key actor during the onboarding who, with the use of individually adapted resources and plans, will help support the new employee during their learning process. The fact that the managers practice onboarding largely individually and use the resources differently could mean that an effective onboarding will depend on the beliefs and values of the person who is responsible for the process.

When HR is reflecting on the term onboarding, it is the formal actions and tactics such as “Ny i Bane NOR”, communication through Driv, being assigned resources, courses and meetings, and being assigned a mentor or sponsor, which is emphasised. Based on the data collected from the interviews, physical presence was a central topic. The role of the sponsor or mentor may be of greater importance during situations where there is an absence of physical presence, to ensure that the new employee does not feel alone as the threshold of asking questions digitally is perceived as higher. Physical presence, inclusion and connection with colleagues are considered important for the new employees. Thus, it also requires that the new employee actively engages in the process of getting to know their colleagues, especially in situations where physical presence is limited. Personality traits of the new employee may affect whether one is actively involved and takes initiative to connect with others. The amount of previous experience may have an impact on individual needs, as recent graduates seem to have a bigger wish for socialisation at work. Active participation from both the manager and colleagues may minimise the new employee's threshold to reach out and ask for help, which may affect how quickly one gets into work tasks and become a part of the organisational culture.

## **5.0 Discussion**

In this chapter, we discuss our results by applying Bauer's six C's as a framework. The findings are discussed by applying complementary theories. The framework in our discussion creates a basis for discussing the conditions for good organisational socialisation and concluding on our overall thesis statement. Organisational socialisation success can be measured both on an individual and organisational level (Bauer in Iversen & Øhrn, 2021, p. 2). As the six C's framework has certain deficiencies according to our view on socialisation when it comes to the relational approach, we saw the need to apply other theories as well. It is however a great framework that got us to reflect on essential areas of BNs onboarding practices. Most theory is paraphrased from the theory chapter, and some are new additions to the paper as we explored relevant theory as we developed the discussion. When applying the theories, we found that some of the theories we used were more relevant than others. We view the actors involved as independent and rational, and as progressive human beings. Such a view is in line with Rogers' view on humans with self-actualisation as a motive for growth (Rognes, 1979).

### **5.1 Compliance**

Based on the interviews, it is evident that BN has specific guidelines and a formal plan on how the new employees will acquire knowledge about formal rules and regulations. This is characterised in Bauer's (2013) compliance, with formal onboarding. There is, however, some variation in how new employees in this study acquired this knowledge.

The orientation day is a resource that Bauer (2010) believes will contribute to future success for the new employees. From the results, it is evident that BN's intention with "Ny i Bane NOR" is to introduce themselves and the organisation, its history, values and its future plans and goals to the new employees. Such formal orientation can, according to Bauer and Erdogan (2011), help new employees feel welcomed and provide information which may help them become successful in their new job. Although this day, under normal circumstances, is held physically with accommodation, have during covid-19 been held digitally. The majority of the new employees in our study did not get to participate in the formal orientation day during the first few months, due to BN wanting to wait until physical presence was allowed again. Research points out that those who participate digitally gain less understanding of the organisation and what their job entails (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). This may support our

findings that the majority of the new employees in our study found their early onboarding somewhat challenging, especially regarding feeling a sense of belonging.

It has emerged in our study that BN offers different manager courses, with the purpose of managers continuously growing in their roles. Additionally, the new onboarding module in Driv was released at the beginning of 2022. However, our study cannot predict the effectiveness of the onboarding module as it has just been released and has not been applied to a large extent by the informants. Our findings do, however, imply that BN recognises that there is a need for change or improvement and has an understanding of important tactics. Thus, one cannot predict how or if Driv will improve the onboarding process at BN. We see that measures are being done, and what seems to be important for BN's onboarding is that the onboarding module in Driv contains effective management principles such as socialisation tactics, and structured and systematic approaches through checklists and courses (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Additionally, the onboarding module includes giving new employees much important information before they start working at BN. A realistic preview of the job and organisation's culture is something Bauer and Erdogan (2011) believe will help facilitate new employees' socialisation.

However, the majority of the participants in this study were isolated from their colleagues due to national orders for the home office. Thus, all the participants did meet their manager physically at the office during the introduction day. Some were also able to meet their colleagues on this day and expressed that this day was important. It seemed like all new employees had a positive experience. But it also supports our findings on how the majority of the participants found the early onboarding process at BN to be somewhat overwhelming.

## **5.2 Clarification**

Bauer states that the quicker new employees understand what their job entails, and what is expected of them, the quicker they will become more productive and achieve to stay integrated into the organisation (Bauer, 2015, p. 2). This level does therefore depend on how the organisation conveys the work task and expectations. Clear role clarification is something Bauer describes as a resource for achieving the integration of new employees during an onboarding process. Although it is mainly the organisation's responsibility to facilitate the creation of an environment where the new employee quickly adapts to his or her new role and understands the organisation's culture, new employees themselves should also actively

participate in the socialisation process (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). It is, as shown in Bauer and Erdogan's (2011) socialisation model, the interaction between new employees' characteristics and behaviour and organisational efforts that affects the organisational socialisation process. Our empirical evidence indicates a fit with this model as all stakeholders in our study expressed being proactively engaged in the onboarding process. We will therefore discuss the different roles during an onboarding process at BN and how role clarification and the interpersonal relationship between HR, managers, and new employees may contribute to a more successful organisational socialisation through clear expectations and role understanding.

If you do not know what performance is expected of you as a new employee, it may be difficult to deliver. The responsibility lies with both actors and perhaps especially today, where we do not have natural access to each other because many of us sit in the home office. The new employee's individual proactiveness towards learning about their role and expectations are important factors. When interviewing the new employees, it became clear that the employees understood the shared responsibility. Several informants mentioned that it is a matter of course that the responsibility to learn what you need in a new job also lies with the new employee. An issue that was mentioned was the aspect of time and accessibility to colleagues and the manager. It is experienced as easier to ask and learn if you meet at the office than across the screen. The use of a sponsor in the socialisation process may help with learning the social aspects of the job, as well as recommending them to specific training, or giving them informal training and feedback. These introductions to social norms and training are essential in the socialisation process, as individuals may find it hard to guide themselves in the new environment alone.

Bauer (2015) emphasises that the organisation can facilitate clarification through actions such as proactivity training, orientation programs and informal and formal training. "Best practices include leveraging technology so that employees can easily access information in a self-service manner helps to maximise the effectiveness of new employee onboarding targeted at building a clear and confident workforce." (Bauer, 2015, p. 4). The Driv module is created for this purpose. Through communication prior to starting the job and after, the new employees get access to e-learning and communication with the organisation. Limited physical presence means that it will be more difficult for the new employee to understand the

social norms, and what is socially expected from the team you will work with. Digital resources will however be important but should not be limited to.

