

M.A. dissertation

**WELFARE AND MIGRATION: TRANSITIONS INTO AND OUT OF WELFARE
BENEFITS RECEIPT AMONG POLISH MIGRANT WORKERS IN NORWAY**

Oleksandr Ryndyk

EMMIR - European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations

Supervisors:

Dr. Gunhild Odden, University of Stavanger, Norway
Dr. Marina Lukšič-Hacin, University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia

Date of delivery: 30 June 2013

Table of content

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1. CURRENT STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE	
1.1. Key issues and evidence of the welfare-migration nexus	7
1.2. Welfare-migration nexus in the Norwegian context	9
CHAPTER 2. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK	
2.1. Norwegian welfare system	12
2.1.1. General features	12
2.1.1.1. Principles of the Norwegian welfare state	12
2.1.1.2. Role of the labour market in the Norwegian welfare state	12
2.1.2. The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration	13
2.1.2.1. General organization, values, and goals	14
2.1.2.2. Services offered under the Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme	14
2.1.2.3. Unemployment and other relevant work-related benefits	15
2.2. Developments in immigration and labour market in Norway during 2004-2013	17
2.2.1. Increased labour immigration	17
2.2.1.1. Implications of the EU/EEA Agreement	18
2.2.1.2. Polish immigration to Norway 2004-2013	19
2.2.2. Labour market participation and unemployment	20
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEEDINGS	
3.1. The initial research question and the choice of the method	23
3.2. Ethical concerns	24
3.3. Establishment of the initial contact and mutual trust	25
3.4. The process of data collection	26
3.5. Transcription, coding, memo writing, and evolution of the research question	27
3.6. Informants' profiles	29
3.6.1. Marta	31
3.6.2. Barbara	32
3.6.3. Joanna	33
3.6.4. Patrycja	34
3.6.5. Tomasz	35
3.6.6. Piotrek	36
3.6.7. Henryk	38
3.6.8. Jan	39
3.6.9. Marcin	40
3.6.10. Wiktor	40
CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	
4.1. Transition into welfare benefits receipt	42
4.1.1. Unemployment and upward occupational mobility	42
4.1.2. Season-sensitive unemployment	45
4.1.3. Unemployment in times of crisis	48
4.1.4. Sickness, sick leaves, and unemployment	51
4.2. Duration of welfare benefits receipt and financial independence	53
4.2.1. The size of welfare benefits	53
4.2.2. Tax reductions	54
4.2.3. Patterns of personal consumption	55

4.2.4. Financial commitments	57
4.3. Transit out of welfare benefits receipt	61
4.3.1. Participation in work-return programs	61
4.3.2. Financial independence and return to work	63
CHAPTER 5. THEORETICAL FINDINGS	
5.1. The role of security, certainty and comfort in work-welfare transitions	67
5.1.1. Security	67
5.1.2. Certainty	67
5.1.3. Comfort	69
5.1.4. Hypothesis H1: (In)security, (un)certainty, and (dis)comfort in the long run	69
5.2. Moderating factors in work-welfare transitions	70
5.2.1. Hypothesis H2: Financial independence: wealth, income, and expenditures	70
5.2.2. Hypothesis H3: Work stability, financial independence, and work-related security. .71	
5.2.3. Hypothesis H4: Transition from work into welfare benefits receipt	73
5.3. Dependency and work-welfare (im)mobility	74
5.3.1. Hypothesis H5: Financial commitments, dependency on work, and feeling settled . .74	
5.3.2. Hypothesis H6: Financial commitments, welfare-related security, and dependency on welfare	77
5.4. The dynamic model of work-welfare transitions	79
CONCLUSIONS	82
APPENDICES	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of the modern welfare state in the 1930-1950s, the question of eligibility to benefits under the national social welfare system has been constantly debated throughout the world. When it concerns immigrants, in the most countries they are usually entitled to a less comprehensive selection of social welfare services than the native population. However, some countries, such as Norway and other Nordic states, offer extensive social welfare coverage not only to its native population but to most of the immigrants as well. As the national welfare traces its roots to the 19th-century European phenomenon of the nation state, immigrants' interactions and attitudes towards the host country's welfare have always been under the close look of the public debate.

During the first decade of the 21st century many Western European countries have seen a considerable increase in the share of its immigrant population. As immigrants now represent a substantial share in the countries' labour force, concerns over their contributions to and benefits from the national welfare have been on the rise. In this regard, Norway is not an exception. The current wave of an anti-immigrant rhetoric in the country is not a new phenomenon, as it tends to go hand in hand with the progression of business cycles. What distinguishes the contemporary situation from the historic ones is that now the Norwegian immigration system is integrated into, and therefore highly dependent on, the broader European immigration legal framework. To name just one of its aspects, the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement considerably reduces Norway's ability to directly manage immigration flows from the EU/EEA states. Consequently, the indirect means, such as the country's relative attractiveness in terms of its national labour market conjuncture, social welfare provision, and education system among others, seem to be the last option the state can resort to.

Localisation in theories/discourses

Similarly to public debates, the welfare-migration nexus became the cornerstone of the scientific discussions on immigrants and welfare in the academic circles. However, after almost half a century of scientific inquiries in this field, the great body of quantitative research has achieved relatively little in explaining the micro foundations of immigrants' interactions with the host country's welfare. Thus, most of the quantitative studies on the welfare-migration nexus use aggregate data from national and international databases, and, as a result, often describe relevant processes instead of explaining them. Moreover, their research findings often appear to be inconsistent and sometimes contradictory, leaving enough room for further studies. Notably, migrants' perspectives seem to be widely ignored when their interactions with the social welfare are in focus. Therefore this master

thesis aims at filling the void of knowledge about micro foundations of immigrants' interactions with the host country's social welfare. More precisely, it addresses the patterns of resort to the welfare provision among unemployed Polish labour migrants during the latest economic downturn and in its aftermath in Norway.

Contextualisation

While most of the European countries were severely hit by the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 with the following protracted economic stagnation across the continent, Norwegian economy seems to have successfully handled the economic slowdown and now resumed its pre-crisis dynamics. It therefore comes as no surprise that immigration to Norway, despite a minor reduction in its absolute numbers in 2009, has now been on the rise again. In general, 710 000 persons of immigrant background, representing 14.1% of the country's population, lived in Norway as of 1 January 2013. Most of the immigrants in Norway come from other European countries. Thus, seven out of ten immigrants to Norway in 2011 had citizenship from another European country. Remarkably, 77 000 or 12% of all the persons with immigrant background in Norway originate from Poland. As Poles represent the biggest and, at the same time, one of the youngest immigrant communities in Norway, it was decided to focus particularly on this group of labour immigrants.

Furthermore, the recent evidence from both Norway and the EU has shown that labour immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are particularly vulnerable to the economic conjuncture, as they tend to be among the first to lose their jobs when the economy slows down. Thus, in the first quarter of 2009 unemployment rates stood at 2.1% for native Norwegians, 6.5% for all immigrant groups, and 8.2% (up from 2.3% in 2008) for workers from the EU states in CEE (SSB, 2012). At the same time, the amount of unemployment benefits in 2009 was double (NOK 9.7 billion) and in 2010 almost triple (NOK 12.2 billion) of the respective figure from 2008 (NOK 4.3 billion). Consequently, such recent trends have intensified the public debate on 'exportability' of the social welfare in Norway. Notwithstanding, this study is concerned with micro foundations of such dynamics and not with its implications for the public finance.

Articulation of research question and methodology

Since this study employs the grounded theory method to data analysis, the main research question has constantly evolved as the research proceeded. After a series of modifications, the final central research question is as following: **Which are the main driving forces that shape labour migrants' transitions into and out of the welfare benefits receipt in Norway?**

In order to answer the central research question, a total of twelve interviews were collected with twelve informants. The main qualitative data were gathered during February-April 2013. Thus, ten

individual interviews were conducted with ten Polish migrant workers who live in the Greater Stavanger Area (Norway). Although dealing with a wide spectrum of social welfare services offered in Norway, the conversations with the informants primarily addressed their personal experiences of being unemployed in Norway. In order to supplement the main data with an institutional perspective, other two semi-structured interviews with the employees of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) were organized in May 2013.

Structure

This master thesis consists of introduction, five chapters of the main body, conclusions, appendices, and bibliography.

Since the study employs the grounded theory method for data analysis, the literature review (Chapter 1) was conducted very carefully in order to avoid borrowing of preconceived theoretical concepts and categories from earlier research. Thus, it identifies existent gaps in the great body of quantitative studies on the welfare-migration nexus and acquaints research users with relevant directions of the research in this domain in Norway.

Chapter 2 provides the reader with a comprehensive contextualisation of the study. It discusses the main features of the Norwegian welfare state and the role the labour market plays in it. In addition, the chapter describes the recent developments on the labour market and the dynamics of labour immigration to Norway.

A thorough description of the methodological proceedings is outlined in Chapter 3. Among other, it justifies the choice of the method, discusses ethical concerns, and explains how the method was operationalized during all the stages of the research. In addition, it introduces the reader to the ten main informants and their experiences of work and unemployment in Norway.

Chapter 4 of this study analyzes the narrative interviews with my informants. It is logically organized according three stages of work-welfare transitions, namely the transition into, duration of, and the exit from welfare benefits receipt. Summarizing the results of focused coding, this chapter operates with such categories as selected codes (SCs) and fractured theoretical concepts (FTCs).

The outcomes of the theoretical coding are presented in Chapter 5. Following the logic of the grounded theory method, it builds a series of hypothetical relations (hypotheses) among defined fractured theoretical concepts and integrates them into **the dynamic model of work-welfare transitions** which is the main theoretical outcome of this study.

Finally, the conclusions summarize the key theoretical findings of this study and suggest possible avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 1. CURRENT STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE

Due to the use of the grounded theory (GT) method in data analysis, the results of the desk research concern only the studies that address the welfare-migration nexus in the international and Norwegian contexts.

1.1 Key issues and evidence of the welfare-migration nexus

Public debates on immigration, labour market participation, and welfare provision have been closely accompanied by scientific discussions in academic circles. Thus, Borjas (1999) examined the so-called *welfare magnet hypothesis* and found that immigrants are particularly attracted by generous welfare states. He suggests that immigrants who rely on social welfare provision are more likely to settle in more generous states, compared to native population. However, his study is based on the US evidence where direct and indirect costs associated with moving to another state may be lower when compared to European countries. It therefore implies higher spatial mobility that may not be the case in the European context. In addition to diverse linguistic and cultural barriers, highly sophisticated and bureaucratized immigration regimes across EU/EEA countries may pose additional constraints for the intra-EU/EEA mobility of both native and immigrant populations.

Another widely studied aspect linking welfare provision and migration is the participation in the social welfare understood as both benefiting from and contributing to it. Thus, migrants contribute to the host country's welfare, as nationals do, by paying taxes. In many countries, immigrants are therefore entitled to a variety of social welfare services, including unemployment benefits, disability and old-age pensions, children allowances, etc.

The *issue of origin* may have particular implications for immigrants' participation in the welfare provision. Thus, Giulietti *et al.* (2011) examined the effect of unemployment benefit spending (UBS) on immigration in Europe. No effect of UBS on the migration patterns of the EU nationals was found, whereas a moderate correlation existed for the third-country nationals (TCNs). It may suggest that national immigration regimes and legislations in this domain might have greater impact on the immigration patterns of EU nationals and TCNs rather than welfare generosity across the EU. Furthermore, Rodriguez-Planas (2012) includes immigrants' *cohort of arrival* as a covariate while modelling the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits among natives and immigrants in Spain. She finds that the most recently arrived immigrants account for a lower unemployment benefits intake as they are restricted to benefit from the social programmes because of their legal status and lesser accrued contributions. On the contrary, immigrants with longer periods of residence in Spain, regardless of their continent of origin, seem to be more likely to receive unemployment benefits than natives do.

Furthermore, Brücker *et al.* (2002) suggest that the welfare generosity may affect the *skill composition* of arriving immigrants. Thus, it appeared that the low-skilled tend to migrate to the countries with extensive welfare provision and correspondingly higher taxes. On the contrary, high-skilled migrants choose countries with lower taxes which, as a rule, imply lower social transfers. The same effect of the welfare generosity on immigrants' self-selection with regard to their skills is found by Boeri (2010). It is relevant to mention that different studies conceptualise high-skilled and low-skilled labour in different ways. On the one hand, the reference can be made to migrants' level of formal education. On the other hand, many studies on the topic perceive immigrants' level of skills based on their net contribution to the host country's welfare, implying that the high-skilled are net contributors to and the low-skilled are net beneficiaries of the welfare.

In addition to the issue of the self-selection among low-skilled vs. high-skilled immigrants, the question of whether immigrants *benefit more from the national welfare* than natives do has also received close attention. Hence, Borjas and Hilton (1996) found that immigrants in the USA tend to resort more frequently to welfare provision and for longer periods of time than the natives do. Similar results can be found in Hansen and Lofstrom (2003) who analysed panel data from Sweden from 1990 to 1996. According their findings, immigrants more frequently participate in the welfare than the native population does. Furthermore, Gustafsson (2011) argues that the immigrants account for the most of the social assistance receipt in Sweden, despite the fact that they represent just 14% of the country's population. A study on the Turkish immigrants in Germany by Riphahn *et al* (2010) confirms the aforementioned pattern of welfare participation among immigrants when compared to natives, but it also reveals that residual welfare dependency is statistically significant only for the second-generation migrants.

As we have seen so far, the available quantitative research seems to be over concerned with migrants benefiting from the welfare, and little attention has been paid to the *contributions* they make to host country's welfare. On the contrary, focusing on the immigrants from the new EU states in CEE, Blanchflower and Lawton (2009) found that they are more likely to be in work when compared to the natives and immigrants from other origins in the UK. I therefore argue that more qualitative inquiries in this domain would greatly benefit the theory of the migration-welfare nexus and provide researchers with useful guidelines for further quantitative and qualitative studies.

An important aspect that is sometimes neglected in many quantitative studies is *the question of endogeneity* when the link between immigration and social welfare spending is to be studied (Giulietti & Wahba, 2012). Higher immigration, in particular on humanitarian reasons, might affect the size of the state's social expenditures, as newly arrived immigrants may need an extensive public support in terms of housing, (re-)education, social integration, etc. Thus, it might seem that

the generous welfare provision attracts low-skilled immigrants, whilst it can also be the other way around. This leads to yet another promising area of scientific inquiry, namely how country's immigration policies affect its own national welfare system by directly and indirectly affecting the key characteristics of its immigrant population.

When compared to the solid body of quantitative studies dealing with the welfare-migration nexus, *qualitative studies* in this domain are virtually nonexistent. However, a study by Timonen and Doyle (2009) sheds light on some important aspects that quantitative studies often fail to take account of. Thus, the authors explore migrants' workers conceptualisation of social protection and their relationships with the Irish welfare state. Their study may be highly relevant to this one, since most of the recent immigrants in Ireland by 2006 were from the new EU states in CEE, in particular Poland. Timonen and Doyle (2009) focus on the migrant workers' experiences, understanding, and expectations regarding their social protection in Ireland. Timonen and Doyle (2009) highlight that one of the key themes that emerged during their conversations with the informants was the rejection of the dependency on the welfare state and the related sceptical views of those who were perceived as dependent (p. 172). The study also showed that many migrants extensively relied on non-welfare sources of security such as private savings and investments, as they were poorly informed of their actual entitlements in Ireland. Whereas migrants' aspirations were dominated by work and career progression, the transnational security was found to be paramount, especially for the non-European migrants.

1.2 Welfare-migration nexus in the Norwegian context

With regards to the Norwegian context, the research on the welfare-migration nexus is rather scarce. In the study of the *welfare and immigrants* in Norway, Ekhaugen (2005) analyses all immigrants who came to Norway between 1992 and 1996 and distinguishes three particular groups among them: western immigrants, mainly coming to Norway for work; refugees and asylum seekers; and non-western, non-refugee immigrants most likely arriving to Norway for family reunifications. The two types of immigrants' strategies, namely re-migration and staying in the country, are believed to correlate with their probability of becoming self-supported. Thus, the re-migration is assumed to be a strategy often pursued by the western immigrants in order "to obtain a higher salary than the relatively egalitarian Norwegian labour market can offer" (p. 26). On the contrary, non-western, non-refugee immigrants were reported to tend to stay in the country as they "fare comparatively better in Norway than in most other countries" (p. 26). It was also found that the share of non-western, non-refugee immigrants claiming welfare benefits, when defined comprehensively, tended to increase over time, and after 17 years of residence it exceeded the welfare propensity of refugees (p. 11). The author found it surprising that the welfare participation is very sensitive to business

cycles. As the non-western immigrants tend to be the first to lose their jobs in the times of economic stagnation, the author concludes that they “do not constitute a stable source of tax-revenue in Norway as their manpower and human capital are not taken advantage of except during very prosperous periods” (p. 26). The most important drawback of this study that puts into question its relevance for the current situation in Norway is its outdated definition of the three immigrant categories. Thus, immigrants from Eastern Europe, including Poland, were conceptualised in Ekhaugen (2005) as non-western, non-refugee immigrants who used to come to Norway for family reunification purposes. However, since the 2004 EU enlargement in CEE the immigration to Norway has been dominated by labour migrants from CEE. Thus, given the current immigration situation, the CEE workers in Norway, in particular Poles, cannot be conceptualised as non-western, non-refugee immigrants in the same way as they were defined in Ekhaugen (2005).

In a comparative study on the *lifecycle employment* profiles Bratsberg *et al* (2007) narrow their focus to Norwegian male natives and non-western male labour immigrants who arrived to Norway in the early 1970s before the 1975 ‘full stop’ on immigration. They point out to the fact that this category of labour immigrants had extremely short employment careers when compared to the natives which can be explained by the differences in non-employment incidence. Bratsberg *et al* (2007) argue that the Norwegian welfare system, characterised by “high benefit replacement ratios for household heads with a non-working spouse and many children,” provides few work incentives for this type of families (p. 43). They emphasize that the family size and the spouse’s employment status contribute significantly to the observed differences in the employment patterns among natives and immigrants. Other factors that contributed to the poorer labour market performance by this cohort of immigrants are said to be the types of jobs and the labour market conjuncture in the first years after their arrival. Many of the labour migrants in this study were reported to have fallen out of the labour market during the two economic downturns in Norway in the 1980s and 1990s (p. 43). Similarly to Ekhaugen (2005), Bratsberg *et al* (2007) observed a considerably higher sensitivity of immigrants’ employment to business cycle fluctuations, what made them conclude that immigrants sometimes constitute “a sort of reserve labour, that may be ‘included’ during good times, and ‘excluded’ during economic downturns” (p. 43). The authors argue that the immigrants’ successful employment upon arrival does not guarantee them a lifetime employment (p. 44).

Welfare dependency is often studied in relation to the eventual *out-migration*. Hence, Longva (2001) addresses the issue of out-migration of the OECD and non-OECD immigrants from Norway. He comes to a conclusion that “the relatively generous welfare in Norway does not necessarily retain groups of immigrants prone to receive welfare benefits” and the least successful non-OECD

immigrants tend to out-migrate the most (p. 36). These findings clearly contradict the results in Ekhaugen (2005).