However, how and what the manager communicates as role- and norm expectations may vary to a great extent. The same matters for new employees' expectations regarding this. Some prefer to get a highly specific role clarification, compared to others. This may also vary from what position one is hired to do. If it is a new position, the employee could get a large degree of autonomy to shape the role, which was the case for Informant 7. The success of this depends on the recruitment process and how the role expectations in the job advertisement correlate with what the new employee actually experiences.

The process of clarification of expectations and role understanding should start already in the recruitment process, where open communication and proactiveness are practised. Both literature and our empirical evidence show that there are individual needs between the new employees. It seems as if recent graduates entering their first job have different needs in terms of follow up and the socialisation process. Managers should therefore take into account the importance of individualised communication. This means that BN relies on having managers who are able to see new employees' individual needs, and who understand the value of teaching them how to become a part of the organisation in an effective way.

Another level of clarification is between HR and the corporate management, and the division managers responsible for the onboarding. Through teaching and learning why clear expectations and role clarifications are important, managers have the basis of providing this when facilitating the onboarding.

Dysvik & Kuvaas (2016, p. 243) emphasises the importance of taking into account individual differences among employees when implementing new HR measures. This is a classic problem especially within HR processes, as these are often written down in formal plans that apply to all. We also see this when we talk about the managers' and new employees' needs. Each manager with autonomy and proactiveness utilises the HR resources that are available differently, as the surroundings and needs are different. Still, the end-product of the onboarding is experienced as successful. HR employee 1 expressed limitations with the current checklists and onboarding processes. As Dysvik and Kuvaas (2016) mention, unproductive or poor performance more easily catches the attention of HR and corporate

management. It is therefore important to be aware of the consequences of developing HR measures that are aimed at the exception. In the worst case, this can lead to demotivating the functioning majority. Especially after a high degree of dissatisfaction due to the restructuring, which can affect how division managers and employees react to new measures and changes.

After working with both the literature and the empirical findings, we see that the attitude of the manager is important when it comes to clarification. “Employees who adjust to their new roles by understanding role demands, feeling capable of performing tasks, and establishing effective relationships with peers will have a strong attachment to the organisation that will prevent them from leaving their jobs” (Bauer et al, 2007). The sooner the managers are able to help facilitate new employees with an understanding of what is expected of them and what their role entails, the sooner they become more productive. All in all, proactiveness from both actors is essential to get a well-clarified expectation about the role.

We argue that total clarification is difficult to achieve through formal, digital and written processes. Neither the organisation nor the new employees were prepared for a pandemic and the consequences of the prolonged home office. According to the empirical findings, it seems to be difficult for managers at BN to get employees to return to the office now that they have become accustomed to working from home. Thus, according to the literature, in order for optimal socialisation, experienced colleagues should also meet at work. It is possible that this will improve, but after the world reopened after the pandemic, BN has had to work actively to ensure that employees return to their offices. The managers during such a process seem to become even more important in circumstances of less physical presence. Due to the loss of physical presence, increased focus on clarity will be beneficial to compensate for the lack of such.

### **5.3 Confidence**

The third C, *confidence*, is one of the phases where establishing a solid relationship and interaction between the new employee, co-workers and manager is essential. The process often includes a volume of information that is overwhelming, empirical and sometimes impossible for new employees to incorporate within a short period of time (Caldwell & Peters, 2018). It is therefore important that the organisation helps the new employee build confidence and give the impression that he or she has made the right decision working within



the specific organisation. Additionally, provide realistic tasks, information, and sources to adequately prepare new employees.

In BN, the new employees we interviewed had all been onboarded with less physical presence at work, where many colleagues worked from home. Social support in the first socialisation phase is not to take easy on. Kammeyer-Mueller et al., argue that “organisational newcomers may be particularly in need of social support because of the uncertainty that accompanies meeting new people and learning new tasks” (2013, p. 1106). All managers we interviewed focused on being available for the new employee, especially during home office. Check-ins over the phone or Microsoft Teams or regular coffee meetings on their own initiatives were done. As feedback is important for building confidence, this is even more important when the onboarding is digital.

According to Kammeyer-Mueller et al., (2013), the support of new employees from co-workers and supervisors declines within the first 90 days of employment. They suggest that early support and undermining may lay a foundation for later work outcomes, such as a higher turnover. The first 90 days are therefore crucial to creating a strong relationship with the organisation in the shape of higher organisational commitment. The new employees' experienced support is argued to be the most important source of this, from both the responsible manager and from colleagues. We noticed a slight difference between the recent graduates and the new employees who had long experience and were more confident in their field. Naturally, those who were in the need of more support as they entered a completely new role, emphasised that it was even more important with access to colleagues so they could ask questions.

Additionally, each new employee is different and has different starting points. How easily one becomes confident in their role depends on a variety of internal and external factors, such as the psychological environment and the degree of previous experience from similar work. One's personality traits, such as confidence and proactivity, also define how quickly one become comfortable in your new role. This was something we understood during the analysis, but with limited insights, we state this based on our findings alone.

According to Wadel (2002), the learning conditions in an organisation have their basis in the interpersonal employee relationship, and it is these learning conditions between employees

that constitute the most important learning conditions. Based on this statement, we would argue that a sponsor may be a valuable resource to facilitate learning between employees. It is common that there are more tasks than time available, which can affect the quality of the onboarding due to other priorities. Facilitating such support is therefore essential. It is important that the sponsor or mentor is dedicated to their task, and that he/she gets proper training regarding the responsibility beforehand. If he/she is not motivated, it may do more damage than good.

Our findings indicate that it is the managers who are largely responsible for the organisational socialisation of new employees at BN. A high degree of autonomy is something HR and managers at BN see as necessary as it is the manager who works closely with the employees and who can see individual needs and facilitate hereafter. This seems to fit with Wadel's (2002) perception that high levels of learning are something that takes place in interpersonal relationships. In an organisation, Wadel believes that learning takes place in teams, in a community of practice and network. All managers in this study showed to include important and valuable onboarding tactics in their self-made checklists- to make the new employees feel confident in their role and feel a sense of belonging.

#### **5.4 Connection**

New employees' feeling of belonging in the light of onboarding is addressed in the theories we have presented. One of Bauer's' six C's, *connection*, is described to be an important aspect regarding how new employees must build networks and interpersonal relationships with managers and other members of the organisation to become a part of a team and to feel accepted and valued. This is an important factor for socialisation, and we see that BN utilises both formal and informal measures to promote belonging, both to the organisation as a whole, and also to the remaining employees.

According to Wadel (2011), interpersonal relationships are the starting point for learning, which often has to be experienced in the form of participation and practice. Common for all managers we interviewed was that they all want to contribute for new employees to learn their tasks as quickly as possible, get to know the organisation and build a network. The importance of becoming an organisational insider is for the new employees to establish ties with colleagues as a sense of belonging and motivation, but also for the organisation in order to be effective and to be able to deliver good results.