Some studies from Norway focus on immigrants' participation in state-sponsored *integration programs* and their eventual outcomes on the Norwegian labour market. Thus, Valenta and Strabac (2011) interviewed Norwegian welfare service providers about their experiences of dealing with migrant workers from the new EU states in CEE. They argue that the exclusion of the EU/EEA workers from the state-assisted integration and social welfare programmes may seriously hamper workers' prospects of an upward social mobility and a successful socio-economic integration in the Norwegian society. Nevertheless, this study, as many others, lacks perspectives of the EU/EEA labour migrants themselves.

Finally, a recent study conducted by Przemyslaw Lukasz Cielen among Polish construction workers in Oslo touches upon migrants' use of unemployment assistance during the periods of redundancies and layoffs. His informants suggest that some dishonest employers, interested in keeping the wages low through a high rotation of employees, may encourage the troublesome workers to resort to social protection services in times of involuntary layoffs (Cielen, 2011).

As the literature reviewed showed, the resort of immigrants to social welfare provision is predominantly studied from the macro perspective. Despite a solid body of quantitative research on the welfare-migration nexus its findings are generally mixed and often controversial. Thus, most of the quantitative studies in this field operate with the aggregate data from extensive databases and apply preconceived categories, such as immigrants' level of skills, country of origin, and length of stay in the country among others, to studying the welfare-migration nexus. As a result, the rigid categorization of the studied phenomena hinders the flexibility of quantitative research. Hence, the macro perspective might not be suitable for answering the question how immigrants themselves conceptualize their interactions with the relevant social welfare services. Moreover, little is known about the patterns of immigrants' transition into and out of benefit receipt, the role of their individual and family-related characteristics on the social welfare dependency, and how the factors of time, motivations, and occupational segregation influence the patterns of welfare consumption among labour migrants.

CHAPTER 2. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Norwegian welfare system

Esping-Andersen (2006) defined three clustered regime-types of the welfare state, namely the liberal, the corporatist, and the social democratic. The *social democratic* welfare regime-type is assumed to be based on the principles of solidarity, universalism, and de-commodification of social rights. It is often referred to as the Scandinavian welfare model, as the most of its common features can be frequently found in the Scandinavian countries. Thus, the social democrats in those nations are believed to have aspired to a welfare state “that would promote an equality of the highest standards, not an equality of minimal needs as was pursued elsewhere” (Esping-Andersen, 2006, p. 168). Under such welfare arrangements, all social classes are covered under one universal insurance system where “all benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to pay” (Esping-Andersen, 2006, p. 169). Consequently, the social democratic welfare regime-type is assumed to be entirely dependent on, and therefore highly committed to, full employment.

2.1.1 General features

It is widely accepted that the Norwegian welfare state is a case of the social democratic regime-type of the welfare state, and therefore many of its characteristics are common for other social democratic welfare states.

2.1.1.1 Principles of the Norwegian welfare state

The Norwegian welfare state is usually characterised by the following principles. Firstly, a high participation in working life should be promoted by the state through such instruments as a free public education and active labour market policies. Secondly, the working life conditions should be negotiated among social partners in the form of three-party cooperation. Thirdly, the public welfare programme, funded mainly through taxation, should grant a high level of welfare rights to all residents. Furthermore, in case of unemployment, sickness, disability and old age, generous transfers should be provided within a comprehensive and universal welfare system. And, finally, equality of genders should be ensured (NOU 2011:7, p. 21).

2.1.1.2 Role of the labour market in the Norwegian welfare state

As it has been mentioned above, the social democratic welfare regime-type in general, and the Norwegian welfare model in particular, are assumed to be highly dependent on the performance of the labour market. Hence, high rates of participation in the working life and the full employment are believed to be crucial for the sustainability of the generous universal welfare coverage.

One of the main features of the Norwegian labour market is its compressed wages structure where minimum wages are negotiated in the process of collective bargaining between social partners,

rather than established by the government. The progressive system of wage income taxation in Norway is to guarantee that there are no major discrepancies in the wealth redistribution among the residents. Thus, the Gini coefficient¹ after taxes and transfers for Norway in the late 2000s was among the lowest in the world and stood at 0.250. In addition to the wages compression, the public sector in Norway employs a relatively large share of active population, and the state promotes active labour market policies (OECD 2011, p. 9).

It is widely acknowledged that Norway's compressed wage structure can lead to a high threshold for admission to the nation's labour market (NOU 2011:7, p. 1). Since the Norwegian welfare model is believed to heavily depend on high rates of employment, uncontrolled migration is often seen as a particular challenge to the fundamental values of Norwegian society. In addition, the public discourse in Norway seems to put a distinctive emphasis on the contributive part of the Norwegian welfare system. Hence, many seem to be very concerned with possible exploitation or 'exportability' of the welfare benefits (NOU 2011:7, p. 1). Despite relatively high fertility rates in Norway, the demographic element is also present in the public discourse, especially when it comes to the sustainability of the nation's welfare model (NOU 2011:7, p. 3).

In order to maintain the existent social structure in Norway, new arrivals need to be successfully incorporated in it. Accordingly, high employment rates are necessary to feed the revenue part of the state's budget. The two key concerns associated with the uncontrolled immigration to Norway are the following. Firstly, large numbers of labour immigrants might put pressure on wages composition and create so- 'grey zones' where labour relations are not regulated (NOU 2011:7, p. 16). Secondly, high levels of introductory benefits for humanitarian migrants and members of their families may lead to the so-called 'culture of passivity' or 'clientele attitudes' towards the state. In its turn, it is believed to pose a threat to the Norwegian welfare system that is based on the sense of unity, contribution and solidarity.

Thus, the labour market in Norway can be considered as a highly regularised one, leaving very few opportunities for irregular employment and over-the-counter payments.

2.1.2 The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration² (in Norwegian, *Nye arbeids- og velferdsetaten*) replaced in 2006 the former National Insurance Service and the former Norwegian Directorate of Labour (Aetat) and assumed their responsibility of providing the corresponding services.

¹ According OECD definition, the Gini coefficient is based on the comparison of cumulative proportions of the population against cumulative proportions of income they receive, and it ranges between 0 in the case of perfect equality and 1 in the case of perfect inequality. For more information, visit: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=26067&Lang=en>

² Here and after NAV.

2.1.2.1 General organization, values, and goals

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service is the state-owned part of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration. Local authorities and NAV offices in particular county signed a cooperation agreement which defines services the local office has to offer.

NAV is reported to administer one third of the national budget through schemes such as unemployment benefits, rehabilitation, pensions, child benefits, and cash benefits (NAV, 2013a). The three fundamental social functions that NAV is expected to deliver are: (1) “job opportunities for as many people as possible, (2) the opportunity of meaningful activity for those with special needs, and (3) the opportunity for secure income with accordance with rights enshrined in legislation” (NAV, 2007). In addition, NAV is believed to pursue the following goals. Firstly, it aims at involving more people into work and activities and minimizing the number of those on welfare benefits. Secondly, it seeks to ensure a well-functioning labour market by offering “good services tailored to the users’ needs and circumstances” (NAV, 2013a). And thirdly, NAV commits to comprehensive and efficient labour and welfare administration by providing “the right services and benefits at the right time” (NAV, 2013a).

2.1.2.2 Services offered under the Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme

The National Insurance Scheme (in Norwegian, *Folketrygden*) is one of the main general social insurance schemes in Norway, the others being the Family Allowance Scheme and the Scheme for Cash Benefit for Families with Small Children. The benefits from the National Insurance Scheme are granted according the National Insurance Act (in Norwegian, *Folketrygdloven*) as of 28 February 1997. Hence, all persons who either reside or work as employees in Norway are compulsory insured under the National Insurance Scheme.

The National Insurance Scheme is funded through contributions from employees, self-employed persons and other members, employers’ contributions and contributions from the state, the rates being decided by the Parliament. It was reported that the total expenses of the National Insurance Scheme in 2011 amounted to NOK 331 989 million, 30.2% of which (approx. NOK 100 157 million) was financed through the state grants (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 5). Persons who are insured under the National Insurance Scheme are entitled to old-age, survivor’s and disability pensions, basic benefit and attendance benefit in case of disablement, work assessment allowance, occupational injury benefits, benefits to single parents, cash benefits in case of sickness, maternity, adoption, unemployment, medical benefits in case of sickness and maternity and funeral grants (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 4). The following section briefly outlines unemployment and other work-related social welfare benefits that are highly relevant for this study.

2.1.2.3 Unemployment and other relevant work-related benefits

The main type of social insurance benefits concerned under this study is *unemployment benefits* (in Norwegian, *dagpenger*). This type of social transfers is to compensate a person for the loss of income due to unemployment. In order to be entitled for unemployment benefits, one's working hours must have been reduced by at least 50% in comparison to previous working hours. In addition, the following requirements should be met. Firstly, one must register with the NAV as a jobseeker, actually apply for work, and submit the employment status form every 14 days. Secondly, one must have been paid at least 1.5 times the so-called National Insurance Scheme basic amount, B.a. (in Norwegian, *Grunnbeløpet (G)* which amounted to NOK 82 122 in 2012) in the last calendar year, or at least 3 B.a. (NOK 246 366) over the three preceding calendar years. Finally, one should live or be present in Norway. As a rule, students are not entitled to unemployment benefits.

A person may also be entitled to unemployment benefits if he/she has been partly or completely laid off, become unemployed because of bankruptcy (self-employed), or have recently been discharged from the army (NAV, 2013b). Notably, if a person has become unemployed by his/her own choice, i.e. if he/she has given notice voluntary, refused to take a suitable job, refused to participate in labour market measures, then a prolonged waiting period may be imposed, or benefits may temporarily be suspended (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 22). A person may be entitled to partial unemployment benefits if he/she is partially unemployed and works 50% or less of the regular hours. In such a case, the payment is reduced in proportion to the number of hours the person worked during the reporting period. Furthermore, if a person is partly on a sick leave or receives partial pensions/benefits, he/she may also be eligible for partial unemployment benefits (NAV, 2013b).

The benefit period depends on the previously earned income from work. Hence, if the income from work in the preceding year was at least 2 B.a. (NOK 164 244 in 2012), the benefit period may last up to 104 weeks. In case the income from work in the preceding year was less than 2 B.a., the benefit period may be 52 weeks. Nevertheless, when the first benefit period has expired, a subsequent benefit period may be allowed, provided that the work-related income requirement is met again (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 23).

The calculation of unemployment benefits is based on the previously earned income from work and any National Insurance benefits due to sickness (in Norwegian, *sykepenger*), pregnancy (*svangerskapspenger*), maternity or adoption (*foreldrepenger*), and other. The calculation basis is the highest level of income before tax earned during the preceding calendar year or the average over the three past calendar years. However, the maximum benefit basis must not exceed 6 B.a. (NOK 492 732 in 2012). The benefit rate per day is 0.24% of the corresponding benefit basis and is

paid five days a week, which in sum amounts to approximately 62.4% of the calculation basis per year (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 23). In other words, an average unemployed person in Norway usually receives 62% of his/her previous income. In addition, a supplement of NOK 17 per day is granted for each child under the age of 18 dependent on the unemployed person. Finally, if a person has received unemployment benefits for more than 8 weeks in the previous year, he/she is entitled to a holiday supplement of 9.5% of the gross unemployment benefits received in the previous year (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 23). The unemployment benefits in Norway are taxed and are paid to the unemployed every 14 days upon having received his/her updated employment status form.

In addition to unemployment benefits, insured members of the National Insurance Scheme are entitled to a range of *other work-related benefits*, such as benefits in the case of occupational injury, work assessment allowance, and daily cash benefits in the case of sickness. As these types of social benefits can play an important role in individual's transition into and out of work, it makes sense to take a closer look to their regulations.

A person who is insured for occupational injury under the National Insurance Scheme and suffers from an occupational injury is entitled to *benefits in the case of occupational injury*. These comprise medical benefits, as well as pensions. Certain diseases, in addition to injury, sickness, and death caused by an accident at work, are also regarded as occupational injury. Depending on the medical nature and degree of the injury, an injured may be granted a compensation for non-economic loss (e.g. reduced quality of life) in addition to any other benefits. The maximum annual compensation from the Social Insurance Scheme in this case is 75% of the B.a. (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 24).

Work assessment allowance (in Norwegian, *arbeidsavklaringspenger*) is addressed to insured adult persons below the age of 67 whose working capacity is reduced by at least 50% due to illness, injury or defect. This allowance can be granted in order to cover living expenses of a person who is undergoing an active treatment and vocational measures or is still considered to have a certain possibility of becoming employed and is being taken care of by the NAV. The benefit rate per year is 66% of the person's pensionable income during the last calendar year or the average pensionable income over the last three calendar years. The work assessment allowance is paid five days a week (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 16).

A person who is insured under the National Insurance Scheme and has an annual income of at least 0.5 B.a. (NOK 42 6023 in 2013) can receive *daily cash benefits in the case of sickness* (in Norwegian, *sykepengen*). As a rule, the person should have worked for at least 4 weeks and is considered incapable of working due to the sickness. Daily cash benefits for employees comprise

100% of their pensionable income (but not exceeding 6 B.a. or NOK 475 296) and are paid five days per week from the first day of sickness for a period up to 260 days (52 weeks). The daily cash benefits during the first 16 calendar days are paid by the employer and thereafter from the National Insurance Scheme. Self-employed persons are also entitled to sickness benefits, which comprise 65% of their pensionable income, from the 17th day of sickness and for a maximum period of 248 days (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012a, p. 18).

2.2 Developments in immigration and labour market in Norway during 2004-2013

The public debate on immigration in Norway proves to be tightly linked to the economic and labour market conjuncture in the country. In the times of economic booms, when labour is scarce, the focus is taken away from the “immigrants who do not want to integrate” and is put on the “immigrants who contribute to the welfare and create jobs.” In the times of economic slowdown or even crises, the focus is put again on the “immigrants who exploit the Norwegian welfare system.”

2.2.1 Increased labour immigration

By the late 1990s the Norwegian economy was believed to be in the great need of additional labour supply. For the first time after 1975 ‘full stop’ on immigration, immigrants began to be perceived as possible contributors to the welfare system, and not just consumers of it. Public discourse on immigration has become more positive, as can be confirmed by the fact that the right-wing populist Progress Party (Frp) lost the local elections in 1999 (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008, p. 275).

Following the sharp growth before the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, labour immigration decreased in 2009 in the aftermath of the relative slowdown of the Norwegian economy. But it has been increasing again since 2010. Figure 2.1. (Appendix A) shows the dynamics of immigration to Norway according reason for immigration during 1990-2011. As it can be seen, the labour immigration outnumbered the family immigration in 2006, and this then has dominated the immigration flows in Norway. Furthermore, it was reported that the number of employed resident immigrants grew by 34 000 (by 14%) from 2008 to 2010, and immigrants from the new EU member states in CEE represented more than half of the increase (SOPEMI 2011, p. 5). As of 1 January 2013, people with immigrant background³ constituted 710 000 persons or 14.1% of Norway’s population. They are represented in all municipalities throughout the country, but Oslo accounts for about 26.6% of all people with immigrant background. The biggest immigrant communities as of January 2013 were from Poland, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany, and Somalia (SSB, 2013a).

³ According SSB definition, people with immigrant background comprise immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents.

2.2.1.1 Implications of the EU/EEA Agreement

On 1 January 2010 the New Immigration Act⁴ came into force. It substantially simplified immigration of EU/EEA nationals to Norway. Thus, before 1 October 2009, all EEA nationals who wished to stay in Norway for more than 3 months had to apply for residence permits. After 1 October 2009 a temporary and as of 1 January 2010 a permanent registration scheme replaced formerly compulsory resident permits for EEA nationals (UDI, 2009a). However, because of the so-called 5-years transitional rules Bulgarian and Romanian nationals were not entitled to the exemption from the resident permits requirements until June 2012.

Since June 2012 the new registration scheme applies to all EEA nationals wishing to stay in Norway for more than 3 months. It also applies to family members of EEA nationals. In addition, EEA nationals who have continuously resided in Norway on legal grounds for at least five years can apply for a permanent right of residence (UDI, 2009b).

An EEA national who wishes to stay in Norway for more than three months must have a basis for residence and is obliged to register with the police. Such individual is expected to have a valid identity card or passport and a proof that he/she “will not be a burden to public welfare services” (UDI, 2012). Registration with the police is compulsory for EEA employees, self-employed, service providers, students, persons with sufficient funds, and EEA family members of an EEA national’s family who wish to stay in Norway for more than 3 months (UDI, 2012). For example, if an EEA national wishes to stay in Norway and seek for employment, he/she is obliged to register with the police within three months after arrival. By doing so, he/she will be granted a right to stay in Norway for up to six months (UDI, 2012). Once the person finds a job, he/she must provide the police with the relevant documentation. Those EEA nationals who meet the registration requirements will be granted a registration certificate which is valid for an unlimited period and does not need to be renewed (UDI, 2009a).

Notably, spouses of the EEA migrants in Norway have two alternatives to legalize their status upon their arrival in the country. On the one hand, they can legalize their status in the country on the grounds of family reunification. On the other hand, they can simply register with the police as job seekers. In the second case, they must find a job within 6 months; otherwise they will have to leave the country. Obviously, because of the suspended border controls on the travels within the Schengen zone, which Norway is part of, it is very hard to track when a person enters or leaves Norway. Consequently, those spouses of EEA migrants who do not wish to undergo the family reunification scheme, but, at the same time, have little chances of securing a job in Norway within

⁴ In Norwegian, LOV 2008-05-15 nr 35: Lov om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (utlendingsloven).

the given 6-month period, may sometimes choose not to register with the police and remain undocumented.

2.2.1.2 Polish immigration to Norway 2004-2013

Following the EU enlargement in CEE in 2004 labour immigration skyrocketed with Polish labour migrants dominating the flows. According SSB, in 2006 immigration from Poland (7 401) for the first time outnumbered the Swedish (5 206) and was almost twice as big as the total immigration from the whole of Africa (7 401 vs. 3 746). Since then Poland has been the major country sending migrants to Norway. For instance, in 2007 more than 26% of total immigration to Norway originated from Poland (OECD 2011, p. 23).

The global financial crisis of 2008-2009 clearly left a mark on the Polish labour immigration to Norway, as Norway's construction industry experienced a major slowdown. But it did not change it radically: after a relative decrease in the number of new arrivals in 2008 and 2009, labour migration has been on the rise since 2010. For instance, in 2011 the flow of migration from Poland outnumbered the inflow of all immigrants coming from Asia (12 615 vs. 12 502). In terms of immigrants stock, Polish citizens have been the biggest immigrant community in Norway since 2009. As of 1 January 2013, there were 77 000 Poles living in Norway, accounting for about 12% of all persons with immigrant background.

In the recent years it has become evident that Polish migrants do not only dominate in terms of labour immigration to Norway, but they have also lead the list of family reunifications. Thus, in 2011 Polish migrants have accounted for 15.4% (2 489 out of 16 200) of all family-related entries to Norway (SSB, 2011). In the retrospective, during the period 1991-2011 arrivals from Poland constituted 9.5% (18 607 out of 196 283) of all immigrants who came to Norway with family as the reason for immigration (SSB). This figure is twice as big as the total number of family-related immigrants from Somalia (9 228 persons) and 1.5 times higher than that from Thailand (13 029 persons) in the respective period. However, Statistics Norway does not provide information on family-related immigration from Poland on a yearly basis, but the aggregated figures for the new EU countries in Central and Eastern Europe show a solid increase during 2004-2011 (SSB). Thus, whereas 730 family-related immigrants from the new EU countries in CEE came to Norway in 2004, the number increased almost fivefold to 3 425 persons in 2007 and eightfold to 5 803 persons in 2011 (SSB). This trend must imply a change in the gender structure of the Polish immigrants living in Norway with an increasing share of Polish women. As the labour migration to Norway reached a pick in 2008 before a relative slowdown in 2009-2010, and is now again on the rise, it is fair to expect an increase in the number of family-related entries in the nearest future as well.