Relationships with colleagues have also been shown to play a key role in socialisation (Filstad, 2017). Mentors are believed to facilitate adjustment by providing support, advice and "inside" information, and by coaching and protecting employees (Kram, 1985, in Filstad, 2017, p. 101). Our research shows that mentor- or sponsorship is a part of the onboarding practice in BN (as stated in the checklists), but that some have experienced not being provided with such, or that the sponsor did not take an active role as expected or needed. Most of the employees who were assigned a sponsor spoke positively about this. Both research and our interviewees find this formal step for socialisation positive, however only if facilitated sufficiently. Sponsors and mentors must understand what is expected of them in order to facilitate new employees' needs. BN could benefit from HR providing thorough training to the mentors and sponsors by emphasising why such a role is important. It is BN's responsibility to provide an environment where new employees can adjust to their new roles. BN can by providing a mentor help new employees with role clarity, but informal actions such as meeting your colleagues, working in teams, and having a manager whom you feel as if you can ask anything are also highlighted through our interviews.

The selection of new employees in our study represents a combination of new graduates with short professional experience and new employees with longer previous experience. This gave us a basis for looking for differences between the individual needs of new employees based on the length of previous experience and knowledge in the field they work in. New employees with previous experience tend to go through a different adjustment compared to new graduates. Those who have previous experience within the field they start working in may achieve role clarity quicker, depending on the tasks they are handed. Experienced new employees can use their insight gathered from their previous job to help them adjust to the new organisation. The connection between colleagues does, however, depend more on the relational aspect of socialisation, such as personality, psychological safety, expectations, and needs. The recent graduates who were interviewed had other expectations and needs when it came to socialisation. When the trainees started working in module 1, they were all spread out between the different divisions, and our findings show a variety in how they were greeted by their managers and colleagues.

According to Bauer's research, the inability to establish meaningful connections with co-workers led new engineers to seek less information (Bauer, n.d). As both research and our

empirical evidence show that less physical presence at the office is challenging in the onboarding process, this can lead to less information flow within the team due to the consequences of less connection building. Most new employees seem to want a large degree of presence at the office, in order to be able to develop good social relationships with their manager and colleagues. Once such relationships are established, other considerations become of greater importance (Lai, 2022). Key findings from our analysis are that the majority of the new employees at BN found social integration to be challenging due to less physical presence. The key question is how new employees can connect with their manager and colleagues and get to know the organisation through digital resources. According to Haaland (2020), previous research has shown that digital onboarding is less effective than social onboarding. Digital onboarding is more effective for learning certain aspects of the role and the organisation than for social and personal growth. The process of getting to know the colleagues and building trust and respect may take longer when done digitally. Due to the downsides of digital onboarding, the responsible manager should encourage others in the team to be present at the office as far as it goes, as the rules allow. If this is not possible, scheduling frequent check-ins with the new employee, with or without the team, will be important.

The new employee as a proactive individual also has a responsibility when it comes to creating connections. For new employees to feel connected and recognised, they must engage, and actively participate in the socialisation process. This means that new employees have an important role in their own organisational socialisation. Research shows that individual differences between new employees in terms of personality traits play an important role in organisational socialisation (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). BN can engage new employees to build a network by inviting them to social activities. As Filstad (2017) argues, learning is rational and not a one-to-one relationship, where new employees can by using their previous experiences, be their own role models. As mentioned, new employees with proactive personality traits may adjust to an organisation more quickly through engagement and taking responsibility for their own onboarding.

As Filstad (2017) also argues, trainee programs are facilitating new employees to strengthen their feeling of mastery and self-esteem. The trainee program at BN does, according to our empirical findings, contribute to a sense of connection for the new employees. This program contributes to new employees feeling invested, which the trainees have given positive

feedback on in the evaluation of the program. The social activities contribute to the trainees we interviewed gaining safety. However, participation in a trainee program does not necessarily secure the new employee with the feeling of social safety. This happens over time through connections with colleagues and managers.

According to Lai (2022), managers should always strive to develop good social relationships, based on trust, respect, and reciprocity with their employees. This is important regardless of the platform and provides the best basis for motivated and productive employees. We saw from our research that those who experienced their onboarding phase as something positive, all mentioned their manager as either available, open, or trusted by their employees.

Connection is an individual feeling. The organisation can do everything right strategically by facilitating social gatherings, a sponsor, and work tasks that the new employee masters. However, if the new employee's values do not correlate with the organisation's and if he or she does not physically meet their colleagues it will be difficult to create meaningful connections. No matter what degree of digital onboarding, the manager should aim to focus on building solid relations with the new employee as it will have a positive effect on their inner motivation. If the new employee meets colleagues that are open, welcoming and engaged, the basis for creating connections is set. Therefore, with the understanding that people are adaptable, and individuals take responsibility for their own actions and development, a sufficient degree of connection can be created if all actors give an effort.

## **5.5 Culture**

Bauer (2010) defines the fifth C, *culture*, as the step where the organisation facilitates the new employees with the organisational formal and informal norms and values in order to become a part of the organisational culture. This understanding of the cultural aspect of socialisation lays somewhat a lot of responsibility on the organisation and how they facilitate this process. We believe, however, that this to a large extent is an organic process happening over time through physical presence and interaction between the members. BN is a large and complex organisation with several layers of culture. From the core values that the corporate management wants to incorporate throughout the organisation, to subcultures in divisions, projects and teams within. According to Kaufmann and Kaufmann (2009), integration into culture takes place mainly through socialisation. In the social impact that takes place, new employees will imitate and identify with the norms and values of culture, and eventually

internalise these. We will discuss this further on, as negative culture can transfer to the new employees.

Kaufmann and Kaufmann (2009) also point to other mechanisms that convey cultures, such as rituals (formal meetings), jargon and symbols. Thus, the company can facilitate this through a range of different measures, which will affect the culture and how it is received. Wadel (2021) questions if shaping and reshaping culture within organisations happens unconsciously and by themselves, or if it can consciously and systematically be changed. He emphasises that organisational culture appears to be more complex and less controllable than some researchers argue that organisational design is. The question we ask ourselves based on this is: to what degree can the organisation formally facilitate the process of learning to become an effective member of the organisation if culture is something that is created and unfolds between the interplay of the individual members in the organisation?

Understanding the organisational culture helps us to understand the members actions. Early on, we learned that the restructuring of the company that has happened during the past couple of years, has affected the stability of the organisation, and the level of trust the employees have with the corporate management. This adds another layer of challenges to the onboarding phase for the HR and managers, as for the new employee to be onboarded into instability and dissatisfaction may be contagious.

Schein's theory on basic assumptions explains that if a basic assumption is strong in a group, then members will find behaviour based on another premise inconceivable. Culture at this level tells the members of a group who they are, how to behave towards each other, and how to feel about themselves. This level is the reason why changes in culture are to a high degree anxiety provoking (Schein, 2016). When gathering insights from both employees in the divisions and HR employees from the corporate management in BN, we found that there was a large focus on culture. This is likely to be due to the restructuring and merging process in recent years that have impacted the culture in the organisation, causing cultural imbalance due to resistance to changes not accepted by all. The results from our studies showed that employees felt as if the unity between the members of the subcultures was good, but the restructuring in some divisions led to a high degree of uncertainty about their own role and function, which created a high degree of negativity around these changes.