It was estimated that in the 4th quarter of 2011 about 12 545 Poles worked in Norway as wage earners not registered as resident compared to 44 080 of those Polish citizens employed and registered as resident (SSB). Distribution by industry reveals a significant segregation of Polish wage earners not registered as residents in some particular occupations, as 26.8% of them worked in labour recruitment and provision of personnel (78.1-78.2), 24.8% in construction (41-43), and 20.5% in manufacturing (10-33). Similar patterns can be observed among Polish employed workers registered as resident in the country. Hence, 12 074 out of 44 080 (or 27.4% of all) worked in construction (35-43), 6 719 (15.2%) in manufacturing (10-33), 5 649 (12.8%) in labour recruitment and provision of personnel (78.1-78.2). Figure 2.2. (Appendix A) shows the distribution of Polish employed persons registered as resident by industry.

2.2.2 Labour market participation and unemployment

The strong economic growth the Norwegian economy experienced in 2000s created a considerable demand for immigrant labour. It was reported that since 2005 and until 2012 about 300 000 new jobs were created and roughly two-thirds of them were filled by labour immigrants (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2012b). Figure 2.3 (Appendix B) shows the dynamics of the employment based on the Labour Force Survey data in Norway between February 2006 and January 2013.

Some suggest that the recent influx of labour migrants to Norway has not only contributed to higher employment rates among migrant population as whole, but has also improved the outcomes of longstanding migrant groups (OECD 2011, p. 9). In the meanwhile, it is acknowledged that, because of its favourable age composition, the labour immigration positively influences the Norwegian economy and public finances. Moreover, labour immigrants from the EEA are believed to be net contributors to the public finance rather than net beneficiaries (NOU 2011:7, p. 8).

During the ten years between the last two releases of the Population and housing census (2001 and 2011), the number of persons aged 16-74 and employed for 100 hours or more a year increased by almost 5% or 120 thousand in the absolute terms (SSB, 2013b). As of 2011, the industries employing the highest numbers of people in Norway were ‘Human health and social work activities’ (510 158 persons or 20% of all the employed in the country), ‘Wholesale and retail trade’ (365 257 persons or 14.3% of all), ‘Manufacturing’ (229 280 persons or 8.95%), ‘Education’ (203 157% or 7.93%), and ‘Construction’ (196 606 persons or 7.7% of all). These five major industries accounted for 59% of all the employed in Norway. ‘Construction’ and ‘Human health and social work activities’ are the two major industries that expanded the most from 2001 to 2011, each by almost 24%. Figure 2.4. (Appendix B) shows the gender distribution of the employed persons in Norway by industry in 2001.

In spite Norway was not as severely affected by the recent global financial crisis as other OECD countries, the unemployment rates significantly increased already in the 4th quarter of 2008. Thus, according the NAV, the full unemployment rate reached 2.9% by the end of April 2009, double the rate from the previous year (OECD 2011, p. 38). Immigrants from the new EU member states in CEE were hit the most, as they experienced a 5.9 percentage points increase in the group's unemployment rate (from 3.3% to 8.2% by the end of March 2009), whereas for other immigrant groups the growth in the unemployment rate was between 1.1 and 1.7 percentage points, and 0.6 percentage points for the native population (OECD 2011, p. 38). This may be accounted to the decline in the construction industry and the recruitment and personnel provision that employ many Polish workers. The data on unemployment among Polish immigrants might not be accurate though, and the corresponding statistics may not reflect the real employment situation among Poles. It is believed that employment rates among immigrants improved in 2010. Thus, the unemployment rates for immigrants from the new EU member states in CEE dropped to 7 per cent by August 2011 (SOPEMI 2011, p. 6). Figure 2.5. (Appendix C) graphically reflects the dynamics of the unemployment in per cent of the labour force in Norway between February 2006 and January 2013.

As it can be seen on the Figures 2.7 and 2.8 (Appendix D), the economic crisis of 2008-2009 years resulted in many Polish migrant workers to loose their jobs in Norway. With becoming unemployed many of them began collecting unemployment benefits from the NAV.

After an almost two-year long period of growth in employment, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) showed a decrease in employment of 11 000 persons from October 2012 to January 2013, adjusted to seasonal variations. At the same time, the number of unemployed persons increased by 9 000 and amounted 97 000 in January 2013, adjusted to seasonal variations (SSB). Figure 2.6 (Appendix C) shows the dynamics of unemployment calculated according different methodologies⁵ (labour force survey; register-based; and incl. government measures) in Norway between February 2006 and February 2013.

According Statistics Norway, there were 60 503 registered unemployed persons in Norway in the 4th quarter 2012, which represents 2.3% of the total labour force in the country (SSB). The unemployment rate for non-immigrant population (including non-residents) was at 1.7% or 39 380 persons in the absolute terms. Hence, the non-immigrant unemployed accounted for about 65% of all the registered unemployed in the country. The unemployment rate for immigrant population

⁵ According SSB definition, "unemployment is measured in two different ways in Norway: NAV's figures on registered unemployed persons and Statistics Norway's figures on unemployment based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Unlike NAV's figures, the LFS figures also include unemployed persons who are not registered with NAV, as well as those registered with NAV but who are classified as participants on labour market initiatives. Conversely, some registered unemployed persons are not classified as unemployed in the LFS. This particularly applies to older age groups with long periods of unemployment who no longer consider themselves to be active jobseekers. Persons on involuntary leave (of up to 3 months) are also not regarded as unemployed in the LFS, but as employed (temporarily absent). The registered unemployed figure must not therefore be confused with the unemployment figure in Statistics Norway's Labour Force Survey."

stood at 6% or 21 123 persons in the absolute terms. Thus, the unemployed of immigrant background accounted for about 35% of all the registered unemployed in Norway. Among the unemployed of immigrant background, about 26.7% (or 5 639 persons in the absolute terms) were immigrants from the EU countries in Eastern Europe. Within the latter group, immigrants from Poland represented 59.3% of all, or 3 344 persons in the absolute terms. The unemployment rate for Polish migrants was therefore 6.2%, about the average rate for all migrant population. Notably, while the average unemployment rate among immigrant population in Norway stood at 6% in the 4th quarter of 2012, it was only 4.2% in the Rogaland County, which, after the Troms County (4%), was the 2nd lowest in the country.

Statistics Norway has carried out calculations regarding possible losses public finance may incur in case labour market participation rates and disability pensions that are typical for immigrants from Asia and Africa become the norm also for immigrants from the new EU members states in CEE. Thus, because of declining employment rates for this group by 1.5% by 2030, 3% by 2050 and 4% by 2100, the net costs to the Norwegian economy might amount to half the savings expected from the newly adopted old age pension reform (NOU 2011:7, p. 29). The Welfare and Migration Committee claims that such losses might be prevented if the labour migrants from the new EU member states in CEE keep their current ties to the labour market.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEEDINGS

3.1 The initial research question and the choice of the method

The preliminary literature review carried in November 2012 revealed an acute need to complement the existent, mainly quantitative studies on the welfare-migration nexus with thorough qualitative inquires. Therefore qualitative instead of quantitative methods are employed in this study in order to *allow migrants speak for themselves*. In addition, a general quantitative contextualization appeared to be necessary in order to provide the users of this study with a better understanding of Norway's specific legal provisions and labour market settings that many Polish migrants operate in.

What role does the participation in the unemployment benefits provision play for Polish labour immigrants in Norway in relation to their individual goals and strategies? – was the main research question which this study originally sought to answer as of November 2012.

In order to avoid any initial bias in the research design and *allow migrants speak for themselves*, I chose to formulate no research hypothesis in advance. Therefore, this study, devoid of preconceived categories, aimed at defining the theoretical concepts relevant to the studied phenomena in the process of qualitative data analysis. Therefore *the grounded theory (GT) method* was chosen for this purpose. The applicability of the GT method proved to be particularly efficient when the studied phenomena are new or little researched and often dynamic in its nature. Furthermore, the GT method allows researchers to study social phenomena from the micro perspective with a big room for manoeuvres as the study proceeds. The GT method aims at defining concepts that explain the ways people behave regardless of time and place. Therefore the use of description in the GT method is rather to illustrate such concepts, and not to describe the actions.

Instead of working with the preconceived categories that often fall short in explaining the collected data, the GT method defines theoretical concepts from the collected data and forms hypotheses that can explain the data in the most accurate way. Notwithstanding, the GT method does not aim for the 'truth'. Thus, the following scheme explains how the GT method works. At the beginning, when the data is being collected, the key actions or incidents in it are marked with a series of codes (initial or open coding) that precisely follow the data. Then, the similar codes are grouped into corresponding concepts (focused or selective coding). Next the concepts are aggregated into fractured theoretical concepts (theoretical coding) which form the basis for the creation of a theory, or a reverse formulated hypothesis. In general, GT method is a comparative method which implies active interactions with the studied material and constant comparison of the incidents within the data.

Initially, the use of the GT method in this study was expected to reveal the role unemployment benefits play in migrants' individual goals and strategies. However it soon became clear that

migrants' individual *goals* and *strategies* can in fact be regarded as preconceived categories. As a result, these preconceived categories were eliminated and the research focus was broadened in order to look *at the patterns* of unemployment benefits receipt among Polish migrant workers in Norway.

In addition, this study originally aimed at shedding light on how migrants perceive the implications of their individual and family-related characteristics for their motivations to and actual patterns of unemployment benefits receipt. Finally, it was sought to provide an account of how occupational segregation of Polish migrant workers in particular niches of the Norwegian labour market shapes the patterns of their resort to unemployment benefits provision. Thus, in order to answer the main research question, the following list of secondary research questions was drawn:

- 1) How do individual characteristics, such as the level of education, language skills, age, and sex, among others, influence the patterns of migrants' resort to unemployment assistance?
- 2) What implications do family and/or household specific characteristics, such as the number of children and the employment situation of the spouse/partner among others, have for individual's motivations to resort to unemployment benefits provision?
- 3) What is the role unemployment benefits play for individual and/or household consumption during unemployment periods?
- 4) How does the occupational segregation of Polish labour migrants influence their patterns of transition into and out of unemployment benefits receipt?
- 5) How does upward social mobility impact individual's dependence on the social welfare?

Notwithstanding, as the study evolved in 2013 both the main research question underwent changes which are addressed in details in the following sections.

3.2 Ethical concerns

As this study addresses migrants' personal experiences of being unemployed and relationships with the Norwegian welfare state it had particular implications for the data collection process. The qualitative methods applied in this study implied direct interactions with the informants via individual interviews. Hence, the inquiries could have dealt with sensitive private issues, such as the informants' family situation, financial settings, personal motivations, networks, legal status, etc. Therefore it was of a paramount importance for me, as a researcher, to protect my informants' identities and their direct and indirect private information. Therefore, in January 2013 the study was reported to, and a formal approval was granted by, the Privacy Ombudsman for Research at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Furthermore, the ethical guidelines for research

developed by the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) were used throughout the duration of the project.

When the qualitative data were collected, the interviews were transcribed and anonymised. Thus, the word-for-word transcripts of the interviews do not contain any directly or indirectly identifying information. Accordingly, the true names of my informants were substituted by invented names. In addition, all proper names of the geographical places, such as regions and counties, municipalities, and city districts in Poland and Norway, mentioned by my informants, were replaced by the corresponding them general names, such ‘a municipality in the Greater Stavanger Region,’ ‘another county in Norway,’ ‘Northern Norway,’ ‘Southern Poland,’ ‘a city district,’ etc. Furthermore, the names of my informants’ employers are neither disclosed in this study, nor in the transcribed data. Hence, in order to enable the readers to follow individual career paths of my informants in Norway, general naming schemes such as Company A, B, C,..., Agency A, B, C,..., were used. Moreover, all references to specific time frames that can be used for identifying my informants are deliberately given with little precision. Thus, one’s date of arrival to Norway, for instance, being 15 February 2008, would be, as a rule, referred to as “the end of the winter 2008.” Being aware that the composition of one’s family can indirectly point to the person’s identity, the sex and the age of the children, if any, are not specified. Accordingly, the reported age of my informants might not be necessarily accurate and, as a rule, differs from the actual by 1-5 years.

Finally, all the recorded data were eventually deleted according the regulations of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) when this study was completed in June 2013.

3.3 Establishment of the initial contact and mutual trust

One of the key factors that facilitated the recruitment of informants for this study was the fact that I already acquired contacts with representatives of the Polish community in Stavanger during my internship at the Centre for Intercultural Communication (SIK) in 2012.

It was anticipated that approaching the main target group of informants could be a challenging task, as migrants who resort to the social security benefits may be a particularly vulnerable group. Migrants could not be willing to talk about their problems for their own reasons, for instance due to the feeling of guilt or the fear to be disclosed to the third parts. Therefore, the research design included a stage of initial contact building, when I contacted the informants for the first time and worked on building mutual trust. Thus, the already established contacts with leaders of Stavanger-based NGOs and relevant social service workers served as the points of departure in for recruitment potential informants. For instance, contacts with five out of ten informants were acquired via one person (Contact A) who has an extensive work-related experience of communication with Polish

migrant workers in the Greater Stavanger Area. I was initially set in contact with one of them (Informant 6), who eventually convinced four of his colleagues (Informants 7, 8, 9, and 10) to participate in the interviews. References made to the Contact A served as a guarantee to Informants 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 that their identities would not be disclosed. Other three contacts (Informants 3, 4, and 5) were acquired through a person (Contact B) who is very active in the Polish-Norwegian Society in Stavanger (in Norwegian, *Polsk-Norsk Forening i Stavanger*) and whom I had met in the autumn 2012. Finally, the last two informants (Informants 1 and 2) were chosen among my direct acquaintances. The Figure 3.1 (Appendix E) graphically demonstrates how the ten informants were recruited for this study. In a nutshell, the fact of being introduced to my informants by someone whom they had known from before could have contributed to a higher degree of confidence among my informants that their identities would not become disclosed to the third parties.

Finally, my own background from a neighboring country (Ukraine) and the immigrant status in Norway facilitated the mutual trust between me and the informants. For instance, talking about one's experience of resorting to welfare benefits in Norway to a non-Norwegian listener could have relieved one's fear of being condemned or judged. In addition, speaking good Polish, coming from a similar culture and having familiar ties to Poland, all have contributed to ensuring the maximum amount of information my informants were willing to share.

Hence, during January and February 2013 the initial contact and the necessary sense of trust were established between me and the potential informants.

3.4 The process of data collection

For the purposes of my research, a total of twelve interviews were collected with 14 informants. The main qualitative data in the form of ten narrative interviews were collected during February-April 2013. The supplementary two semi-structured interviews with the employees of the Norwegian Welfare Organization (NAV) were organized in May 2013 in order to supplement the main data with an institutional perspective.

Before the conversation, each informant was informed about the content of the conversation, the purposes of this study and how the collected data would be treated. Each of them was also requested to provide an oral consent and give a permission to record the interview. Thus, the interviews were recorded on my phone. As mobile phones, in contrast to a voice recorder, are commonly used devices, my informants seemed to be at ease during the conversation and did not pay much attention to the fact that they were being recorded.

For the purposes of the grounded theory method, asking directly-leading questions was avoided. Hence, the interviews usually started with an invitation of the informant to tell about his/her arrival

to Norway. Some informants told their stories for several minutes before further questions had to be asked. However, other seemed to be reluctant to take the lead and seemed to be expecting further guidelines. Notwithstanding, as the conversation developed, most of them overcame this barrier.

All the ten narrative interviews were conducted in Polish. Their duration varied, and an average interview lasted about 30-40 minutes. All but two interviews were conducted at the informants' homes which also served as a source of additional information. The two supplementary interviews with the social service providers were conducted at a NAV office in the Greater Stavanger Area. In order to ensure a diversity of perspectives, one of the interviews was conducted in English with an employee of Norwegian background, while another in Polish with an employee of Polish background. Finally, the data were supplemented by informal conversations with an expert in the field of contemporary Polish immigration to Norway and social welfare provision in the country.

3.5 Transcription, coding, memo writing, and evolution of the research question

The collection of the data was accompanied by its immediate transcription and initial coding. Although the advocates of the GT method are often skeptical of transcribing interviews and call it counterproductive, it served three purposes. Firstly, a transcription of an interview shortly after it had been recorded allowed for including some relevant pieces of information that not always are grasped by the electronic means and can be easily missed after some time (e.g. emotions, face expressions, laugh, etc). Secondly, the immediate transcription served as a tool to look critically on my own role during the conversations, pay more attention to the words used, and, when needed, to adjust my role for the later interviews. Thirdly, performing an initial coding after each interview helped me to pay more attention to possibly emerging concepts during the following conversations.

The transcription of the ten narrative interviews was done on the word-for-word basis. It soon became clear that limiting my research question to solely one type of social welfare service, namely the unemployment benefits receipt, could be disadvantageous, as it appeared to be tightly connected to other social welfare services (children allowances, kindergarten assistance, sick leaves, work return programs, etc). In other words, when treated in the isolation from other welfare services, the receipt of unemployment benefits could not accurately explain the relationships of my informants to the welfare provision in Norway. For instance, some of my informants were in fact unemployed, but did not collect unemployment benefits as they were not entitled to any. Nevertheless, their experiences of being unemployed proved to be too valuable for the theme of the study to be simply omitted. For other informants unemployment benefits seemed to be one of many possible alternatives to chose from when remaining in work became difficult. Since “*all is data*” (Glaser, 2001, p. 145), the exclusion of some pieces of information would have hindered the applicability

and the eventual efficiency of the GR method in this study. As a result, the research focus was expanded to other relevant social welfare services and, accordingly, all the collected data were included in the analysis as well.

In order to ensure the accuracy of the codes and avoid a potential loss of the semantic value inherent in the narrative interviews, the collected data was initially coded without being translated into English. Thus, *the initial coding* was done on the sentence-by-sentence basis. It is partly due to the peculiarities of the Polish language, being one of the Slavic languages. Thus, long sentences were common during the interviews. Hence, a line-by-line coding seemed to be less applicable. Nevertheless, elements of the word-by-word coding were also applied to some particularly insightful sentences and especially in those cases when the informants talked about their emotions, feelings, and attitudes. The initial (open) coding aimed at describing the actions and incidents reported by informants in the most accurate way. Therefore the initial codes tend to be short, precise, and follow the data very closely. The codes itself were written in English.

In order to note potential relationships between the codes, the technique of memo writing was used throughout the three stages of coding. *Writing memos* is an important tool to keep track of the emerging ideas when the described actions and incidents are constantly compared within the same interview or from one interview to another. Thus, memos were used in order to prepare the informants' profiles presented in the following section.

In the course of *focused coding*, some initial codes appeared irrelevant, while others repeated within the same interview or from one interview to another. Thus, the latter formed the array of selected codes (SCs) and some of them developed into fractured theoretical concepts (FTCs). The memo writing at the stage of focused coding served the purpose of analyzing the relationships between emerging selected codes, their grouping, and their further development into corresponding fractured theoretical concepts. Thus, the results of the focused coding are presented in the analytical chapter of this study.