Some HR employees that were interviewed are of the understanding that the organisation should facilitate good culture. We interpret that this is due to the imbalance in the culture in BN today. The benefit of such challenges is that challenges can drive action. According to the employee survey, employees experience a high degree of control and have a low degree of trust in corporate management. Trust between management and employees is the foundation of the management's basis for performing its functions in an efficient manner, and integrity is the core dimension of trust (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, p. 359). The aim is to move from a large degree of control to a more innovative and dynamic focus. BN says they want to have a focus on the humans in the organisation and practise a high degree of employee participation, also when it comes to decisions. If doing so, it is extremely important that these opinions and wishes are followed up on. Promising changes that are not acted on, will over time affect the trust.

According to HR, there is a desire to execute trust-based leadership. This would mean that HR should not strategically control too much of the onboarding processes either. It is the division managers that are responsible for using the resources they feel they need and welcoming the new employee into the organisation. Both the managers and the employees stated that they experienced freedom and autonomy and felt trusted. The socialisation process where the new employee becomes a part of the team and the culture is a process that evolves over time. HR should aim at trusting the natural processes, and rather focus on developing the cultural issues in the organisation, through accepting time and emphasising actions that are based on BN's values throughout. This would correlate with the wishes from the culture survey.

It is not uncommon that large organisations to have communication problems due to a lack of information flow between divisions internally (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009). This was also uncovered in the culture survey, as it revealed that many employees wanted more communication between the divisions. The digital revolution has provided us with several digital resources making communication easier in many ways, so exploiting this would be beneficial. It came to light during the interviews in this study that there was different clarity regarding which support functions that were available for the managers. Some managers were not aware of the new onboarding module in Driv. Others were not aware of the existing checklists and those who were aware did not follow this to the letter. HR could invite managers to seminars on how to facilitate effective onboarding and give training on how to

use Driv. Henceforth, HR must trust that managers are doing their best.

From the empirical findings, several new employees mentioned that the culture was experienced as open and inclusive, that they were seen, and that people were open for change as well as there was a forward thinking focus on exploiting the resources available better. Overall, both employees and managers said that the work environment in their team or division was good and that one could ask if there were any questions. The division managers we spoke to expressed awareness, reflection, and consideration. We experience that the interviewees were all generally positive towards this, even though the culture survey revealed somewhat otherwise. This could be because our interviewees reflected on the core team they were in, while the survey had a more general focus on BN as an organisation.

What we do find interesting is that the results said that there was not much difference on the results based on the length of the employment and age. Meaning, that it is not only those employees that have been in Jernbaneverket and Rom Eiendom that want improvement. New employees are learning through relationships more than what the corporate management teaches them through formal measures. Over time, the new employees become a part of the organisation and form their own opinions.

How one experiences culture depends on clarifications of expectations and previous experience too. New employees that came from previous jobs where they did not identify with the values or had other negative experiences, were more positive towards the current culture and socialisation, than new graduates who had higher expectations towards the social aspect of their job. If this need is not met, it will have an impact on the overall experience with the onboarding process in BN.

The psychosocial work environment is the quality of the social and emotional interplay between the members of an organisation (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, p. 263). As a new employee, you will get a sense of how the atmosphere and the habit of thinking are at the workplace straight away, as well as notice how the psychosocial work environment is. However, to really understand the values, the work environment, which forms the actual culture in an organisation, will take a longer time. With less physical presence at the workplace together with colleagues, this is experienced as even more challenging. The management should therefore facilitate as much as possible for the new employee to



physically meet its colleagues and motivate other employees to be present at the office. We have previously discussed how some new employees who had much home office during the onboarding felt a need to be present and meet their colleagues. This also matters when it comes to becoming a part of the culture. Some introduction to the culture can and will happen digitally, but less than through physical interactions.

Both Wadel (2002) and Scharmer (2009) emphasise the term “to listen”. Learning to become a part of the organisation and the subculture the new employee is introduced to, means being open to the existing norms and assumptions. Wadel also mentions that formal and asymmetrical learning relationships (such as e-learning or courses with pre decided curricula) cannot replace learning through relationships. As Schein (2016) says, the socialisation process is to a large degree embedded in the organisation's everyday routines. This is where cultural assumptions are learned, not through courses and indoctrination sessions. A learning culture that is largely informal is difficult to grasp as it is a hidden part of the organisation. (Wadel, 2002). Presenting information about the organisation's strategy, goals and values through formal rituals or ceremonies such as “Ny i Bane NOR”, is a supplement to the natural socialisation happening. We saw that most HR and managers mentioned this as a socialisation activity. However, the new employees did not focus as much on this when being asked about socialisation.

The organisation can facilitate events, e-learning, and provide information about the organisation. However, we argue that a deeper level of connection and understanding of the culture can only be done over time and through informal processes. Growth and changes also affect the culture. It shakes up something that is already fragile. If BN has the ambition to have a culture that emphasises openness, innovation, respect, and commitment, it must act on these terms all over. This includes the autonomy that the managers acknowledge to a large degree, as well as local differences throughout the organisation. Acceptance that it takes a long time to change organisational culture. As HR employee 2 said, mutual trust binds each other together.

## **5.6 Checkback**

Bauer's sixth C, *checkback*, involves how the organisation should continuously seek feedback from the new employee about how they experience the onboarding phase.

Checkback, as well as feedback, is a way of learning from the bottom up. Here, we want to

discuss both the terms and put emphasis on the advantage of feedback to managers and HR as well as the benefit of early checkbacks to create a trust-based relationship within the organisation.

Iversen and Øhrn (2022) argue that the organisation should continuously do these checkbacks about the various measures and their benefits. Learning organisations constantly develop through both formal and informal learning. BN seeks thorough feedback from the trainees after the first few weeks of the trainee program through an evaluation looking at the different activities in the program, for future development of the program. We have an understanding that this formal feedback collection is used and taken into account. How the feedback is used comes back to the organisation, their openness to feedback from employees with different perspectives.

When it comes to new employees who have not been a part of any trainee program, BN does not have a routine to formally collect feedback regarding their onboarding phase. Ashford and Tsui (2017) researched feedback-seeking behaviour of 387 managers and found that active negative feedback seeking, and not only positive feedback seeking, is a central part of a total process of self-regulation for managerial effectiveness. From our interviews, we experienced the managers as responsible individuals, who focused on creating a good first introduction to BN. The checklist for onboarding does not contain any information about doing checkbacks during the onboarding. Therefore, managers should seek such feedback at their own initiative. To create a learning environment, we would argue that feedback seeking is a step that would help to create dynamic learning processes. As the managers we interview want to facilitate good onboarding, they would initially also seek feedback and checkbacks from the employees. The organisation may also benefit to educate the managers that are responsible for onboarding about the importance of doing checkbacks.