Finally, in the process of *theoretical coding* the selective codes (SCs) and related to them fractured theoretical concepts (FTCs) were integrated into wider hypotheses (Hs) that formed the basis for construction of a theory. It was achieved by *sorting the memos*. In order to illustrate the codes/concepts/categories, a total of about 80 most insightful extracts from the great volume of transcribed data were chosen and were translated into English. A model that explains how labour migrants transit into and out of social welfare benefits receipt in Norway is the main outcome of the theoretical coding. Hence, the constructed hypotheses and the model are presented in the theoretical chapter of this study.

In the process of data collection, its transcription, coding, and memo writing the original research question evolved. Instead of looking solely at the unemployment benefits receipt, the whole range of social welfare services provided to my informants by Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organization (NAV) were taken into account. Thus, the final research question this study aims at answering is: *Which are the main driving forces that shape labour migrants' transition into and out of the welfare benefits receipt in Norway?*

3.6 Informants' profiles

The only criterion for recruiting potential informants for this study was one's experience of being unemployed in Norway. As this study did not aim at producing representative results, but rather a more complete knowledge about diverse individual experiences of being unemployed in Norway, the informants were chosen as diverse as possible. However, in order to ensure the gender balance, the male-to-female ratio was 3-to-2, as six out of my ten key informants were men, and four were women. Their age varied from 29 to 61. Some of them were married and lived with the spouse in Norway, while others, also married, stayed alone in Norway with the spouse living in Poland. One of my informants was divorced, and two constituted a household without being formally married.

As Polish men are overrepresented in the construction industry in Norway, five out of the ten narrative interviews were collected with Polish construction workers. The five interviewed men belonged to different age categories, the youngest being 42 and the oldest 61 years old. Similarly, they differed considerably in terms of their Norwegian language skills and family situation. Four of them had their spouses or partners back in Poland, while one lived together with his wife in Norway. In addition, the husbands of two female respondents described below have also worked in the construction industry in Norway. Thus, they were also present during the interviews and contributed their perspectives, although the interviews mainly concerned their wives. Therefore, the perspectives of Polish construction workers living with their families in Norway are also included in this study.

Further detailed information about the ten key informants is summarized in the table below.

Table 3.1 The overview of the profiles of the main informants

N	Name	Sex	Age	Civil status	Partner in Norway?	Type of housing in Norway	Number of dependent children	Employment situation	Total time on social welfare (months)	Time in Norway (months)	Level of Norwegian
1	Marta	F	29	Engaged	Yes	Own apartment	2	Full-time, 1-year contract	9	60	Fluent
2	Barbara	F	38	Married	Yes	Own apartment	1	Full-time, permanent	0	60	Good
3	Joanna	F	40	Married	Yes	Rented apartment	2	Part-time (75%), permanent	0	16	Basic
4	Patrycja	F	45	Married	Yes	Rented apartment	2	Part-time (80%), permanent	7	48	Fair
5	Tomasz	M	31	Engaged	Yes	Own apartment	2	Full-time, permanent	5	60	Good
6	Piotrek	M	42	Married	No	Rented room in a shared flat	2	On sick leave (<1 month)	4	36	Fair
7	Henryk	M	46	Married	No	Rented room in a shared flat	1	Unemployed (>12 months)	13	60	Fluent
8	Jan	M	49	Divorced	No	Rented room in a shared flat	0	Unemployed (<12 months)	24	72	Basic
9	Marcin	M	56	Married	Yes	Rented apartment	0	Full-time, permanent	1.5	66	Good
10	Wiktor	M	61	Married	No	Rented room in a shared flat	0	In the requalification program (<6 months)	60	72	Fair

For the purposes of the GT method and in order to provide a better understanding of the study among its users, the ten detailed individual profiles below summarize the stories told by my informants.

3.6.1 Marta

Female, 29 years old, living in a partnership, with two children. Holds a master degree in Humanities and speaks fluent Norwegian and good English. Pays mortgage in Norway.

Marta came to Norway together with her boyfriend in the spring 2008. According her, the primary reason for coming to Norway for her was to be together with her boyfriend and avoid separation with him. In addition to this, after having worked for two years in an academic institution in Poland, she was not offered a permanent contract. Thus, she found it financially challenging to combine her PhD studies with a modestly paid temporary job. As her boyfriend worked in Northern Norway during the summer one year earlier, they decided to settle in the same area. In the meantime, their only child remained in Poland and was taken care of by relatives.

Marta immediately began working upon their arrival to Norway. Her first job lasted for six weeks at a fish factory. Later, during the summer 2008, she returned to Poland to her child and brought him with her back to Norway. As the child was about to start school, Marta was offered a part-time job as a mother-tongue assistant at the same school. Being pregnant with her second child, she eagerly accepted the offer from the school. She gave birth to their second child in early 2009. Thus, Marta received parent's allowance (in Norwegian, *foreldrepenger*) from NAV for having to stay home and look after the child. At the same time, she continued working part-time at the school as a mother-tongue assistant, combining it with other part-time jobs. When reached the age of ten months, the child was offered a full-time day-care at a kindergarten, so that Marta could begin working full-time at the same fish factory.

Since the very beginning of their stay in Norway, Marta and her partner wished to eventually move to another area of Norway with better employment opportunities. Therefore, after having worked three months full-time at the fish factory in early 2010, she decided to quit that job and seek for a new one according her education. She registered as unemployed at a local NAV office, but her application for unemployment benefits was rejected on the grounds that she had not worked the required amount of time and had not earned the given level of income. Nevertheless, the family moved to Stavanger in the autumn 2010. Three weeks later Marta began working in a kindergarten, while her husband was unemployed and stayed home with their 1.5-year-old child. As the job at the kindergarten was a temporary substitution position, Marta's working hours were eventually reduced to 40% ten months later. Due to financial constraints, Marta began collecting partial unemployment

benefits (in Norwegian, *graderte dagpenger*) for about one month before she finally decided to resign from her part-time job at the kindergarten in September 2011. In the meanwhile, her husband found a permanent job in his profession. This time Marta was very determined to find a job according her education. Hence, she did not consider any other job offers. For the next nine months Marta was registered as unemployed, searched for a new job and received unemployment benefits (in Norwegian, *dagpenger*) from NAV. Since June 2012 Marta has been working on a temporary contract as a secretary at a higher education institution in the Greater Stavanger Area. She is satisfied with her job, although aspiring for a more fulfilling one. At the time of the interview, however, she was not considering changing her job in 2013.

3.6.2 Barbara

Female, 38 years old, married, with one child, living with her family in Norway. Speaks good Norwegian. Pays mortgage in Norway.

The interview with Barbara was taken at her home. Her husband showed an interest in the conversation and often contributed with his perspective. Barbara came to Norway in the summer 2008 together with her child in order to reunite with her husband who had been working in the construction industry there since 2006. Back in Poland, Barbara worked as a dental technician and earned decent wages. However, in order to provide for their family, both Barbara and her husband had to work overtime. Consequently, they lacked contact time with their child.

Since Barbara came to Norway under the family reunification scheme, it took her about half a year to arrange all the formalities. As Barbara's child was not initially provided with day care in kindergarten, Barbara had to stay home and look after the child during the first year of her stay in Norway. Consequently, she was not actively searching for work. As her child was over three years old, she was not eligible for cash-for-care benefits. Thus, Barbara's husband's salary was the only source of income for the family. During the first nine months of Barbara's stay in Norway, their family of three persons lived in a hostel room of 12sqm rented for Barbara's husband by his employer. At the beginning, the monthly rent for the room amounted to NOK 3000, - and was later increased to NOK 4000, - per month. In the spring 2009, the family moved out from the hostel and rented a new apartment that cost them NOK 6000, - per month, plus other bills. In the meantime, Barbara's husband had to work overtime in order to support the family of three.

In the autumn 2009, their child began attending kinder garden. As one of the spouses did not work at that time, the family received a 50% discount on the kinder garden fee (NOK 1300, - instead of NOK 2500, - per month). Being now able to work full-time, Barbara contacted NAV to learn about her work opportunities in Norway. Having eleven years of work experience in her profession, Barbara wished to find a similar job in Norway. In the meantime, she enrolled in Norwegian

language course. Having little success in finding a desired job, she eventually considered working in the cleaning segment as an option, but she never happened to work as a cleaning assistant. Without receiving any job offers, Barbara visited NAV in person and was offered assistance in finding an unpaid internship. Hence, she was issued a letter of support from NAV which she could attach to her applications. Notwithstanding, she did not manage to find a firm that would be interested in hosting her as an unpaid intern.

Being unemployed for over two years, Barbara did not collect unemployment benefits as she was not entitled to any. Notably, her husband has always managed to remain in work, even when the financial crisis hit the Norwegian construction industry in 2008-2009. He believes that his good Norwegian language skills and personal qualities, commitment to work in particular, helped him preserve his job.

In the summer 2011 Barbara was finally contacted by two local firms specializing in dental services who found her details in the NAV database. One of them offered Barbara a trial work period of half a year. Two weeks after she began working there, she received a permanent contract. Since then, she has been working for this firm for two years. Barbara is satisfied with her job and believes that her colleagues at work are also satisfied with her.

In 2012, Barbara and her husband bought a semi-detached house and since then have been paying mortgage. According to them, they consider selling the house soon and buying a detached house. Their child attends school and faces no major problems in learning. Both Barbara and her husband speak good Norwegian.

3.6.3 Joanna

Female, 40 years old, married, living with her husband and a teenage child in Norway. Speaks basic Norwegian. Rents an apartment together with her family.

The interview with Joanna took place at her home. Her husband and both children were present and also participated in the conversation. Joanna came to Norway with her younger child in the winter 2012 to join her husband who had been working in the construction industry there for a few years. In the meanwhile, their older child remained in Poland in order to finish high school. With regards to her education, Joanna completed secondary education and received training in retail sales in Poland.

Without speaking either Norwegian, or English, Joanna began working unofficially in the cleaning segment. As one of her friends was pregnant and could not continue working in the cleaning, she delegated her clients to Johanna. After some time, another friend of her advised Joanna to start working officially for a cleaning firm. Thus, she began working there as a substitute available on

phone (in Norwegian, *ringevikar*) in the autumn 2012. At the end of the year she received a permanent contract. At the time of the interview, she still worked for the same firm. According Joanna, her working hours are irregular and usually amount to 30 hours a week. She would eagerly quit her job in the cleaning firm and find a work in a canteen.

Joanna's husband had come to Norway before the global financial crisis hit the construction industry in the country. During the whole duration of his stay in Norway, he has always worked for the same employer. As this rather small firm managed to retain its employees and provide them with assignments during even the hardest months, Joanna's husband has never been unemployed in Norway. Their older child who lives in Poland is expected to graduate from high school, join the family and enroll at a university in Norway this year.

At the time of the interview, Joanna and her husband expressed their priority to acquire their own housing in Norway. At the same time, they own a house in Poland. They do not rent their house in Poland, but they neither consider selling it as a feasible option.

3.6.4 Patrycja

Female, 45 years old, living with her husband and a child in Norway. Speaks basic Norwegian. Rents an apartment together with her family.

Patrycja came to Norway in the summer 2009 in order to join her husband who had been working in Norway for one year. Having fifteen years of work experience in producing smoked meats in Poland, she decided to find a similar job in Norway.

Upon her arrival to Norway, she applied for relevant jobs advertised on the companies' web-pages. However, she did not receive a single invitation to a job interview. Patrycja believes that her insufficient knowledge of Norwegian was the main obstacle for finding a relevant job. Without any success with her applications, she eventually accepted a work in a cleaning firm in the spring 2010. She had worked there for more than one year until the spring 2011 when she applied for a summer substitution job (in Norwegian, *sommervikar*) at one of the meat processing factories (Company A). She explained her motivation to leave the cleaning firm and undertake the summer job by her expectations to eventually become permanently employed at the Company A. She was hired by the Company A for the substitution position, but when her contract was about to end and she expressed her will to continue working there, she was not offered a permanent contract.

Patrycja registered as unemployed in the autumn 2011. A few weeks later, she learned about a labour market program that combined Norwegian language training and a professional internship and was specifically designed for Polish workers. She applied and was accepted to it. After the

language part was done, Patrycja was asked to prepare a list of the firms that she considered her potential employers. Thus, one of the firms (Company B) eventually agreed to host her as an intern.

After ten-week internship, she was offered a 50% working time position. Despite her disappointment, she accepted the offer and in the spring 2012 began working in the Company B. After having worked there for six months, she decided to talk to her boss and find whether she could get a permanent full-time contract. A new contract was not given to her, but her working hours increased to 80%. At the time of the interview (April 2013) Patrycja was still working there. Normally, she works four days a week, from Monday to Thursday, having Fridays free. When she is offered to work on Fridays, she usually accepts it. With regards to her remuneration, Patrycja is neither compensated for her vocational education from Poland, nor for her extensive work experience in the industry. At the time of the interview, she had her foreign credentials being formally evaluated and she was planning to submit a claim to her employer when the documents were ready.

Patrycja lives with her husband and a teenage child in the Greater Stavanger Area. They rent an apartment and, at the time of the interview, were not planning on acquiring their own housing. Patrycja's husband has lived in Norway for five years. Having vocational education from producing smoked meats as well, he has always worked for the same meat processing factory and has never been unemployed in Norway. Patrycja is not member of a labour union, while her husband is. In addition, Patrycja has an adult daughter who lives in Poland who is married and who recently had a baby. Because of her daughter's family's economic situation, Patrycja is financially committed to partly support her adult daughter and her family in Poland. According Patrycja, she does not consider re-uniting with the daughter and her family in Norway. At the time of the interview, Patrycja stated that she would rather continue working for the same Company B. Together with her husband she would like to settle and live in Norway until they both retire.

3.6.5 Tomasz

Male, 31 years old, living in a partnership, with two children. Tomasz holds a master degree in Mechanical Engineering and speaks good Norwegian and fluent English. Pays mortgage in Norway.

While studying mechanical engineering in Poland and living together with his girlfriend, Marta, and their child, he used to travel abroad during summer vacations in order to earn some money to be able to support his family during the academic years. For the first time Tomasz came to Norway in the summer 2007. For his interest in Norway, he hitch-hiked the whole country from the south to the north during ten days and finally found a summer job at a fish factory in Northern Norway. He then returned to Poland in order to finish his master program in engineering.

Without work experience in his profession, Tomasz returned to Norway the next year together with his girlfriend Marta. They both started working at the same fish factory. From the beginning of his stay in Norway, Tomasz searched for a job according to his education. Thus, he immediately contacted NAV upon his arrival to Norway and expressed his interest to work as an engineer. However, it took him three years to find a job relevant to his degree. In the meanwhile, he worked full-time at the fish factory. When their second child was born in early 2009, Tomasz took a six-week paternity leave and decided to use this time off from work for finding a job. Thus, he spent the first two weeks for brushing up his English and improving the CV. For the rest 3-4 weeks Tomasz went on a trip to major cities in Norway in order to visit in person the key companies in the industry. However, as it had not brought him an immediate success, Tomasz returned to work in the fish factory for another year. He undertook a similar trip one year later.

The family's decision to move from Northern Norway in the autumn 2010 was due to the fact that Tomasz had been promised a job as an engineer in a firm operating in Rogaland. However, when the family came to Stavanger, the employer halted the recruiting process due to a complicated economic situation. Hence, Tomasz registered as unemployed and began receiving unemployment benefits. At the same time, his partner Marta found a job in a kindergarten. As their second child (1.5 years old) was not offered daycare in kindergarten, Tomasz also received the full amount of cash-for-care benefits (about NOK 3100-3300 per month) for having to stay home and look after the child.

While being on unemployment at NAV, Tomasz learned about the opportunity to do a professional internship with financial support from NAV. He immediately contacted a company which he had established a contact with earlier and asked whether it would be interested in hosting him as an intern from NAV. After an interview, he was accepted as intern. A few months later, Tomasz was offered a permanent job in this company, where he has been working until now.

3.6.6 Piotrek

Male, 42 years old, married, with two children, living alone in Norway. Speaks fair Norwegian and good English. Rents a room in a shared apartment. Has a degree in Technical Mechanics from Poland.

Piotrek came to work in the construction industry in Norway in the summer 2010. Before that, he had worked in the same industry in four other European countries. Similarly to other Polish construction workers, a staffing agency (Agency A) sent him on a one-week long work-and-safety course in Poland and, at the same time, arranged all the necessary documents for his work in Norway. While working for the agency, one of his colleagues died in a fatal accident on the construction site. Piotrek reported being emotionally traumatized by this loss. According to him, the

staffing agency, being in fact responsible for this accident, manipulated the situation and put the responsibility of the accident on the deceased. After Piotrek's six-month assignment expired, he was offered another assignment – a two-week long contract. He did not accept the new contract and quit the Agency A.

Thus, Piotrek immediately contacted NAV and registered as unemployed. Two days later he was hired by another staffing agency (Agency B), where he worked on two assignments, each two-week long. When the winter came, he requested appropriate working clothes. Nevertheless, it appeared that he would not need it anyways as the Agency B did not offer him another contract and Piotrek became unemployed again. He had gone to Poland during Christmas vacations and registered as unemployed at NAV only after having returned to Norway in early 2011.

As he could not earn a considerably high income during those seven months of work in Norway, the calculated amount of the unemployment benefits resulted to be very low. After having collected unemployment benefits for one week, Piotrek found a new job. He was hired by a small family-type construction firm (Firm C) where he was offered considerably higher wages. The higher wages came at its cost. According Piotrek, he experienced work pressure from the first day of his work there. Obviously, the work-and-safety standards at that firm were not a priority and small accidents at work occurred.

Piotrek worked for the Firm C until autumn 2011. Together with other employees Piotrek faced redundancies and a few weeks later the Firm C began the bankruptcy process. Being legally obliged to pay salaries to its employees during the first ten days of layoffs, the Firm C broke the law and issued layoffs with a date preceding the actual by 14 days. Consequently, Piotrek registered as unemployed at NAV again. He did not collect unemployment benefits for long as he soon found a job in another staffing agency (Agency D). There he worked during three months until the end of the winter 2012 when the Agency D went bankrupt. Thus, from Piotrek remained unemployed until late spring 2012.

In late spring 2012, Piotrek found a new job where he was still working at the time of the interview with him (March 2013). Precisely at the time of the interview, Piotrek was staying on a sick leave from work for about one month. He reported having periodically suffered from lumbago.

Piotrek is married and has two children whom he supports financially. Notably, he is not planning on bringing his family to Norway. While working in Norway, Piotrek invested about NOK 200 000 in his own construction firm in Poland. However, the investment did not bring the expected results. In the meanwhile, Piotrek has partly saved some money which he wants to use for building a new family house in Poland.

3.6.7 Henryk

Male, 46 years old, married, with one child, lives alone in Norway. Speaks good Norwegian. Rents a room in a shared apartment.

Working in the construction industry in Poland, Henryk became unemployed when his project ended and, consequently, his contract expired in 2007. After having found a job advertisement, he was recruited by a staffing agency (Agency A) and sent on a short Norwegian language and work-and-safety course in Poland. In the meanwhile, the Agency A arranged all the necessary documents for his work in Norway.

In the early 2008, Henryk came to Stavanger where he was placed by the Agency A. Seven months later he quit the Agency A and moved to another county where he had been offered a new, better paid, job. However, his new job lasted for only three months as the firm faced redundancies. Being aware of his entitlements to unemployment benefits in Norway, Henryk temporarily returned to Poland in December 2008.

While staying in Poland, he had been searching for a job in Norwegian companies via Internet. Without success, he returned to Norway in the spring 2009 and became soon recruited by another staffing agency (Agency B). He believes that his working knowledge of Norwegian is one of the factors that helped him find a new job. He then worked on different construction projects in Eastern Norway for about nine months. When the winter came, his last project ended, and Henryk left the Agency B. He soon found another staffing agency (Agency C) and worked on some minor assignments for a short period of time. However, as he was more interested in working on big construction projects and having a permanent place of work, he decided to quit the Agency C.

In early 2010, yet another staffing agency (Agency D) placed him on an assignment in Northern Norway, where he worked at a factory for nine months. When the winter began in Northern Norway, the factory experienced a reduction in orders to such extent that some of its permanent employees faced redundancies. For communication misunderstandings with his employer, Henryk decided to quit that job and for the first time contacted NAV. Nevertheless, his application was rejected on the grounds that his employer, the Agency D, was registered in Eastern Norway. Accordingly, he was advised to apply for unemployment benefits in Eastern Norway.

However, Henryk decided to move to Rogaland. Thus, he was unemployed for about three months in early 2011. Notwithstanding, due to a delay in submitting all the necessary documentation, he was unable to receive unemployment benefits during the first two months. Henryk soon became recruited by the staffing Agency E which he worked with for only two months. His next employer, the Agency A, placed him on a construction project in Rogaland where he worked for about nine months. In the early 2012, Henryk stopped working for the Agency A because of his

misunderstandings with colleagues at work, became unemployed and began collecting unemployment benefits from NAV. At the time of the interview in March 2013, he was still registered as unemployed.

With regards to his family situation, Henryk is married and has a school age child. His wife and their child live in Poland. Henryk is financially committed to support his family in Poland, as his wife's salary, being among the lowest in the country, is not enough big to maintain a household of two. Henryk usually visits his family three to four times a year, doing it more frequently while on unemployment provision. According him, if he finds a well paid job he will consider bringing his family to Norway.

3.6.8 Jan

Male, 49 years old, divorced, lives alone in Norway. With very limited knowledge of Norwegian. Rents a room in a shared apartment.

Jan came to work to Norway on the legal grounds in the summer 2007. Before, he worked informally in the construction industry in the Oslo area, but it proved to be “the wrong way” when put in his own words. Similarly to other construction workers who came to Norway at that time, Jan was recruited by a big staffing agency (Agency A). Upon having completed a short language and work-and-safety course organized by the Agency A in Poland, he then worked on several construction projects in the Greater Stavanger Area for about 1.5 years.

Due to the crisis that hit the construction industry, Jan became unemployed. At the same time, he was facing family-related problems back in Poland. As his wife divorced him, Jan decided to remain in Norway.

Thus, Jan had been unemployed for about 1.5 years before he began working again. Through a friend contact, he learned about a call for specialists in his profession at the same staffing agency (Agency A). Hence, he was recruited in the summer 2010 and worked for the next two years until the autumn 2012. At the same time, Jan experienced some major health problems and had been twice operated in Norway. At the end of his work, he faced difficulties in receiving new work assignments and, consequently, the commissions paid to him at the Agency A. As he could merely earn enough for his diet, Jan decided to quit his job and registered as unemployed at NAV. According him, he has been looking for a job in the construction industry, but could not find any as of March 2013.

Jan claimed no debts or no other financial obligations. His adult son, who lives in Poland, is self-sufficient and no longer needs Jan's support. Due to his modest style of life, Jan was always able to save a part of his income, even while receiving unemployment benefits. In addition, he is not

planning on investing in housing. Jan has been recently seeking for an official medical diagnosis and has made some inquiries about disability pensions in Norway. He has been dating a widowed woman who lives and has her own business in Poland. According him, she is self-sufficient and is waiting for him to come to Poland and live with her.

3.6.9 Marcin

Male, 56 years old, married, living in Norway with his wife. Speaks fair Norwegian. Rents an apartment.

Marcin came to Norway at the end of 2007. He was sent on a one-month Norwegian language course in Poland while the staffing agency (Agency A) prepared all the necessary documents for his work in Norway. Marcin worked on assignment-based contracts for more than two years. While working in a mainly Polish-speaking environment, his Norwegian did not improve much. Half a year after his arrival to Norway, Marcin decided to learn Norwegian and enrolled in a language course.

In 2009, Marcin did not receive a new assignment and was advised by the agency to register as unemployed with NAV. After having collected unemployment for about six weeks, Marcin received a new contract at the same Agency A. Having worked for half a year on the new assignment, he was offered a permanent contract.

In the meantime, his wife was living in Poland. Marcin was committed to partly support her financially, as her salary was not big enough, despite working full-time. Their children were grown up and no longer needed their parents' support. In 2011, Marcin's wife came and joined him in Norway. She has been attending a Norwegian language class while working informally in the cleaning sector. Marcin rents an apartment, where he lives with his wife, and rents one of the bedrooms to a non-related person.

Marcin was satisfied with his job and was not planning on changing it at the time of the interview (March 2013). According him, he will stay in Norway as long as there is work for him. At the same time, Marcin wishes to earn the right to the Norwegian old-age pension and move back to Poland when retired.

3.9.10 Wiktor

Male, 61 years old, married, living alone in Norway. Speaks fair Norwegian. Rents a room in a shared apartment.

During nine years before coming to Norway, Wiktor run his own small construction firm in Poland. However, due to an increasing competition and dumping from the side of single-person workers, he

had to discontinue his business. At the same time, his 55-years-old wife became unemployed. She was not very optimistic about finding a new job at her age, while she still lacked five years before she could retire. Because of the family's hard economic situation, Wiktor decided to find a job abroad.

Wiktor came to Norway in the early 2007 through a staffing agency (Agency A) that arranged for him all the necessary work formalities. After having worked for there for a few months, he quitted the Agency A as he had been promised a better paid job in a small firm. As his second employer (Firm B) did not keep the promise, Wiktor quitted this job and was soon recruited by another staffing agency (Agency C). While working in Norway, he suffered a work-related injury which he did not take a proper care of. After some time, when working for the Agency B, Wiktor faced serious health problems and had to finish his professional career in the construction industry. He was offered to undergo a spinal surgery, but rejected it because of the risks involved and went on a sick leave for one year (2008).

When his sick leave ended, Wiktor contacted NAV and sought to be included in one of the work return programs available to people like him. He reported feeling unwelcomed at NAV, but having his right to the social protection defended, he was eventually offered to participate in the work assessment program (in Norwegian, *arbeidsavklaringpenger*) which lasted for another year (2009). Finally, when this program finished as well, Wiktor felt that NAV attempted to exclude him from any further assistance. According Wiktor, NAV offered him to return to Poland on a sponsored ticket. Nevertheless, he rejected this offer and managed to be admitted to the requalification program (in Norwegian, *rekvalifiseringsprogram*). At the time of the interview (March 2013), he was still enrolled in this program. Thus, Wiktor attended more than one hundred hours of Norwegian language lessons and psychological adaptation to work in Norway. At the same time, he worked four hours a day in a company employing people with special needs. He reported being satisfied with his job, although feeling unable to undertake higher working hours.

In the meantime, his wife has been retired for about one year now. Nevertheless, Wiktor is still committed to supporting her financially, as her pension in Poland is not big enough. Their son is married and economically independent, thus Wiktor does not need to assist him financially. As for now, Wiktor is expected to find a new job before the Requalification program ends in the autumn 2013. If he does not manage to do so, the program may be eventually prolonged for another year. If it results impossible, Wiktor considers taking an option of the early retirement at the age of 62. He admits that in the case of early retirement he will need a part-time job, as the pension he is entitled to would not suffice for his living expenses in Norway.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter summarizes the results of the *selective coding*. In some instances, the selected codes (SC) are grouped into corresponding fractured theoretical concepts (FTC). Nevertheless, it is not the aim of this chapter to explain potential relationships between various fractured theoretical concepts. In order to make it easier for the reader to understand the connections between the selected codes and the fractured theoretical concepts, the analytical material was logically organized into three major themes, namely transition into, duration of, and transition out of welfare benefits receipt.

4.1 Transition into welfare benefits receipt

As every transition into welfare benefits receipt is a unique story and experience, there can be no generalization why and how people, regardless of their legal status in the country, transit on welfare. However, the evidence from most of the countries shows that the incidence of unemployment among the immigrant population tends to be higher than among the native. It can be attributed to a variety of factors, ranging from the national characteristics of the labour market to immigrants' individual characteristics. This section examines therefore the patterns of transition into unemployment and other types of welfare benefits receipt reported by my informants.

4.1.1 Unemployment and upward occupational mobility

Holding a master degree in Mechanical Engineering, Tomasz (31) always aspired for a job in his profession since he arrived to Norway in 2008. However, it took him about three years before he could start working as an engineer.

“I tried to find *a job in my profession* during my whole stay in Norway, already from the very beginning. And it seemed to me that it would be much easier. However, our first place of residence in Norway, a little place far in the North, close to [city name], had no work opportunities except from the fish factory or some shop”⁶ – Tomasz (31) about his endeavors to find a job in his profession in Northern Norway.

A job according one's profession is one of the key codes selected in the array of other, less relevant codes. As it is shown later in this chapter, this code falls into a larger theoretical concept of *aspirations for an upward occupational mobility* (FTC).

Tomasz became unemployed in Norway for the first time in autumn 2010 when his family moved from Northern Norway to Rogaland. Since the company that had promised a job to Tomasz halted the recruiting process, Tomasz did not get the promised job and had to register as unemployed with NAV. As it is discussed in detail in the following section, Tomasz took some time on unemployment in order to find *a job in his profession* (SC).

⁶ In Polish, “Prace w zawodzie namagałem się szukać podczas całego pobytu w Norwegii, już od początku. I wydawało mi się, że to będzie dużo łatwiejsze. Jednak nasze pierwsze miejsce zamieszkania w Norwegii, to była mała miejscowość, daleko na północ, koło [name], gdzie jedyna możliwość pracy, to była w fabryce ryb, albo jakiś sklep.”

Marta (29) herself is also a good example of how *transition into unemployment* (FTC) can be incorporated into one's strategy for an eventual upward occupational mobility. Thus, Marta registered as unemployed in Norway for the first time in April 2010. By then, she had worked part-time in different jobs in Norway during 2008-2009 and full-time during the first three months of 2010. Hence, she believed she was *entitled to unemployment benefits* (SC):

“I had worked full-time during the period of 3 months and believed that *I had already earned the right to unemployment benefits*. It was not the case, though. In Norway one must have worked full-time during six months or some percentage, which I am not sure of, during two or three years. One must have earned a basis *in order to have the right to [unemployment] benefits*. Thus, *I had never earned that right*. So, when I registered as unemployed, my application was rejected on the grounds that I had not worked *a corresponding amount, a corresponding quote in order to receive the unemployment benefits*.”⁷ – Marta (29)

Formal entitlement to unemployment [or other welfare] benefits is one of the most common selected codes (SCs) encountered in the narratives of my informants. Thus, such expressions as “the right to unemployment benefits,” “a basis in order to have the right to unemployment benefits,” “a corresponding amount,” and “a corresponding quote in order to receive the unemployment benefits” among other, were often mentioned in the interviews to refer to *formal entitlement to unemployment benefits* (SC).

Notably, Marta was not fired from her job, and it was rather her decision to quit working at the fish factory and find a better job. Having a master degree in Humanities, she also wished to find *a job in her profession* (SC), as working in kinder garden or at the fish factory did not satisfy her ambitions:

“I registered [as unemployed] at NAV when I considered *finding a better job*.”⁸ – Marta (29)

As her application was rejected, she continued working for some time at the fish factory until her family finally moved from Northern Norway to the Greater Stavanger Area. Her next attempt to transit into unemployment benefits receipt, this time successful, was in September 2011, after she had worked enough hours to meet the *formal criteria* (SC):

“I collected unemployment benefits in [municipality in the Greater Stavanger Area], after *I have worked for a few months, the required months*.”⁹ – Marta (29).

This time, her transition into unemployment was due having her working hours reduced to 40% of working time. Hence, she could collect a partial compensation from NAV. Nevertheless, she decided to leave her job completely at the kinder garden and find *a job in her profession* (SC):

“Thus, I could then collect a part of the money from NAV, as I had worked a certain amount of those years, had [earned] an amount of that income basis or whatever it was... And then in

⁷ *In Polish*: “Ja przepracowałam z okres z 3 miesacy na 100% i wtedy myslalam, ze ja juz wypracowalam sobie prawo do zasilku do bezrobotnych, ale tak nie bylo. Bo w Norwegii jest tak, ze musisz pracowac 6 miesiaczy 100% albo przez chyba 2 lata, czy 3 lata – nie jestem pewna – ilosc tam procent. Ilosc musisz wypracowac tej podstawy, zeby miec prawo do zasilku. Wiec ja nie mialam nigdy prawa do zasilku. I moje pierwsze podanie o zasilek, jak zlozylam, to odrzucone. Udokumentowane to, ze nie mam odpracowanej odpowiedniej liczby, odpowiedniej kwoty, zeby dostalam zasilek dla bezrobotnych.”

⁸ *In Polish*: “W NAVie zarejestrowalam sie po jakims czasie, kiedy myslalam znalezc sobie lepsza prace.”

⁹ *In Polish*, “Na zasilku dla bezrobotnych bylam w [nazwa miasta] potem, jak pracowalam juz przez pare miesiaczy, tak przynalezny miesiaczy.”

September I stopped working completely. I was not looking for another job as I focused on... that now I will find *a job in my profession*.¹⁰ – Marta (29)

She elaborates further:

“I decided to *go for all the marbles*: I have to find *a job in my profession*. Or I would accept a job where I will be able to develop [myself], have a contact with the [Norwegian] language.”¹¹ – Marta (29)

The expression *to go for all the marbles*¹² used by Marta when talking about her decision implies that there were *risks* involved in the decision and that she was aware of them. However, her motivations to find *a job in [her] profession* (SC) seem to have outweighed the obstacles and possible risks.

Having vocational certificate and fifteen years of work experience in smoked meats production from Poland, Patrycja has always wished to work in the same industry since she came to Norway in 2009. Nevertheless, it took her almost three years to begin working *according her profession* (SC). Thus, in the spring 2011, Patrycja was hired for the position of a temporary substitution at a renowned company in Rogaland specializing in smoked meats production.

“Before I worked in a cleaning firm *which I intentionally quit hoping to become employed* at the Company A. Those three months [of the summer job] would pass and I would eventually stay [there] longer, right? That is to say, permanently. And it did not work out.”¹³ – Patrycja.

When her summer substitution contract was about to expire, she expressed her willingness to continue working in the company:

“I went to the manager and said [to him] that my summer contract was about to expire, that *I have formal education*, that *I have those years of work experience*, that *I would like to work here* [at the company]. Well, he said that, as it was the autumn, there would be less work, less orders. *Well, I understand it*. [...] It was in August. My summer job ended in August.”¹⁴ – Patrycja.

Thus, Patrycja also aspired *to a job in her profession* (SC). Moreover, her motivations eventually overweighed *the risks involved* (SC), so that she quitted her job in the cleaning firm and agreed to a temporary position, but in the relevant industry.

As we have seen so far, *transition into unemployment* (FTC) can in some cases be the result of one's *aspirations for an upward occupational mobility* (FTC). On the one hand, a transition into unemployment benefits receipt can be a deliberate decision, as in the case with Marta. On the other

¹⁰ *In Polish*, “Wiec, wtedy moglam juz czesc tych pieniedzy podbierac z NAVu, bo juz mialam odpracowana ilosc tam tych lat, ilosc tam tej podstawy pieniezna, czy cos tam bylo... I wtedy w wrzesniu przestalam calkiem pracowac, nie szukalam juz innej pracy, poniewaz skupilam sie... ja teraz znajde prace w moim zawodzie.”

¹¹ *In Polish*, “Postawilam wszystko na jedna karte – ja musze znalezc prace w zawodzie. Albo przyjme taka prace, gdzie bede moglam sie rozwinac, miec kontakt z jezykiem.”

¹² The expression “Postawic wszystko na jedna karte” can be literally translated *from Polish* as ‘to put everything on one card’.

¹³ *In Polish*, “Wczesniej pracowalam w firmie sprzatajacej, gdzie sie specjalnie zwolnilam pod taka nadzieja: zatrudnie sie w [name of the firm 1], te 3 miesiacy mina i ewentualnie zostane na dluzej, tak? W nawiasie, na stale. I sie nie udalo.”

¹⁴ *In Polish*, “Poszlam do kierownika, no i powiedzialm, ze mi sie konczy ten sommervikariat, ze jestem po tej szkole, ze mam te lata doswiadczenia, ze chcialabym tutaj pracowac. No to on powiedzial, ze teraz bedzie jesien, mniej pracy, mniej zamowien. No to ja to rozumiem. [...] To byl sierpień, koniec sierpnia skonczyl mi vikariat.”

hand, it can happen unexpectedly, as in the cases of Tomasz and Patrycja due to previously taken decisions.

4.1.2 Season-sensitive unemployment

Employment in some industries might be *sensitive to seasonal changes* (SC). In Norwegian settings, it is particularly valid for the construction industry and the agriculture. Thus, there is little work to be done in the agriculture during the winter months. Although to a lesser extent, it applies to the construction industry as well, especially during the very cold periods. Since many Polish male migrant workers are concentrated in the construction industry, *seasonal-sensitive unemployment* (SC) can be particularly relevant for them.

Piotrek (42) began working in the construction industry in Norway through a staffing agency in the summer 2010. Thus, when his 6-months assignment expired and Piotrek was offered a 2-weeks assignment, he rejected it and quitted the agency:

“[...] I said that I do not accept two-week contracts and that I am not planning on working under two-week contracts. *Simply because I am not protected here in any way. I cannot rent an apartment, I cannot be sick, I cannot receive compensation, for example, when laid off, or any other social matters.*”¹⁵ – Piotrek reflecting on his entitlements when working for a staffing agency.

Thus, *working on short-term contracts* (SC) does not provide Piotrek with the necessary feeling of *security* (FTC) as he feels limited in his actions (the repeated phrase “*I cannot*”). Piotrek’s second job in Norway started at the beginning of the winter 2010. When it suddenly became colder, Piotrek asked the company to provide him with appropriate work clothes, but instead became unemployed again:

“When I asked for winter clothes [laughing] because it became colder and so on, it was just negatively perceived by the management as if [laughing]... *as if I was demanding too much* [laughing]. So, I was told: ‘You will not need winter clothes as you have just finished working for us’ [laughing].”¹⁶ – Piotrek.

Hence, Piotrek alludes to a possibility that some employees who actively defend their rights in staffing agencies might be perceived as “*too demanding*” (SC). Therefore they might face problems in remaining employed or having *long-term assignments* (SC) especially during particularly vulnerable seasons.