Bauer's research puts great focus on the strategic measures by organisations in an onboarding process. Even though we believe that employees in relation and interplay with each other will be able to create good socialisation together, checkbacks are a measure that should happen both formally through evaluations and surveys, and naturally through managers who care and believe in learning through feedback and open dialogue. For feedback to happen unsolicited from the new employees, a trusted relationship with the manager of the sponsor should be in place. Both trainees showed characteristics and personality traits of being able to take

responsibility for their own organisational socialisation. Both of the trainees early in their onboarding process went to their managers and expressed the challenges of their colleagues choosing to work from home at a time when everyone was allowed back at the office. Being able to give such feedback made their manager aware of the importance of physical presence when it came to the social aspect of onboarding for the trainees. Both their managers took this feedback seriously as they motivated and encouraged everyone in their team to come back and work at the office. Additionally, the trainees said that their manager did continuous checkbacks where the challenges with less physical presence were the main topic, which created social safety for the new employees.

When receiving such feedback from employees, it is essential that they are acted on. If there are good reasons why change is not possible, this should be communicated to the employee. If not, a relationship with a low trust could easily develop. We view BN and its corporate management as forward-thinking and solution oriented. They carry out yearly employee surveys and in 2022 they also did a survey on the culture. These can reveal pain points where actions are needed. However, undertaking interviews or fieldwork by physically meeting, and talking to the managers and employers in the different divisions will uncover another level of hidden knowledge.

It is also important that new employees themselves seek honest feedback in order for them to become familiar with what behaviours are needed to fit in with the organisational culture and expectations. One of the trainees expressed that they experience that BN does not have a hierarchical structure where the inquiry must go through many stages or managers before it reaches the general manager. We believe that BN's ability to give such an impression of the organisation may have contributed to the trainees being able to give their manager feedback about things they believed should be improved.

According to Dusvik and Kuvaas (2016), systematic evaluation of learning- and development measures in organisations are nearly non-existing in many organisations. We would therefore emphasise reviewing both the resources and measures that are used for learning and their effects before further developing these. Additionally, besides checkbacks from the new employee to the managers and HR, we want to emphasise learning through feedback from the managers to HR. It was not clear to us through the empirical data if HR does this already. When developing Driv, HR informants informed us that the decisions around the features

were made on a general level by those responsible, and not based on co-creation with employees. User-centric digital development that enhances the work life, and effectiveness of employees should be targeted. Digitising large organisations is costly, and receiving feedback from the end user throughout the processes could be a valuable step in the development of such.

“We all carry within us assumptions about the state of the world and about the correct ways to engage in relationships” (Schein, 2017, p. 27). After researching the checkback aspect of onboarding, we realise that also here, competent managers as well as proactive new employees will be able to create a culture where feedback and checkbacks are welcomed. When BN elaborates on their value as “innovative”, they state that they ought to be curious, seek new knowledge and learn from experience (Bane NOR, 2020). To actualise such value, the organisation must facilitate so that such culture is possible and wanted for learning and development in the future.

### **5.7 Preconditions for Effective Organisational Socialisation**

According to Scharmer (2009), to lead and to socialise is to work with one's preconditions, so that one can create change. Based on this and our own beliefs that the actors in the onboarding process are both competent and independent, discussing the different preconditions for good organisational socialisation in addition to the six C's we believe will be beneficial for this paper.

Every society or organisation is based on the principle of the common good (Blindheim, 2020). The principle of common humanity refers to the notion that humans can be separated from other existences, and that we are bound together by a fundamental similarity. “Since collective action is necessarily an activity that takes place openly between the actors involved, and in this sense can be described as public, must also perceptions, actions and situations for the coordination of collective action are based on organising principles that are themselves public, and that is perceived as legitimate by others” (Cloutier et al., 2017, as cited in Blindheim, 2020, p. 175). The case we have studied reveals a complex organisation with a long history and organisational changes that have disrupted the status quo. Subcultures have emerged and shaped the organisation over time. Individuals' effort into the common good are essential for growth and change. We understand all the informants in BN as adaptable individuals, who are eager to do their best to achieve such work environments.

Røvik (2019) argues that within the field of organisational development, organisations tend to request adopting the same ideas, even though they are different in many ways. Only when you view the organisation in the light of the abstract identity as a formal organisation, the organisations can seem relatively alike. We mean that this can also be transferred to departments and divisions within a larger organisation, such as Bane NOR. The social construction of the organisation is complex and consists of subcultures, which have developed over time. When making decisions based on the formal organisation and looking at the modernisation of BN, digital systems and resources have been developed to create a good and effective flow internally in the organisation. We would like to argue to adapt a more human-centred approach to changes and processes. We are aware that there are a lot of aspects and actions that we as researchers do not know about in BN. From our research, however, we find that HR has a more strategic and formal approach to onboarding. However, through facilitating the adaptation of processes, one opens up for the possibility of negative customisation, but one also opens up for a much wider area of possibility.

We continue to return to Laloux's statement where he claims that in Teal organisations, support functions such as HR should exist to guide, and not decide or impose rules. According to Dysvik (2014), high levels of structure combined with low levels of care give the highest level of unwanted behaviour at work. Moderate levels of structure in combination with a high level of care give the least unwanted behaviour at work. As employees may experience too much structure such as controlling, this should not be a goal in itself. Self-management is central in such organisations as BN. As people often find ways around rules and procedures or ignore those, he claims that trust should be embraced. This means that the corporate management has to trust in giving up on a large degree of control. A downside of centralised decision making, Laloux states, is the lack of information to manage the specifics. The norms, the personalities and the structures in the different sub-cultures are hard to understand if you do not live them yourself. This supports our findings that HR at BN is a support function that contributes to the facilitation and digitization of formal onboarding. HR is therefore not responsible for the social integration of new employees. HR's role is to continuously improve systems to help facilitate effective management principles.

Dysvik & Kuvaas (2016) argues that it is crucial to obtain information about the managers' and employees' experience of an organisation's HR. If most managers and employees

perceive the HR measures as inadequate, unfair or unnecessary, it is unlikely that the employees will respond positively to the measures. They also point out that it is not uncommon for employees' experiences with HR measures to deviate from how HR and corporate management perceives the measures. Through our interviews and insights into the culture survey, we got the understanding that there is some mistrust towards corporate management after the restructuring of the organisation. Also, we understand based on questions about feedback and internal communication and learning that there is a need to “breaking down the silos” across the organisation. Fixing such mistrust is a process that one must work on over time, and where words are not just words, but also actions. HR employees have their opinion about what is expected and needed, while managers and employees have theirs. Creating an organisation where such expectations are in line should be the target. We understand that as of today, such expectations are not completely aligned with reality. Even though individuals are adaptable and tend to create successful processes together with their colleagues, we still want to emphasise the importance of role clarification between both managers and HR and managers and the new employee.

## **6.0 Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we will conclude on our thesis statement, research questions, and our assumptions will be reviewed.