Staffing agencies, in fact, might use *different types of assignments* as a *system of privileges and punishments* (FTC). Thus, *too demanding* or *troublesome* workers might be “*punished*” by receiving *short-term assignments* (SC) or *not receiving any at all* (SC), whereas *obedience and*

¹⁵ In Polish, “[...] powiedziałem, że ja nie znam żadną umowę dwutygodniową i nie mam zamiaru pracować na umowach dwutygodniowych. Dlatego że po prostu nie jestem chroniony tutaj w żadnym sposób. Nie mogę ani wynajmować mieszkania, nie mogę być chory, nie mogę brać pieniędzy z tytułu, na przykład, *vente-pa-job* czy tam innych społecznych spraw.”

¹⁶ In Polish, “Ale jak upomniałem się o ubrania zimowe (laughing), to przyszyli mrozy i t.d., no to zostało po prostu niemiło zauważone przez kierownictwo, że... (laughing), że się za dużo domagam (laughing). I powiedziano mi, że już Panu nie będzie potrzebne ubrania zimowe, bo Pan właśnie zakończył u nas pracę (laughing).”

commitment (SC) among employees might be “rewarded” with *long-term assignments* (SC) or *good contracts* (SC). The hierarchy of employees in a staffing agency is therefore a fractured theoretical concept that emerged from the codes which is also in line with what Henryk calls as “*being in front*” (SC) vs. “*being behind*” (SC). In this way, a staffing agency might exert its power over the employees by indirectly affecting their perception of *certainty* (FTC) in general and *security* (FTC) at work in particular.

Henryk (46) has worked in at least four counties of Norway and has changed many jobs over the last five years. Accordingly, he often became unemployed. Notably, Henryk appears to have lost his job every time winter came in 2008, 2009, and 2010. This is how he describes becoming unemployed at the end of 2009:

“*The project finished. Winter. And I parted from the company. However, I still had some minor assignments, for example, to assemble or disassemble shelves in the shops, all the various installations in the shops, or any other minor tasks. But as my first priority was to have big contracts and a permanent place of work, so I said good bye to the firm.*”¹⁷ – Henryk.

Thus, Henryk alludes to the fact that during the winter months big construction projects tend to be suspended because of the weather conditions. And since most of the staffing agencies use assignment-based payment schemes, Henryk might have experienced *problems in earning enough money* (SC). Despite not making an explicit reference to this fact, Henryk emphasizes his priority to be employed at *big construction projects* (SC) and having *a permanent place of work* (SC) as it can assure a *relatively stable income* (SC) over a relatively long period. Finally, Henryk tends to use mild expressions such as “*to part from the company*” and “*to say good bye to the firm*” instead of the stronger *to quit/leave the company* or *to resign from the firm*. I argue, it may indicate rather a compelled nature of his *decisions to change jobs* (SC). Thus, since the beginning of 2008 and by the end of 2010, Henryk changed four jobs. However, only once it was due to redundancies at the firm. And it was the only firm he was directly employed at. In the rest of the cases, Henryk worked for staffing agencies.

At the end of 2010, after having worked for nine months in Northern Norway, Henryk became unemployed again:

“There was another situation. Hence, *in the winter* there were few assignments for firms [=staffing agencies] on that production plant. And among others, they [the production plant] faced redundancies among their own employees. So, the hired workers [from staffing agencies] automatically quitted.”¹⁸ – Henryk about becoming unemployed at the end of 2010.

Henryk reported competition among his colleagues and mobbing by the management as the reason why he left the Agency A in 2008:

¹⁷ *In Polish*, “Skonczył sie projekt – zima ja sie rozstalem z ta firma. Bo tam jeszcze mialem troche takich drobnych zlecen. Naprzyklad, jezdzić po sklepach [name of the supermarket chain], demontaz-montaz polek, roznych wszystkich wyposazenia sklepow, czy tam jakies inne drobne zlecenia. A jezeli mi interesowali tylko duze kontrakty, stale miesce pracy przede wszystkim, no to pozegnalem sie z ta firma.”

¹⁸ *In Polish*, “ To tam byla inna sytuacja, bo w zimie nie mieli na zakladzie przy fabrykacji nie mieli firmy zlecen i miedzy innymi swoich ludzi wysylali na permitteringi. Wiec, automatycznie ludzi wynajecie zrezygnowali.”

“Well, due to the fact that... as the Agency A employed about 20-25 Poles on that construction site, soon *a rat race began among the Poles*, and apart from it, the *mobbing by the Agency*, so after 7-8 months I left the Agency A. However, at that time I had already found myself a new work in [city name].”¹⁹ – Henryk.

Remarkably, Henryk makes a reference to the *competitive work environment (SC)* he encountered when working for the Agency A. Calling such a competitive environment *a rat race (SC)* might imply a challenging group dynamics at the workplace. Furthermore, he reports having faced *mobbing (SC)* by superiors at the agency. It is unclear, though, what Henryk conceives as *mobbing*. Notably, it was not the only case that Henryk lost his job due to misunderstandings at the workplace:

“But *it somehow happened* that the foreman there did not accept me in the group. Or other way, the group of Poles who worked there did not accept me. Maybe [they] told [to him] that they did not want competition.”²⁰ – Henryk.

Thus, he reported having to leave the Agency A again at the beginning of 2012, shortly after he had been put on some minor assignments at the new workplace:

“Well, and in [winter month] *I parted from the firm* and began collecting [unemployment] benefits. Since *the Agency did not have, did not have, did not have... did not have for me any job assignment*, and since it [the Agency] does not pay for such *permitterings*, or temporal layoffs, so it was better [for me] to terminate the work contract and make use of my earned right to [unemployment] benefits.”²¹ – Henryk.

Jan (49) also mentions a relatively challenging employment situation in the construction industry during the winter months:

“Well, I also believe that during those *bad times*, which are *from October to April*, I was aware that there is *a little slowdown* in the construction industry. So, *I expected that I might become unemployed* during that time. But I think that now, after the holidays I will anyhow find that job and will be working.”²² – Jan.

Notably, Jan calls such *vulnerable periods at work (FTC)* during winters as *bad times (SC)*. Furthermore, Jan became unemployed for the second time in Norway in October 2012. When asked why he lost his job in the Agency A, Jan could not provide a clear answer:

“Well, in October... I had health problems earlier. Thus, I had been twice in a hospital in Norway. Maybe this fact had to do something, but, maybe, basically because young people started arriving, young specialists, younger, very *communicative, with language [skills.]* So, in that moment I already... Because *the Company A started to carry such a strange policy* that, in principle, I was employed, but practically, there was *no work [assignments]* for me. And since I had *no means for*

¹⁹ *In Polish*, “No, ze wzgledu na to, ze... ze [company’s name] bylo/a tam na tej budowie okolo... rotacyjnie miedzy 20 a 25 osob – polakow tam pracowalo. To juz do tego polacy zaczeli wyscic szczurow, a oprócz tego mobbing [company’s name], po 7-8 miesiacach rozstalem sie z [company’s name], ale juz w tym czasi zalatwillem sobie prace nowa w [city name].”

²⁰ *In Polish*, “Ale tam, jakos tak wyszlo, ze, ze tam majster akurat nie zaakceptowal mi w grupie. Albo inaczej – grupa polakow, ktora tam robila, nie akceptowala mnie. Moze tam powiedzieli, ze nie chca konkurencji.”

²¹ *In Polish*, “No i... w styczniu sie rozstalem z firma i poszedlem na zasilek. Bo akurat, w [name of the firm 2] nie mial, nie mial, nie mial... nie mial dla mnie zadnej oferty pracy. A jako takiego permeteringu nie placi, czyli czasowego zwolnienia, wiec, bylo lepiej rozwiacz umowe na prace i skorzystac z przyslugujacego mi prawa do zasilku.”

²² *In Polish*, “No i tez uwazam, ze te chude lata, tak jak od padziernika teraz do kwietnia, to ja dawalem sobie sprawe, ze w branze budowniczej jest zastoj lekki. Wiec sie spodziewalem, ze moze zostac bez pracy przez ten czas. No ale mysle, ze zaraz po swietach, czy jakos tak, gdzie ta prace znajde i dalej bede pracowal.”

subsistence, I made a decision, as [it's] hard, resigned from the Company A and went on [unemployment] provision.”²³ – Jan.

Thus, Jan reported the *lack of assignments* (SC) at the Agency A as a reason for him to resign and *transfer into unemployment benefits receipt* (FTC). Notably, he calls such practices in the Agency A “a policy,” and in particular “a strange policy.” This alludes to the possibility that such practices could be common in the Agency A. Furthermore, when asked whether he was paid by the Agency A only for those periods when there were assignments for him, Jan confirmed:

“Yes. Only and exclusively then. I think, I have no claims at all to the firm. Simply because [there] were much younger, very *communicative* and *healthier* [workers]. And *healthier* [emphasizing the last].”²⁴ – Jan.

It may be inferred from the extract above that *failures of staffing agencies to provide work assignments* (SC) to an employee might be of a deliberate character and be used intentionally in order to *make the employee voluntary resign* (SC).

To conclude, due to their *professional segregation in the construction industry* (FTC) and due to the *predominance of staffing agencies* (FTC) in this sector, Polish male migrant workers can experience particularly *vulnerable periods at work* (FTC) during the cold months in Norway.

4.1.3 Unemployment in times of crisis

When the construction industry in Norway experienced a *slowdown* (SC) as the result of the *global financial crisis of 2008-2010* (SC), Marcin (56), as many other Polish workers, lost his job and became unemployed:

“I did not loose my job, but just the project [assignment] finished. When the project finished there was no other project [for me,] and in Agency A [they] told me to register at NAV.”²⁵ – Marcin.

Thus, Marcin says that his *project finished* (SC) and the Agency A did not find a new one for him. A *project that has finished* (SC) is also a very common code among my informants who work in the construction industry. For a construction industry worker, a *project that has finished* (SC) may often mean unemployment. It is interesting to see that Marcin does not want to recognize that he actually lost his job at the staffing agency. His reluctance to acknowledge this fact might be accounted to two reasons. On the one hand, after six weeks on unemployment provision Marcin became again recruited by the same staffing agency (Agency A), and he has worked for it until the time of the interview. In other words, Marcin may consider his short unemployment situation as a temporary break from work for the same employer. On the other hand, in his interview Marcin

²³ In Polish, “No, w październiku, tam miałem wcześniej problemy zdrowotny. Byłem dwukrotnie w szpitalu w Norwegii. Może ten fakt mi zaszkodził, może to, że poprostu już zaczęły napływać młodzi ludzie, młode kadry, młodsze, bardziej komunikatywni, z językiem. Więc, poprostu w tym momencie już, ze względu na to, że [name of the firm] dziwna politykę zaczęło prowadzić taka, że byłem teoretycznie zatrudniony, a praktycznie byłem na stanie [name of the firm], ale prace dla mnie nie było. I jak już nie miałem za co żyć, no to zdecydowałem się, że już trudno, wypowiedzenie złożyłem w [name of the firm] i poszedłem na zasiłek.”

²⁴ In Polish, “Tak. Tylko i wyłącznie wtedy. Sadzę, że to nie ma pretensje w ogóle do firmy, no bo poprostu byli dużo młodsze, bardzo komunikatywne i zdrowsze. I zdrowsze.”

²⁵ In Polish, “Ja nie straciłem pracy, tylko skończył się projekt. Jak się skończył projekt, to już później tego projektu nie było i w [name of the company] powiedzieli, żeby ja sobie poszedł do NAVu.”

mentioned several times that his experience might not be very useful for my research as he was unemployed during a very short time.

“I went to NAV and was there *very briefly*. I think that for your study you need people who were [unemployed] longer. I was *briefly*. It was one month. One, practically, one month I was [unemployed,] or maybe one and a half. That is to say, six weeks. Or three times, three times I was paid by NAV, as they paid every two weeks. So, *three times I was paid and then I again got work.*”²⁶ – Marcin.

Marcin emphasizes that his unemployment lasted *very briefly* (duration of unemployment) and that soon he began working again. He also assumed that for the purposes of this study I needed people who have been unemployed for longer time. This may imply his feeling of shame for being unemployed and a fear of being judged. However, it may also indicate Marcin’s own prejudices towards being unemployed and the unemployed. In fact, Marcin was the person who introduced me to other four informants in this study. Three of them actually experienced long-term unemployment in Norway.

Jan (49) became unemployed for the first time at the end of 2008, after having worked for the Agency A at different construction projects during 1.5 year:

“Later, *there was quite a crisis* in Norway. It mainly involved people whose *projects finished* being fired whereas those who *had work [projects]* remained. Company A could not find employment for everyone, so I went on unemployment at NAV for the next one and a half year.”²⁷ – Jan.

It can be inferred from the passage above that *in times of redundancies* (SC), some employees become unemployed because their *projects have finished* (SC). But there is also a group of those who have contract and therefore remain at work. Before leaving for unemployment Jan participated in a meeting organized at the Agency A where he was instructed “where to go” and “what to do.”

“It happened that there was a whole group [of employees] leaving [for unemployment]. We had a meeting. We knew exactly what we have to do, where to go.”²⁸ – Jan.

The interview with Marcin sheds more light on how redundancies happen at staffing agencies. Thus, after having worked for about six years at the same company, Marcin did not consider changing his job at the time of the interview:

“Now, I do not even aim at changing the firm, because *I feel comfortable here. I am now in front*, though *I have my years*, but still *I am in front*. If I moved to another firm, even if they offered me a little bit higher [wages], I would always be behind. When redundancies take place, *those, behind, are at risk. Not those in front*, but always those behind are at risk. So, I do not plan on

²⁶ In Polish, “I poszedlem do NAVu i tam bylem bardzo krotko... Ja jak jestem, potrzebuje do tych badan, to potrzeba ludzi ktorzy duzej byli. Ja bylem wktorce, to byl jeden miesiac. Jeden, praktycznie, jeden miesiac bylem, naczne moze 1.5. To jest 6 tygodni, czyli 3 razy, 3 razy NAV mi zaplacil, bo placili co 2 tygodni. Tak ze, 3 razy mi zaplacili i pozniej juz dostalem znowu prace...”

²⁷ In Polish, “Pozniej byl w Norwegii taki dosyc kryzys. Polegalo to na tym, glownie, ze ludzi, ktorych projekty sie konczyli, to poprostu zostali zwolnieni z prostego powodu, ze poprostu zostawal ten, ktory mial prace. [Name of the firm] nie moglo znalezc dla wszystkich zatrudnienia, wiec pozniej poszedlem na nastepny poltora roku na, do NAVu, na bezrobocie.”

²⁸ In Polish, “Zdarzylo sie tak, ze poprostu tam cala grupa odchodzaca – bylo spotkanie, wiedzielismy dokladnie, co mamy zrobic, gdzie isc.”

changing [my job]. *I feel comfortable here.* I know people. People know me. I am known. *There is nothing to be changed.*²⁹ – Marcin.

As it can be inferred from the extract above, Marcin *feels comfortable* (SC) at the company. For him, *comfort* (FTC) implies *not being at risk* (SC) to lose his job. Hence, he refers to himself as “*being in front*” (SC) within the company. It alludes to a possible *hierarchy of employees in recruiting agencies* (FTC). Therefore, knowing that he is not facing the risk of becoming unemployed during redundancies, makes Marcin *feel comfortable*. In its turn, feeling comfortable contributes to Marcin’s *reluctance to changes* (SC). As he emphasizes, even a somehow higher wages will not make him change his mind. Thus, the price of having his *comfort* (FTC) is higher than a little increment in wages.

After having worked for about three months for his new employer in another county of Norway, Henryk (46) became unemployed at the end of 2008 as a result of redundancies at his firm caused by the construction *crisis* (SC) in Norway. Instead of registering as unemployed with NAV, Henryk returned for a few months to Poland. *It somehow happened* (SC) is a code which was often employed by Henryk in my interview with him to describe work-related situations. Thus, *it somehow happened* that he had to quit companies; *it somehow happened* that he had to temporarily return to Poland in 2008 and so on and so forth. Such a tendency of Henryk to frequently apply this expression to different work-related situations might reveal his intention to transfer the responsibility for what happened to some external, often unknown factors. When combined with another his tendency of using soft expressions, such as “to say good bye to the firm” or “to have to part from the company,” it can also prove Henryk’s *reluctance to assume his responsibility* (SC) for the situations and the eventual decisions taken.

One important piece of information that was never mentioned by Henryk, but which I learned from third persons, was Henryk’s *problem with alcohol* (SC). Obviously, this is not something a person would eagerly talk about with a stranger. Therefore it was of a very high importance to learn about this fact in order to better understand Henryk’s *fractured employment trajectory* (SC) in Norway. Thus, over the last five years in Norway, Henryk changed six to seven employers. He worked in four different counties of Norway. Moreover, he was often given *short assignments* (SC) or the so-called “*junk contracts*” (SC) at the staffing agencies. Eventually it was often the reason why he “had to part from” such agencies. Accordingly, Henryk was unable to achieve *work-related security* (FTC). Knowing the meaning of “*junk contracts*” for Polish construction workers and their use in the staffing agencies, it might be assumed that Henryk was not among the most valued employees.

²⁹ *In Polish*, “Ja tylko teraz, nawet nie mam zamiaru zmieniać firmy, dlatego że jest mi tutaj dobrze. Jestem już z przodu, mam już też swoje lata, a jestem z przodu. Do każdej firmy, nawet gdyby mi dawali trochę więcej, ale jak pójdzie, to zawsze będę na koncu. Kiedy będzie zwolnienie, to ostrzega tego z konca. Nie ostrzega tych z przodu, tylko zawsze na koncu. A tylko nie mam zamiaru zrobić... jest mi tu dobrze. Znam ludzi. Ludzi mi znają. Poznali mi – niema co zmieniać.”

4.1.4 Sickness, sick leaves, and unemployment

Wiktor (61), as many other construction workers from Poland, came to Norway through a staffing agency in the beginning of 2007. A few months later, he quit the agency, as he had been *promised a better remunerated job* (SC) in a small construction firm. Not being paid accordingly, Wiktor soon left the firm and found a job in another staffing agency. As a consequence of an earlier mishandled work-related injury, Wiktor finished his professional career in the industry at the end of 2007.

“Well, I finished my career there because it turned out that at the beginning of my work [in Norway,] at one of the construction sites, I suffered an injury. I did not know that it was serious. One year later it turned out that I had a spinal injury. [...] I was sick for one year. And then became a *patient of NAV*.”³⁰ – Wiktor.

Wiktor was suggested to undergo a spinal surgery either in Norway or in Poland, but he refused it. Thus, after the one-year sick leave in 2008, Wiktor registered as unemployed with NAV. He ironically perceives himself as a *NAV's patient* (SC) that may refer to his *dependency on welfare provision* (SC), on the one hand, and an implied protracted character of it, on the other. He describes his interactions with NAV employees and the related bureaucracy as *a fight* (SC):

“Well, I *had to fight* to simply enter in some program of return to work. *It was difficult* at the beginning. [...] But in the meantime, I happened to meet a person who helped me a lot. [Thus] I entered the Work Assessment Program which actually aimed at... [which] was supposed, *was supposed* [stresses here] to basically help me find either a job, or some training, or requalification.”³¹ – Wiktor.

Hence, Wiktor emphasized that the Work Assessment Program (WAP) *was supposed* to help him find a job. Notably, it might not be necessarily the case, as the main purpose of the WAP is to evaluate one's possibilities to eventually return to working life. However, Wiktor seems to prefer thinking that someone (the WAP, the NAV employees, etc) *was supposed help him* find a job instead of considering himself as the main responsible here. Therefore it may be conceptualized as one's *dependence on others* (SC) and *lack of agency* (SC). Furthermore:

“Well, *unluckily I will not return to construction because of the injury*, at least as a *tømrer*, that is to say a building carpenter. So, after one year in the Work Assessment Program, [they] wished to completely kick me out from the NAV's assistance. But I did not give up. I precisely met a person who helped me return to the program.”³² – Wiktor.