- I. What informal and formal practices and factors should be in place to facilitate learning in a socialisation process?*

Formal structures are easily seen compared to informal structures that are dynamic and harder to recognise as an outsider of the organisation. It is these norms, values, knowledge, and beliefs that tell us about the organisational culture of the given organisation. Our empirical evidence shows that sponsorship or mentorship has a positive impact on the socialisation of new employees. Such roles make the threshold for asking questions lower and can lighten the pressure on the manager. This finding was more evident for recent graduates when compared with new employees with previous work experience who were entering a role, they were familiar with. Individuals who accept such responsibility must know the importance of their role and enter it with motivation and openness.

We argue that organisations that facilitate organisational socialisation through both formal and informal tactics will lay the best basis for new employees. That way, new employees will adjust to social and performance aspects effectively to become productive and contributing members of the organisation.

Educating both managers and sponsors/mentors is important as people who are onboarded with absent support tend to notice such behaviour, which could damage the overall impression of the organisation. Individual role clearance early in the process should also be in place. The organisation should facilitate so that managers can execute good management and autonomy, which includes providing digital resources for communication and follow-up, e-learning, and checklists. A realistic expectation of the benefits and challenges of digitalisation includes openness for adjustments to the resources available for the different divisions. Digital resources may provide the new employee with formal learning, but not socialisation into the culture and a sense of true belonging. That only happens over time and between the employees. Finally, through our study, we saw that if there is a solid and good subculture, then the important aspects of the socialisation that the new employees emphasised will happen naturally.

## *II. In what way are the different actors in a socialisation process of new employees responsible for the outcome?*

The reception of new members to an organisation is a task that concerns HR, division managers, colleagues, and the new employees themselves. Each of these have their own understanding of what their task entails and what they must do. Our initial assumption about HR at BN was that they focused more on the formal processes, rather than the informal onboarding process. Our interpretation of the empirical findings reveals that HR is mainly responsible for the compliance, whereas the managers and new employees are responsible for the informal processes, which occur across the different phases of Bauer's C's.

The role of HR employees should be to support, communicate, and listen to the managers and employees in the organisation. Our findings show that managers and employees do not expect them to monitor or take an active part in the onboarding process, but rather provide them with the right prerequisites for them to solve this process on their own. What we noticed to be somewhat absent today is how the available resources are communicated to the end user. BN

could benefit from HR as a knowledgeable resource, who could educate the managers about the importance of different relational aspects in the onboarding process. Additionally, when developing Driv, openly listening, and co-creating with the end user will be beneficial as these roles know what their needs are better than anyone.

The role of the manager is to take responsibility, to show care, and to listen with an open mind. A challenge is to know exactly what is expected of you as a manager, as each new employee enters the onboarding with different backgrounds and expectations of the manager's role. Early communication and clarification of expectations from the manager will therefore be important to establish a positive onboarding process. The manager's job is to find the balance between the new employees' expectations, needs and what is feasible for the organisation.

The empirical findings indicate that the new employee is a proactive individual who is capable of taking initiative where it is needed to become a part of the organisational culture and unity. Even though the onboarding processes our informants had gone through lacked different aspects due to limited physical presence, they still had a positive experience overall and acted to fulfil the potential. Motivation was not a term we researched, but we saw that as long as the new employees were motivated for the job, they sought and wanted learning and unity.

Our empirical findings showed the variety of different views and expectations the actors had towards themselves and others. We asked ourselves if these expectations were compatible. Each individual acts from their own reality, and how he or she interprets the surroundings and the action of others. After looking at each separate actor's role in the socialisation process, we understood that it was the interaction between them that creates a good onboarding phase. It is the informal community that is created over time, which lies the foundation of the culture within the organisation. All actors should communicate and act on their responsibilities, explicitly, and implicitly. However, all actors' individual effort in relation to strengthening or building interpersonal relationships is essential.

*III. Is physical presence a prerequisite for the new employee to learn to become a part of an organisation?*



Connecting with colleagues is important to create a feeling of belonging in an organisational structure. Our empirical evidence shows that each individual new employee is experiencing the onboarding phase differently, including the consequences of digital onboarding. We saw that new employees who met with their colleagues physically experienced more connection to the work and their colleagues. The digital solutions are perceived as increasingly formal and where the informal and relational dialogue is missed.

Hybrid offices lay another level of challenge to the socialisation process. As the new employees are experienced as adaptable and solution oriented, they view the overall onboarding phase as a positive experience even though there is a lack of physical presence. However, BN could benefit from facilitating and encouraging physical presence at the office for the employees to meet colleagues, as the downsides of being onboarded digitally were enlightened during our interviews.

A sponsor will have an even more important role if the onboarding happens digitally. To communicate means to share experiences, views and informal and formal knowledge. The new employee informants pointed out that even though the colleagues were welcoming and open, it was more difficult to reach out to them digitally. As we humans learn through relations, the connection between new employee and their colleagues is what creates learning, belonging, and growth. Competence is something the actors in an organisation have together. The lack of physical interactions at the office could prolong the process, and the organisation should therefore aim at facilitating physical interaction between the members of an organisation.

The manager and HR team should trust the informal learning process and the individuals who play the central role in the onboarding process. The new employees are aware of their own responsibility but emphasise that it is easier to ask questions and learn the cultural norms when meeting physically. As there are individual needs in the socialisation process, the managers should seek to communicate early on what the new employees have of expectations and needs, which is even more essential if the onboarding happens digitally.

*IV. How can the conditions for an organisational socialisation process be improved at BN by taking an explicit and proactive approach to the task?*

Whether an organisation succeeds with onboarding, depends on how the actors understand and extend their role. Through our empirical research and theory from the field, we view organisational socialisation as a process that is defined by the actors' previous experiences, expectations and needs, and how each of their contributions interacts together in the culture they find themselves in. It is the informal organisation that provides safety, inclusion and a feeling of belonging. Onboarding a recent graduate will have different needs than welcoming someone to a senior role. A sponsor or mentor can be useful, particularly for new employees who are new to professional work life. Clarity regarding individuals' role perceptions and expectations towards the process should be set early. We view the new employees and managers who are directly engaged in the onboarding process as proactive, and that they understand they must take an active part in the process. HR, which in large organisations is the stable support system for the employees, could benefit from viewing the onboarding process to a larger degree as something happening between the actors involved. Their role is to continuously improve the support system that helps facilitate effective management principles through seeking feedback and co-creation tactics.

The recent organisational changes in BN have led to cultural changes and resistance to change, which should be addressed. Establishing a trust-based relationship between the actors is essential for this growth. Through actions and not only words, this relationship can be strengthened over time, which can develop in line with BN's values. An onboarding process that is in line with these values should be the objective. A high level of structure and control towards managers in relation to the socialisation of new employees is not aimed for, due to a need for flexibility and autonomy. Communicating and educating managers on why the informal and relational aspect is important in the onboarding phase could be beneficial.

When it comes to organisational subcultures, the study shows that entering the different divisions also means becoming part of individual subcultures. Theory shows that subcultures unfold in an organic direction based on the values and interactions between individuals. Nevertheless, new employees are formed indirectly over time and learn through interactions with colleagues, where they consciously and unconsciously learn to become part of the organisation.

## **6.2 Limitations of the Study**

In hindsight, there are limitations related to the validity of the study, as well as time limitations. The quality and the scope of the thesis could be strengthened if executed in the course of a long time. We only researched employees and onboarding processes in some divisions at BN at the head office. There could be different experiences and challenges with socialisation in other divisions, especially in more practical departments. Meaning that we cannot conclude anything on behalf of the whole of the BN organisation. Moreover, we have not researched other companies, meaning that we cannot say for certain that the findings are relatable to other organisations, even though we find it reasonable to suggest that there will be similar challenges in other organisations. Finally, we did not interview colleagues, mentors or sponsors of the new employees. As research regarding culture and new employee socialisation is a complex field, this could reveal important factors and strengthen the reliability of our findings.

Limited research has previously been done in regard to how new employees are onboarded remotely. Most of the literature on organisational socialisation has been conducted before the covid-19 pandemic. Theory regarding the new and transformed way of working and its effect on new employees and their learning trajectory is also limited.

### **6.3 Implications and Future Research Directions**

Regarding transferability, one should be aware of the fact that the questions in the interviews and the analysis are based on our thoughts, perspectives and experiences, as well as inputs from our supervisors at the institute and BN. This implies that one cannot directly transfer the same results to similar studies. However, we do think some of our findings could be connected to similar research, as they are based on relevant and solid theories in the fields we have researched. For further research and the use of different methods, it could be beneficial to do a mixed method study, with observation, interviews and quantitative research for BN to get even more reliable findings to plan the way forward for HR.

We have based much of our structure and theoretical framework on Bauer's 6 C's framework. As mentioned, this is highly focused on what HR can do to strengthen the onboarding process in organisations. We think it would be interesting for further research to exclude this framework and focus increasingly on social learning and relational aspects of the socialisation process and see what the results would reveal. Additionally, future research

could be directed on different leadership styles, and the implications these have on new employees' socialisation and feeling of inclusion.

As we have researched a quite wide and complex field of organisational socialisation in relation to informal and formal strategies, physical presence and through different actors, there are several possibilities when it comes to future research. One could look at turnover and the correlation the quality or experience of onboarding impacts this. One could also look at new employees' motivation and how this is affected by different degrees of formal or informal learning practices.

Another interesting research area is to study the trainee program only, and the actual effect of these and the actions Bane NOR is taking towards new graduates. Further on, one could research other divisions, and one could compare subcultures and how such differences affect onboarding. A comparative study of the different divisions could be done, which was something we considered at the beginning of our study. We also think it could be beneficial for BN to research Driv after it has been in use for some time and review the implementation process and satisfaction with the digital communication resources before further developing it. When it comes to the cultural aspect and the structural changes that BN has done over the last year, it could be interesting to look at the effect of these changes, the cultural differences and the merging of Jernbaneverket and Rom Eiendom.

Regarding organisational socialisation during times with less physical presence, there is more and more literature on the specific field. It is however limited as before covid-19 this was not a wide problem. Further research on the implications of organisational socialisation in such circumstances is interesting to investigate, and how they can adjust in the best possible way to ensure good onboarding. Research on onboarding practices where there has not been a lack of physical presence could also be researched in the future, as our results were affected by the recent covid-19 pandemic.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Forespørsel for deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet “Hvordan kan Bane NOR forbedre sin onboarding praksis?”**

Dette dokumentet forklarer hva formålet med prosjektet går ut på og hva det innebærer for deg å delta.

#### **Formål**

I dette prosjektet vil vi finne ut av hvordan Bane NOR sin praksis rundt onboarding (innfasing) av nyansatte er i dag, og hvordan denne prosessen kan forbedres. Vi vil gjennom halvstrukturerte intervjuer med ansatte og teori om temaer som organisasjonssosialisering, organisasjonskultur, hybrid arbeidsmodell og psykososialt arbeidsmiljø se på hvilke faktorer som ligger til grunne for ansattes forhold til arbeidsplassen.

I den forbindelse ønsker vi å gjennomføre noen uformelle samtaler med 8-9 ansatte i Bane NOR, både nyansatte, divisjonsledere og HR ansatte. Derfor håper du vil at akkurat du vil være med!

Dette prosjektet er et forskningsprosjekt i forbindelse med en masteroppgave ved Universitetet i Stavanger.

#### **Hvem leder forskningsprosjektet?**

Gina Haavik og Camilla Finnseth

#### **Hva betyr det for deg å delta?**

Hvis du ønsker å delta i forskningsprosjektet, vil vi gjennomføre et intervju med deg. Spørsmålene vil omhandle innfasing, organisasjonskultur og psykososialt arbeidsmiljø på arbeidsplassen din.

Intervjuet gjennomføres som en halvformell samtale der vi stiller deg forskjellige spørsmål rundt temaet. Vi vil ikke gjøre lydopptak av intervjuet, men vil ta notater underveis. Ditt navn vil bli anonymisert og det vil ikke være mulig å gjenkjenne deg gjennom materialet som innhentes. Intervjuet tar ca. 40 minutter.

#### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du vil delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. All informasjon om deg vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg om du ønsker å trekke deg underveis.

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

Vi vil kun bruke informasjonen om deg til å finne ut av hvordan ansatte i Bane NOR opplever innfasingen i bedriften, hvordan HR og ledelsen utøver denne i dag og hvordan den eventuelt kan forbedres.

Vi vil ikke dele din informasjon med andre. Det er kun Gina Haavik og Camilla Finnseth som har tilgang til informasjonen.

Bane NOR vil kun få tilgang til oppgaven, ingen notater eller personidentifiserende opplysninger om deg.

Vi er ansvarlig for at ingen kan få tak i informasjonen som vi samler inn om deg.

Vi lagrer all informasjon på en sikker server.

Vi passer på at ditt navn anonymiseres og at du ikke kan gjenkjennes i oppgaven.

Vi følger loven om personvern.

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

Vi er ferdig med forskningsprosjektet 15.06.2022. Da vil vi slette all personidentifiserende opplysninger om deg.

### **Dine rettigheter**

Hvis det kommer frem opplysninger om deg i det som vi skriver, eller har i dokumentene våre, har du rett til å få se hvilken informasjon om deg som vi samler inn. Du kan også be om at informasjonen slettes. Dersom det er noen opplysninger som er feil kan du si ifra og be forskeren rette dem. Du kan også spørre om å få en kopi av informasjonen av oss. Du kan også klage til Datatilsynet dersom du synes at vi har behandlet opplysningene om deg på en uforsiktig måte eller på en måte som ikke er riktig.