The first sentence in the extract above provides an important piece of information which defines Wiktor's relation to work and welfare assistance. He makes it very clear that *he is not able* (SC) to return to work, at least, not the one he used to do before. This, in conjunction with his perception of himself as *a NAV's patient* (SC), may indicate his *dependence on the welfare provision* (FTC).

³⁰ In Polish, “No i tam juz zakonczylem kariere, poniewaz okazalo sie, ze na poczatku swojej pracy na jednej z budow doznalem urazu. Nie wiedzialem, ze to bylo powazne. I po roku czasy wyszlo, ze mam uraz kregoslupa [...] Rok chorowalem. No i pozniej stalem sie juz pacjentem NAV.”

³¹ In Polish, “Tak ze troszke musialem walczyć, zeby poprostu wejść w jakiś program powrotu do pracy. Początkowo było to trudno. [...] Ale udało mi się trafić w międzyczasie na osobę, która mi dużo pomogła. Poszedłem właśnie do programu takiego Arbeidsavklaringenger, który miał za zadanie właśnie... powinien, powinien [stresses] poprostu pomóc mi w znalezieniu pracy czy jakiś poprostu treningi, czy przekwalifikowania.”

³² In Polish, “No bo niestety już na budowie nie wróce z racji urazu, przynajmniej na budowie w charakterze tego tomrera, czyli ciesli czy stolarza budowlanego. No i po roku czasu tego programu Arbeidsavsklaringenger chciano mi wymiksować w ogóle z tej pomocy NAVoskiej. No nie dałem się. Trafiłem właśnie na osobę, która pomogła mi wrócić do programu.”

After one year (2009) in WAP, Wiktor was admitted to the Requalification program which combined a substantial teaching of Norwegian and an acquisition of another profession:

“Thus, now I am in this Requalification program. Through this program I was sent to a firm that provides training in other professions [for] such people, let’s say, *handicapped*, like me, *disabled*.”³³ – Wiktor.

Notably, Wiktor perceives himself being *disabled* (SC). His participation in the Requalification program will end in the autumn 2013. In the meantime, Wiktor considers possible outcomes and his eventual actions:

“Thus, my program will end in [autumn month], at the end of [autumn month]. So, if in the meantime I simply do not find... or *nobody helps me* [stresses] find [?], then I’ll have to “face”, of course it is only in my favour, that they might prolong this program for one more year.”³⁴ – Wiktor.

Remarkably, Wiktor does not specify *what* he has or *others are supposed* (SC) to help him *find*. One may deduce from this extract that he means *job*, but, in fact, he does not say it. In my opinion, it indicates that Wiktor does not really consider finding a job as a possible solution to his situation which is in line with the aforementioned *dependence on the welfare provision* (FTC). It may also imply that he does not believe that he is capable of finding a job. This statement is strongly supported by his perception of himself as *disabled* (SC), mentioned above.

Jan (49) also faced health problems during his stay in Norway. But he does not relate his health problems to his work in Norway, as they had begun before he came to Norway:

“Well, I started having problems with [body organ.] But I also already had [it] much earlier. Thus, it was rather not connected with my work at all.”³⁵ – Jan.

At the time of interview, Piotrek (42) was on a one-month *sick leave* (SC) from work. He explained that, if one has worked in the construction industry for a long period, it is typical to experience problems with the spine. Thus, he mentioned lumbago as a *construction sickness* (SC) and the reason for his sick leave. Piotrek reported taking a one-month sick leave every year because of the health concerns. When asked for how long he is planning on staying in Norway, Piotrek answered:

“As long as my health allows for it and so on. Or as long as there is work, because nobody knows at all what can happen here in a few year. After all, the situation in the world is unsure. Nobody can be sure that Norway will have work. It seemed that when one worked in England one was in seventh heaven. But, alright, let’s not compare England to Norway, right?”³⁶ – Piotrek.

³³ In Polish, “No i teraz jestem w tym programie rekwalifiseringprogram. I z tego programu zostałem skierowany do firmy, która trenuje jakby w innych zawodach takich ludzi, nazwijmy to, ulomnych, jak ja, niepełnosprawnych.”

³⁴ In Polish, “Ponieważ mój program kończy się właśnie w [autumn month], w końcu [autumn month]. Tak że prosto, gdybym w tym czasie nie znalazł albo nikt by mi nie pomógł znaleźć, to jeszcze mi grozi, oczywiście dla mnie to na plus, że jeszcze rok mogą mi przedłożyć prosto ten program.”

³⁵ In Polish, “To, tam pojawia się problemy z [body organ]. Co to też miałem [problem] już dużo wcześniej... No ale to było prosto nie związane raczej w ogóle z pracą.”

³⁶ In Polish, “Ile zdrowie pozwoli i t.d. O ile będzie praca, bo tutaj też nie wiadomo, co będzie za kilka lat w ogóle. Przecież sytuacja w świecie jest niepewna. Nikt nie może być pewien, że Norwegia będzie miała pracę. Wydawało się, jak człowiek pracował Anglii, że już złapał Boga za nogi, ale no bo porównajmy Anglii do Norwegii, prawda?”

Finally, Henryk (46), unemployed since February 2012, was transferred to the sickness benefits program for the last six months before the spring 2013 in order to undergo rehabilitation after an operation. Henryk reported having returned to the unemployment program in the spring 2013 and was looking for a new job since then.

Obviously, the modes of transition into welfare benefits receipt among Polish migrant workers cannot be limited to the cases studied above. Transition into welfare benefits receipt might not necessarily be the result of one aspirations for an *upward occupational mobility* (Marta, Tomasz, and Patrycja), *seasonal sensitive industries* (Piotrek, Henryk, Jan), a *crisis in the industry* (Marcin, Henryk, Jan), or *sickness* (Wiktor, Henryk, Piotrek). Thus, some cases of unemployment may occur due to other factors as well. For instance, Piotrek (42) twice lost his job in Norway because of the bankruptcy of the companies he worked for.

4.2 Duration of welfare benefits receipt and financial independence

The *duration of welfare benefits receipt* (FTC) among my informants varied significantly, with some falling out from work for a few weeks while other remained on welfare for months. Accordingly, some of the informants reported becoming unemployed in Norway only once, whereas other transited into and out of unemployment benefits receipt more often. This section examines how my informants conceive their *financial independence* (FTC) and what role welfare benefits, in particular unemployment benefits, play in it.

4.2.1 The size of welfare benefits

In general, unemployment benefits aim at securing a certain level of personal consumption when an individual is unemployed. The question how big unemployment benefits should be has always been actively debated among advocates of different types of welfare regimes. While in a liberal welfare state, social assistance aims at recreating a basic level of personal consumption, it is rather meant to ensure a much comprehensive coverage under a social democratic welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 2006).

With regards to the amount of unemployment benefits, Marta (29) referred to it as such that did not make her *feel comfortable* (FTC), but was sufficient to take “*the time for her*” (SC) and continue looking for *a job in her profession* (SC).

“Me too, I had money from NAV, and it accounted for 60% of the income in the previous year. Thus, it was a certain amount that although did not allow me *to feel comfortable*, but was enough [to feel] that *it's time for me*.”³⁷ – Marta.

³⁷ In Polish, “Ja miałam też pieniędzy z NAVu i to stanowiło 60% dochodu z poprzedniego roku podatkowego. Wiec, była to pewna kwota, która pozwoliła mi nie czuć się komfortowo, ale na tyle, że to jest mój czas.”

Piotrek (42) became unemployed for the second time in early 2011 after having worked a total of seven months in two jobs in Norway. According him, his accumulated income in the previous year (2010) amounted to about NOK 160 thousand. According the benefit rate per day (0.24% of the previously earned income), Piotrek must have been paid around NOK 1 920 of unemployment benefits per week (or NOK 384 per day). Apparently, this amount did not meet Piotrek's *financial commitments* (SC), because he shortly found a new job:

“Well, according those 160 [thousand kroner] of my income, the [unemployment] *benefits were very small*, for it was 62% [of the previous income per year]. So, as I say, *I immediately embarked on searching for a work.*”³⁸ – Piotrek.

Thus, the *size of welfare benefits* (SC) is positively related to one's *financial independence* (FTC) and therefore negatively to the *incentives to quickly return to work* (SC).

4.2.2 Tax reductions

Another factor that influences *financial independence* (FTC) is taxation. Thus, the redistributive function of the welfare state is achieved through taxation. Evidently, taxes directly affect one's *financial independence* (FTC) by reducing the disposable income. Some of my informants seemed to be remarkably acquainted with the Norwegian tax system and corresponding to them *tax reductions* (SC).

Thus, Wiktor (61) demonstrated a very good knowledge of the fiscal regulations in Norway. He reported visiting his family in Poland, at least, three times a year. By doing so, he maintains his *status of a commuter worker in Norway* (SC) which allows him to deduct taxes for his boarding, lodging and travelling expenses:

“It is required to have, at least, three stays [per year] in Poland for the purposes of family contacts. So, I try [to do] it due to, let's say, *economic and fiscal reasons*. Otherwise I cannot deduct boarding costs which amount to 170 kroner per day for an immigrant from the EU. That is to say for a taxpayer. *One does not have to work, what matters is whether one pays taxes*. Thus, *I do not work, but I pay taxes*. Of course, *I pay taxes and make contributions* from what I receive from NAV. *I pay all this.*”³⁹ – Wiktor.

Wiktor did not mention how much he saves in paying taxes due to his *commuter's status* (SC). However, the regulations on tax reductions for EU/EEA commuters are quite generous and may result in net savings of NOK 20 000-30 000 per year. According my informants, such amount may correspond to a minimum *yearly* salary in Poland.

Notably, Wiktor emphasizes making contributions and *paying taxes* (SC) while *living off the welfare benefits* (SC). It can be argued that Wiktor pursues a strategy of *tax optimization* (SC).

³⁸ In Polish, “Wiec, no ale z tych 160 tam ponad, po prostu dochodu, zasilek byl bardzo malutki, bo jest 62%. Wiec, mowie, odrazu zabralem sie za szukanie sobie pracy.”

³⁹ In Polish, “Jest wymagane, przynajmniej, 3-krotny pobyt w Polsce w ramach kontaktu z rodzina. Ze staram sie to z przyczyn, nazwijmy to, ekonomicznych-podatkowych, bo inaczej nie moge sobie diet rozliczyc, ktora obcokrajowcowi przysluguje dziennie okolo 170 koron z Unii Europejskiej. No znaczy platnikowi podatkow. Nie musisz pracowac, wazy, ze podatek, odprowadzasz, nie. No ja nie pracuje, a mam podatek. Tak nie, bo tego, co otrzymuje z NAVu, place podatki, place skladki. Place te wszystkie...”

When asked whether his welfare benefits suffice for his living expenses in Norway and assisting his wife in Poland, Wiktor answered:

“It must! *One just has to be economic*, and then it suffices.”⁴⁰

It is worth noticing that Wiktor has *lived off welfare benefits* (SC) for more than 5 years in Norway. Furthermore, he was not the only informant who reported visiting family in Poland for tax reasons. Thus, Piotrek (42), Marcin (56), and Henryk (46) also travel to Poland 3-4 times a year in order to maintain the *status of a commuting worker* (SC).

In addition to the tax reductions for commuters, one is also entitled to tax-free personal allowances in Norway. Although Henryk (46) does not make an explicit reference to his fiscal situation, he mentions travelling to Poland every three months for family visits. It can therefore be assumed that he, being aware of the tax regulations, aims at maintaining his status of a commuter worker in Norway. Thus, Henryk reported that his wife, who works full-time in Poland, earns less than NOK 41,100 a year. Therefore Henryk can, in principle, profit from the “tax class 2” personal allowance (in Norwegian, *personfradrag*) which amounts to NOK 94,300 per year. Exempt from paying the municipal tax of 28% on this amount, Henryk may save a lump sum of NOK 13,200 (28% of the extra NOK 47,150) in addition to other reductions.

To conclude, being *able to save in paying taxes* (SC) results in *higher levels of disposable income* (SC). In its turn, it enhances one’s *financial independence* (FTC), on the one hand, and, on the other, reduces the *incentives to quickly return to work* (SC).

4.2.3 Patterns of personal consumption

As some of my informants, although being part of transnational spaces (e.g. family, household, etc), lived alone in Norway, I distinguish between one’s *personal consumption* (SC), which is discussed in this section, and *family financial situation* (SC), discussed further in this chapter.

Evidently, the size of the welfare assistance, be it unemployment provision or sickness benefits, matters for one’s *personal consumption* (SC). At the same time, one’s *personal consumption* might often determine whether the size of the welfare assistance is sufficient.

Thus, when Jan (49) became unemployed at the end of 2008, he realized that he could afford living in Norway despite *being on welfare* (SC):

“So, I simply decided that, *despite being on the [unemployment] provision*, I will somehow manage it... [I’ll] *manage to survive*. So, I stayed in Stavanger and was on the [unemployment] provision.”⁴¹ – Jan.

⁴⁰ *In Polish*, “Mus! No po prostu trzeba oszczędnie gospodarować, i wtedy wystarczy.”

⁴¹ *In Polish*, “No i po prostu zdecydowałem się, że mimo zasiłku tutaj, jakos tam sobie dam radę... dam radę przetrwać. No i zostałem w Stavanger i byłem na zasiłku.”

When asked whether the social benefits from NAV suffice for his expenses in Norway, Jan (49) answered:

“*Suffice*. I would say even more. When I was committed to support my son, I was earning money, so to say, in order to save for a car. So at that time *I worked and had more* [money]. But now, while leading *a modest lifestyle*... I actually don't smoke. And when one weekend I go for a drink or join a company where I'd drink vodka or beer, then it's no harm. It definitely does not affect the so-called *home budget* which can be affected by such things... Simply because nothing like that happens. In financial terms, *I am not afraid* that I will run out of money.”⁴² – Jan.

Thus, *a modest lifestyle* (SC) of Jan is one of the reasons why he *feels secure* (SC) about his *financial independence* (FTC). By spending little, he might even manage to *save some money* (SC). Therefore the amount of the unemployment benefits he receives suffices for his living expenses in Norway. As a result, he faces no *financial harm* (SC). I argue it may be a factor that reduces Jan's *incentives to quickly return to work* (SC). Remarkably, Jan makes references to a range of different types of personal expenditures that define his *personal consumption* (SC), including smoking, consuming alcohol, having a car, renting accommodation, etc:

“Actually, I happened to have *quite a cheap accommodation*. So... but I've got a car. I travel and I do not sit home. I move around. I cannot say in the full sense of the word that I visit [places], but I travel around. And I believe that my life is prosperous as *I face no financial harm or anything else*.”⁴³ – Jan.

He concludes that when everything is taken into consideration, he “face[s] no financial harm or anything else,” the fact that possibly alludes to his *feeling of comfort* (FTC) while living off welfare.

Piotrek (42), who worked in the UK during 2006-2008, also became unemployed due to the global financial crisis that hit the construction industry in the UK. The following extract sheds light on Piotrek's perception of the unemployment provision in the UK and his decision to return to Poland:

“I remained there for a little while. However, the perspective of receiving unemployment benefits in England was not *as happy* as it is here [in Norway]. Because the unemployment benefits in England amounted to 70 pounds per week, whereas *my accommodation cost* me 50 pounds [per week]. Thus, I was left with 20 pounds *for food*. So, I did not have means *to sit* there. Moreover, I had *a family and small children to provide for*, two small children. So I resigned from that England, because it was impossible to find a job there, and returned to Poland.”⁴⁴ – Piotrek (42)

As it can be seen from the extract above, Piotrek makes a reference to both his *personal consumption* (FTC) and his *family financial situation* (FTC), when being unemployed in the UK. Furthermore, Piotrek alludes to the difference in unemployment benefits provision in the two

⁴² *In Polish*, “Wystarcza. Ja to bardziej bym powiedział, wtedy jak miałem jeszcze pomagałem synowi, dorabiałem się, że tak to powiem, zbierac na samochod. No to wtedy pracowałem, miałem więcej. Teraz przy skromnym takim życiu, jestem akurat nie palacy, a, jak (laugh) się tam raz czasami w weekend wypije, pojedzie na impreze, wypije wodeczki czy piwo, to się nic nie dzieje. To zupełnie nie szkodzi poprostu dla budżetu tak zwanego domowego, który tam może być zachwany z powodu jakichś tam... Po prostu nie ma czegoś takiego. Finansowo, po prostu, się nie boje o to, że mi braknie pieniędzy.”

⁴³ *In Polish*, “Akurat wyszło, że mam dosyć tanie mieszkanie. Więc, no ale mam samochód. Jeżdże na wycieczki, nie siedzę stacjonarnie w domu. Przemieszczam się. Nie powiem w pełnym znaczeniu tego słowa, że zwiedzam, ale przemieszczam się. I poprostu uważam, że to życie moje jest na tyle dostatnie, że poprostu nie dzieje mi się żadna krzywda finansowa, ani inna.”

⁴⁴ *In Polish*, “Chwilke jeszcze tam przebywałem, no perspektywa zasiłku dla bezrobotnych w Anglii nie była, nie była (laughing) taka wesola, jak tutaj. Dlatego, że tam zasiłek dla bezrobotnych w Anglii wynosił 70 funtów na tydzień. A mieszkanie kosztowało 50 funtów. Więc, na jedzenie zostawało ci 20 funtów. Więc, nie było za co tam siedzieć. A tym bardziej, że poprostu miałem rodzinę na utrzymaniu w Polsce i małą dzieci, dwoje małych dzieci. Także zrezygnowałem z tej Anglii, bo prace nie szło poprostu znaleźć. I wróciłem do Polski.”

countries. Remarkably, he employs the word *happy* (*wesola*, in Polish) in order to describe the perspective of receiving unemployment benefits in Norway. By doing so, Piotrek might in fact refer to one's (possibly, his own) feeling of *comfort* (FTC) while living off unemployment provision in Norway. Finally, the verb *to sit* (SC), used by Piotrek ('I sat'), may imply feeling *comfortable* (FTC). Thus, Piotrek implicitly alludes to the relation that exists between his *financial independence* (FTC) and the feeling of *comfort* (FTC), as the later influenced his decision to return to Poland when becoming unemployed in the UK.

Thus, the patterns of *personal consumption* (SC), defined by one's individual lifestyle, might have considerable implications for one's *financial independence* (FTC) and therefore the *incentives to quickly return to work* (FTC).

4.2.4 Financial commitments

As migrants tend to be part of families or households, including the transnational family, their *family financial situation* (SC) may influence their *financial independence* (FTC). Hence, the more secure is one's family financial situation, the better is one's financial independence, and vice versa.

Thus, Tomasz' *family financial situation* (SC) during his unemployment was enough secure and therefore allowed him to take enough time (four months) and find his "*dream firm*" (SC). His partner Marta (29) just began working in a kindergarten, while Tomasz, being unemployed, stayed home and looked after their 1.5 years old child. At that time, their family of four combined three main sources of income: Marta's salary, Tomasz' unemployment benefits and cash-for-care benefits for the younger child who did not attend kindergarten after the family had moved to Rogaland. I argue that if it was not for his partner Marta, who worked full-time during those four months, Tomasz would not have waited this long and, probably, would have accepted a less relevant job.