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

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Institutt for medie- og samfunnsfag ved Universitetet i Stavanger har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

### **Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?**

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

Ansvarshavende institusjon som er Institutt for medie- og samfunnsfag ved Universitetet i Stavanger, [post-ims@uis.no](mailto:post-ims@uis.no), ved Øystein Hatteland, [oystein.hatteland@uis.no](mailto:oystein.hatteland@uis.no), som er ansvarlig for og veileder av prosjektet

Ansvarlige masterstudenter som gjennomfører prosjektet er Gina Haavik og Camilla Finnseth som kan kontaktes på [ginahaavik@gmail.com](mailto:ginahaavik@gmail.com) eller [camilla.finnseth@gmail.com](mailto:camilla.finnseth@gmail.com)  
Personvernombud ved Universitetet i Stavanger kan kontaktes på [personvernombud@uis.no](mailto:personvernombud@uis.no)

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på e-post ([personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no)) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17

Med vennlig hilsen

Gina Haavik og Camilla Finnseth

Ansvarlige masterstudenter for prosjektet

### **Samtykkeerklæring**

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om masterprosjektet om innfasing, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- ved behov, at intervju blir gjennomført via Teams eller Zoom

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet 15.06.22.

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## Appendix 2

### Introduksjon av case studie, si litt om hensikten med intervjuet:

Vi jobber med en oppgave hvor vi ønsker å evaluere innfasingsprosessen ved nyansettelser i din bedrift, med bakgrunn i faktorer som organisasjonskultur og psykososialt arbeidsmiljø. I den anledning ønsker vi å snakke med deg om hvilke tanker du har om disse og hvordan du har opplevd å være leder/ansatt. Intervjuet vil bli gjennomført som halvformelle samtaler hvor vi går ut ifra en intervjuguide.

Takk for at du er villig til å dele dine erfaringer med oss. Informasjonen som kommer ut av disse intervjuene vil bli anonymisert og din identitet vil ikke bli knyttet til de svarene du gir. Du kan når som helst trekke deg fra intervjuet eller velge å holde tilbake informasjon som du har gitt.

Har du noen spørsmål før vi begynner?

### Intervjuguide HR ansatt

1. Hva er dine hovedarbeidsoppgaver/rolle i bane NOR?
2. Hvem har det overordnede ansvaret for at det er etablert en onboardingprosess i BN og hvem har ansvaret for å gjennomføre denne?
3. Hva mener du er viktig i en onboardingsfase for ansatte? Hvordan vil du si at denne er i BN i dag?
4. Har du noen tanker om den spesifikke kulturen og den sosiale praksisen i divisjonene har positiv innvirkning på kvaliteten av onboarding av nyansatte?
5. Hvor tett kommuniserer dere med lederne i divisjonene? Både med tanke på onboarding men også på andre områder.
6. Hva gjør dere i dag for å finne ut av hvordan tilfredsheten på arbeidsplassen er blant de ansatte?
7. Hvordan opplever du organisasjonskulturen med tanke på åpenhet for endring?
8. Hvordan opplever du endringsvilligheten i bedriften?

### Intervjuguide avdelingsledere

1. Hvordan er dine arbeidsoppgaver i dag? Hvor mange ansatte har du ansvar for?

2. Kan du fortelle om stegene dere tar ved nye ansettelser for å sette han/henne inn i bedriften? (sosialt, arbeidsoppgaver m.m.)
  - a. Hvem har det overordnede ansvaret onbordingsprosessen i BN og hvem har ansvaret for å gjennomføre denne i praksis? Hva er din rolle i en onboardingsprosess?
3. Er det noe du tenker kunne vært gjort annerledes rundt onbordingsprosessen i deres divisjon/ Bane NOR?
  - a. Hva tenker du kan være grunnen for at dette "mangler" i dag?
4. Hvordan opplever du å ansette nå når arbeidsformen er hybrid? Tror du det er en fordel/ulempe?
  - a. Hva er dine holdninger om hybrid arbeidsform generelt?
5. Hvordan er det mtp. selvbestemmelse som leder i Bane Nor?
  - a. Er det mye frihet eller mye rammer fra toppledelsen? Kan du tilpasse mye til din divisjon?
6. Hva er viktigst for deg for at du skal ville bli (lenge) på en arbeidsplass?
7. Har du noen formening om utviklingen av turnover blant ansatte etter det ble mer hybride ansettelser enn før?
8. Hva er din oppfatning av bedriftskulturen i din divisjon?
  - a. Hvis noen mangler/negativt; Har du noen tanker om hva som er grunnen til dette?
  - b. Har du noen tanker om den spesifikke kulturen og deres divisjons sosiale praksis har innvirkning på kvaliteten av onboardingen av nyansatte?

### **Intervjuguide nylig ansatte, inkludert traineer**

1. Når ble du ansatt i BN?
  - a. Trainee eller ikke?
2. Hva er din arbeidstittel/rolle i bane nor i dag?
3. Kan du guide oss gjennom de første ukene i BN for deg; hva ble gjort for at du skulle onboardes i BN? (sosialt, arbeidsoppgaver m.m.) (*utdyp hva vi definerer som onboardingfasen*)
4. I sin helhet, hvordan opplevde du onboardingfasen i BN?
5. Hvordan har du erfart å bli onboardet hybrid (med mindre fysisk tilstedeværelse på arbeidsplassen)? (da med tanke på sosialt, trygghet rundt arbeidsoppgaver m.m.)
6. Hvordan oppfatter du kulturen i divisjonen du arbeider i Bane NOR? (samhold mellom kollegaer, åpenhet, tillit og arbeidsmiljø)
  - a. Hva mener du påvirker denne i størst grad?
  - b. Oppfatter du at BN etterstreber å handle etter sine verdier?

- c. Hvordan opplever du at ledelsen lytter til sine ansatte?
7. Hva er viktigst for deg for at du skal ville bli (lenge) på en arbeidsplass?
    - a. Oppfatter du at BN tilrettelegger for dine behov?
  8. Hvordan trives du på arbeidsplassen i dag?
  9. Føler du at ting kunne blitt gjort annerledes for at du i dag kunne hatt det enda bedre?

## Appendix 3

[Meldeskjema](#) / [Innfasing i Bane NOR](#) / Vurdering

### Vurdering

**Referansenummer**

396636

**Prosjekttittel**

Innfasing i Bane NOR

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Universitetet i Stavanger / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Institutt for medie- og samfunnsfag

**Prosjektansvarlig**

Øystein Hatteland

**Student**

Camilla Finnseth

**Prosjektperiode**

28.02.2022 - 15.06.2022

[Meldeskjema](#)

Dato	Type
24.02.2022	Standard

**Kommentar****OM VURDERINGEN**

Personverntjenester har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

Personverntjenester har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

Det betyr at du nå kan starte datainnsamlingen din.

**TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET**

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til den datoen som er oppgitt i meldeskjemaet.

**LOVLIG GRUNNLAG**

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

**PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER**

Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

**DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER**

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Personverntjenester vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

**FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER**

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og



konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleverandør, skylagring eller videosamtale) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

#### MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilken type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>  
Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Personverntjenester vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!