Similarly, Marta (29) was unemployed and collected unemployment benefits during nine months from autumn 2011 to spring 2012. Her determination to find a *job in her profession* (SC) combined with a secure *financial situation of her family* (FTC) may explain why it took her this long to return to work. It is important to mention that when Marta decided to quit the job and become unemployed her partner had recently been employed as an engineer. This fact could have contributed to her determination in a two-fold way. Firstly, the success of her partner who followed a similar strategy could have provided additional strength to her *aspirations for an upward occupational mobility* (FTC). Secondly, having one stable source of income in the family, in addition to her unemployment benefits, could have relieved her of the *fear of facing financial hardships* (SC) and added to her feeling of *security* (FTC).

"He [the partner] had a job. At that time, he had a job, and *I was not afraid* that we will not have money to pay the bills. *I knew* that we will have enough to pay the bills, and *now it's my turn*. Me

too, I had money from NAV, and it accounted for 60% of the income in the previous year.”⁴⁵ – Marta.

It can be inferred from this extract that Marta *was certain* (FTC) that her decision would not put an extra burden on her family’s budget, as she *knew* (SC). She also felt *secure* (FTC), as she *was not afraid* (SC). Furthermore, Marta understood her unemployment as a “*time for her*” (SC) and “*her turn*” (SC). It may allude to the reason why Marta had to quit her job in the kindergarten in order to start looking for *a job in her profession* (SC). Accordingly, it holds true that while working in the kindergarten, Marta could not fully focus on searching for a relevant job, as *the time* did not completely belong to her. When becoming unemployed, she therefore found the “*time for her*” (SC). While unemployed, Marta was advised to accept any job, not necessarily matching her education:

“I always said [to NAV] that I want to have *a job according my profession*. They [NAV] told me that no, that I must have a job similar to those I had had. That is to say, either at that [fish] factory, or in a kindergarten. I say, ‘No. Because *I have an academic degree*. Why do I have to work at a factory?’ – ‘Well, because we have the demand here,’ right?”⁴⁶ – Marta.

Marta had remained unemployed until the spring 2012 when she finally received a job offer relevant to her degree, although not exactly matching her *ambitions* (SC).

During her first year in Norway, Barbara (38) stayed home and looked after her child, while the husband worked. According her, she was not actually searching for job, so she could not be considered unemployed at that time. Barbara started looking for job in the autumn 2009 when her daughter began attending kindergarten. When asked whether she received unemployment benefits while being registered as unemployed, she answered:

“No, although I was registered as [unemployed]. No, because I had not worked [required] days-hours, hence, *I was not eligible for benefits*. I sat...”⁴⁷ – Barbara.

Notably, when Barbara with the child came to Norway, her husband used to work overtime:

“It was actually as following. There was an opportunity to work overtime. For instance, instead of working until 15.00-15.30, [he] sometimes worked two hours longer. [Thus], sometimes until 19.00, sometimes until 18.00.”⁴⁸ – Barbara.

By working overtime, Barbara’s husband managed to *earn enough in order to provide for a family* (SC) of three. At that time, Barbara was still searching for *a job in her profession* (SC). As the time passed, his agency adopted stricter regulations regarding overtime work. Thus, if one worked many

⁴⁵ *In Polish*, “On miał prace. Wtedy on miał prace i ja nie białam sie tego, ze nie wystarczy nam pieniedzy na oplaty. Wiedzialam, na oplaty nam wystarczy i teraz jest kolej na mnie. Ja mialam tez pieniedzy z NAVu i to stanowiło 60% dochodu z poprzedniego roku podatkowego.”

⁴⁶ *In Polish*, “Ja zawsze mowilam, ze ja chce miec prace w zawodzie. Oni mi mowia, ze nie, ze ja musze miec taka prace, jaka mialam. Czyli albo w tej fabryce, albo w przedszkolu. Ja mowie: ‘Nie, no przeciez jestem po studiach, dlaczego musze pracowac w fabryce?’ – ‘No bo tutaj mamy zapotrzebowanie,’ tak?”

⁴⁷ *In Polish*, “Nie. Zgloszalam, ze... Nie, bo dlatego ze nia mialam zadnych przepracowanych dni-godzin, wiec mi nie przyslugiwal zasilek. Siedzialam...”

⁴⁸ *In Polish*, “Akurat to bylo tak. Byla mozliwosc pracowac te wiecej godzin. Naprzyklad, zamiast pracowac tam do godziny 15:00, 15:30, to pracowal 2 godziny czasami wiecej, czasami do 19:00, czasami do 18:00, no.”

hours overtime and crossed the allowed limit, one had to take a certain amount of time off. Therefore working longer hours became disadvantageous for Barbara's husband:

“Thus, it made no sense [to work overtime].”⁴⁹ – Barbara.

It must be added as well that at that time Barbara's *family financial situation* (FTC) was put under pressure:

“[It was] *difficult*. In addition, when we moved to a new apartment, we had *to pay more*. [...] Thanks God we managed! Plus electricity... Thus, with every moment *it was becoming more and more difficult* and worse. *Different bills started arriving*, one for TV, others for the car, insurance and so on. Suddenly we realized that, instead of being in black, we began *falling in red colors*. And exactly then began that whole thing with me *finding a job as soon as possible*.”⁵⁰ – Barbara.

In other words, Barbara's aspirations to *a job according her profession* (SC) were moderated over time by her *family financial situation* (FTC). Barbara could no longer wait until she was offered a job she wanted. However, Barbara's husband continued working on Saturdays, and it was not before she found a job in the spring 2011 that he stopped working on Saturdays:

“I do not work on Saturdays either. I have not worked [on Saturdays] in a very long time. Two years.”⁵¹ – Barbara's husband who works in the construction industry.

Obviously, this may be explained by the fact that, when Barbara started working, the family budget comprised two sources of income, namely Barbara and her husband's salaries. Thus, their *family financial situation* (FTC) improved and the need to work on Saturdays exhausted.

Thus, Wiktor (61) seems to organize his personal budget very prudently, as he manages to make some savings, despite living on welfare. At the same time, he is committed to remitting some money to his wife who is *retired* in Poland. He explains it by referring to *pensions* (SC) in Poland as “very problematic” because they are “too big for one to die, and too little for one to live.”⁵²

After his wife divorced him, Jan (49) met another woman who he would like to be with and who has been waiting for him in Poland. According Jan, this person is widowed, has her own business and a house in Poland. She is self-sufficient and has no intention to move with him in Norway. This is how he describes her attitudes towards his stay in Norway:

“[...] who [the woman] in principle said to me in the following way. Sit [=remain] there as long as you can manage it. And then come back to me and we will live together in the form of a marriage for convenience or...”⁵³ – Jan.

⁴⁹ *In Polish*, “No to bylo bez sensu, no.”

⁵⁰ *In Polish*, “[...] trudno, a jeszcze w momencie, jak wtedy musieliśmy przenieść się, musieliśmy więcej płacić. [...] Dzięki Bogu się udało. Plus prąd, no to tak co chwile już zaczynało być coraz trudniej, coraz gorzej. Bo przychodziły różne opłaty, to za telewizję, to opłate roczne za samochód, ubezpieczenie i t.d. Nagle się okazywało, że zaczynamy już być zamiast nad kreską, to spadamy coraz niżej. No i wtedy się właśnie zaczęła ta ... żeby jaknajszybciej tą pracę znaleźć.”

⁵¹ *In Polish*, “Ja w sobotę też nie pracuję. Nie pracowałem bardzo długo. Dwa lata.”

⁵² *In Polish*, “Bo nie da się umrzeć, bo jest za dużo, ale żyć się nie da, bo jest za mało.”

⁵³ *In Polish*, “[...] która, w zasadzie, w ten sposób powiedziała, że ile tutaj dasz rade, to sobie siedź, a później przyjeżdżaj do mnie i będziemy sobie razem mieszkać w formie jakiegos tam małżeństwa ze zysku, czy...”

It was already mentioned, that the verb *to sit* (*siedzieć*, in Polish) is often used to describe the state of idleness or passiveness and usually has a negative connotation. Thus, some of my informants used it in different contexts in order to describe situations like being unemployed, having no work, being idle and so on. Remarkably, Jan employs this word to describe his situation in Norway. Hence, he acknowledges his passiveness in finding a job.

Henryk (46) has a wife and a teenage child in Poland. His wife works full-time, but, according Henryk, her salary is one of the lowest in the country. It amounted to PLN 1178 per month what corresponds to about NOK 2100-2300 per month. He calls this salary “ridiculous” and explains in a detailed manner that, when accommodation costs deducted, the amount left does not suffice even for food expenses for his family in Poland. In other words, his family depends to a great extent to financial assistance from Henryk.

Finally, acquisition of property in the host country can be a serious financial commitment for most migrants. Thus, three of my informants reported paying mortgage in Norway. Notably, all of them are below the age of 40 and were in work at the time of the interview. The rest of my informants lived in rented housing. Thus, Patrycja’s family has been renting accommodation since they had arrived to the country. When asked about her plans for the future in regards to her stay in Norway, she said:

“Yes, *to settle*. Well, *until retirement*. As my husband is older [than me,] he will retire earlier. Wait... Thirteen... He is 54 years old, so it is thirteen years left. Now he will go to the Population Register or to the Immigration Office and he will have to submit the documents that he’d like to settle here [in Norway]. And I’ll do [the same] one year later. So, we do not have to buy our own property in order to live here, we don’t have to. We can just rent. But, on the other hand, it would be good to have your own place.”⁵⁴ – Patrycja (45) about settling in Norway.

The extract above alludes to Patrycja’s aspirations to settling in Norway. Notably, she mentions *retirement* (SC) and her husband’s age. Although tacitly, such reference may imply that the *age* (SC) is an obstacle to *acquiring property in Norway* (SC). In other words, being old(er) *moderates* (FTC) Patrycja’s *aspirations* (FTC) to own property in Norway.

Jan (49) also referred to his *age* (SC) when justifying his decision not to invest into real estate:

“I was about to buy a house. And it was almost decided, so that any moment. I was to buy a house for renovation. However, I came to a conclusion that starting a construction or doing a complete renovation when you are 50 is... This house, basically, is not needed for the future. Simply *because I am too old* and, in principle, it is therefore good for nothing. Well, some of my peers, unfortunately, are no longer alive, as they died because of some reasons. So, *one simply does not build a house at my age*.”⁵⁵ – Jan.

⁵⁴ *In Polish*, “Tak, osiedlic sie. No, do emerytury, tak. No, ale maz jest starszy, no to maz pojdzie szybciej. Czekaj, 13... on ma 54, no to jeszcze 13 lat. Jest teraz, pojdzie do Skatu, czyli do UDI i po 5 latach musi zlozyc tam papiery, ze on sie chce tutaj osiedlic, tak. A ja niby za rok. Wiec, nie musimy kupowac mieszkania z tym, zeby tu mieszkac, nie musimy. Mozemy prosto wynajmowac. No, ale z drugiej strony, warto by bylo miec troche swojego konta.”

⁵⁵ *In Polish*, “Mialem kupowac dom, i to bylo juz bardzo podbronkowo, tak ze juz! Juz mialem kupowac dom do remontu! Ale doszedlem do takiego wniosku, ze w wieku 50 lat startowac z budowa domu czy z takim generalnym remontem, to ten dom nie, praktycznie, nie jest potrzebny na

Concluding this section, *financial commitments* (SC), in the form of investments, loans, debts and so on, are negatively correlated with one's *financial independence* (FTC) and positively with the *incentives to quickly return to work* (FTC). Therefore I suggest that the higher financial commitments unemployed migrants have, the shorter is the duration of their resort to welfare provision.

4.3 Transit out of welfare benefits receipt

As transition into welfare benefits receipt differs from one case to another, so does transition out of it. When it comes to unemployment, some of my informants were able to find a new job due to personal contacts, while others participated in special work-return programs supported by NAV.

4.3.1 Participation in work-return programs

Tomasz (31) was unemployed for about four months until the spring 2011. During that time he focused on searching for *a job in his profession* (SC). In the parallel, he completed two levels of Norwegian language training. This is how Tomasz describes that period and the eventual exit from it:

“During that time my *enthusiasm* somehow extinct. I even think that I started *feeling a little bit depressed*. Therefore it [searching for job] was going quite slowly. Later I discovered such an interesting detail that NAV can help unemployed find a professional internship. It would not be paid, but I would be able to... During the course of this internship I would be paid the unemployment benefits, and the employer would not have to pay me. Thus, it will not cost [the employer] anything.”⁵⁶ – Tomasz.

As Tomasz learned about the possibility to do a professional internship with support from NAV, he immediately contacted a firm that he had visited during his job-seeking trip in 2009.

“Well, precisely [at that time] I had [knew about] such a *'dream' firm* which I even got an email from asking about my situation two months after I had visited it. [At that time] I replied saying that I was currently looking for a job and nothing had changed. Thus, I used this firm and wrote [to it] an email [saying] that nothing again had changed, but I had learned about this possibility of internships organized in cooperation with NAV.”⁵⁷ – Tomasz telling about how he arranged himself a professional internship.

He immediately received an invitation to an interview due in two days. Based on the interview, he was accepted to the internship. A few months later, Tomasz was permanently employed at the firm:

przyszlosc. Bo poprostu jestem za stary, i to, w zasadzi, do niczego nie jest potrzebne. No bo juz kilku moich rowiesnikow, no niestety, ale nie zyje, bo zmarli z jakichs tam powodow. No i poprostu, w moim wieku, radzej juz sie domu nie buduje.”

⁵⁶ *In Polish*, “Moj zapal troche sie wypalil przez ten czas. Nawet mysle, ze troche zaczalem miec taka depresje, takze mi to szlo dosyc powoli. Pozniej odkrylem taka jedna ciekawa rzecz, ze NAV moze pomoc bezrobotnym dostac praktyke zawodowa, ktora... za ktora nie bedzie placil, tylko bedzie mog... Ja przez ten czas tej praktyki bede dostawac ten zasilek dla bezrobotnych, a pracodawca wtedy nie bedzie mi nic placil. Tak ze bedzie mial zero kosztow.”

⁵⁷ *In Polish*, “No i akurat mialem jedna taka firme wymarzona, gdzie nawet raz dostalem po jakichs 2 miesiacach od mojej wizyty, dostalem maila, od szefa, z zapytaniem, co tam u mnie slychac. Ja odpisalem, ze w ciagu szukam pracy i nic sie nie zmienilo. Tak ze wykorzystalem ta firme i napisalem takiego maila, ze mi znowu nic sie nie zmienilo, ale dowiedzialem sie o takiej mozliwosci, wlasnie, praktyk, ktore sa wspolne z NAVem.”

“Well, this is how it started with that internship. A few months later, they have learned about me, respected, and thus knew who I am. Hence, without any problem I received a permanent contract and I have worked there until now.”⁵⁸ – Tomasz.

Being unemployed and receiving unemployment benefits for a few weeks, Patrycja (45) learned from her friend that NAV organized a special job-seeking course for Polish workers in Rogaland. The course combined teaching Norwegian language and a ten-week internship in a relevant firm. She immediately contacted NAV in order to make inquiries:

“Thus, I went with her [the friend] to the labour authority, to this NAV. And the lady told me that she would check whether I could still enroll [in that course], as they had somehow began a few days earlier. The day after she called me [and told] that yes, the next day [you go] to the course. Well, *I was happy! Better this than sitting at home, right.*”⁵⁹ – Patrycja.

Remarkably, the last sentence in the extract above sheds light on Patrycja’s priorities when it comes to work. Thus, she seems to prefer participation in NAV-supported work-return programs rather than “*sitting at home*” (SC). Thus, she began attending the course from autumn 2011. At the beginning of 2012, Patrycja was asked to make a list of firms that she considered relevant for her internship. Then, a NAV employee contacted these firms and suggested this form of cooperation. According Patrycja, contacting companies was a challenging task:

“[She] was trying to get in touch with someone from the Company A. No one wanted to talk. [She] could not reach anyone who would be interested in having a job interview [with me], possibly hosting me as an intern and eventually hiring [me]. [...] *Well, alright.* The Company A [was] crossed out. Now, the Company B.”⁶⁰ – Patrycja about the obstacles in finding a company for her internship.

At the end of the winter 2012, Company B accepted Patrycja and she began her internship. Ten weeks later, she was offered to continue working in the company. However, Patrycja was disappointed to learn that it was a part-time, 50% position:

“No, but I was also a little bit shocked, surprised, shocked as *I did not expect it. As I did not ask*, neither the lady [NAV employee] asked precisely. At the end, when the contract with the course expired on Monday, I came to work as an employee. And he [the employer] gives me the contract. I look in it and it says 50%. Only 50%. For this *I was a little bit disappointed.*”⁶¹ – Patrycja.

Nevertheless, she accepted the offer:

“*Well, alright. Better 50% than nothing.*”⁶²

⁵⁸ *In Polish*, “No i tak sie, tak sie zaczelo na tej praktykie, pozniej po kilku miesiacach, poznali mi w firmie, zauwazali, wiedzieli juz, kim jestem. I bez problem dostalem umowe na stale i do dzisiaj tam pracuje.”

⁵⁹ *In Polish*, “Wiec poszlam z nia do urzedu pracy, do tego NAVu. I Pani powiedziala, ze ona to sprawdzi, czy ja jeszcze moglabym dopisac sie do tamtych, bo oni zaczeli jakos tak pare dni wczesniej. Na drugi dzien do mnie zadzwonila, tu juz tak – w nastepny dzien na ten kurs. No to ja bylam szczesliwa, no! Lepsze to, niz siedziec w domu, tak.”

⁶⁰ *In Polish*, “Probowała sie skontaktowac z kims z [name of the firm 1]. Z nikim nie bylo mozna rozmawiac. Nie dotarla do zadnej osoba, ktora bylaby zainteresowana rozmowa, ewentualnie przejeciem mnie na praktyke z pozniejszym zostawieniem... No to dobrze. [name of the firm 1] skreslono, no teraz [name of the firm 2].”

⁶¹ *In Polish*, “No tylko tez bylam troszke szokowana, zdziwiona, zszokowana, bo myslilam tak. Bo ja sie nie zapytalam, Pani tez sie dokladnie nie dopytali. Przyszlam juz na koniec, w poniedzialek tamta umowa juz skonczyla z tym kursem. Przyszlam do pracy. Na ten udzial jako pracownik. I on mi daje umowe. A ja patrze, tam pisze 50%. Tylko 50%. Z tego to bylam troche zalamana.”

⁶² *In Polish*, “No dobrze. Lepiej 50%, niz nic.”

Hence, Patrycja began working in the Company B from the spring 2012. She mentions that during the summer, when people go “again on vacations and there is again a need for *work force*,”⁶³ she worked full-time. After having worked for six months, her working hours increased to 80% or four days per week. According her, she sometimes works five days a week and overtime when the company needs it. As of March 2013, Patrycja continued working at the same company. Notably, she believes that a possible explanation why she cannot get a full-time position in the Company B might be due to the fact that the Company B hires workers from a staffing agency:

“I think that maybe... I sometimes think about [the fact] that we have people employed through staffing agencies, rented workers. They work, we say, *day in, day out*. On Fridays and on Saturdays as well. Thus... And they are paid less than I am. So, I think it’s because of that.”⁶⁴ – Patrycja.

Summarizing Patrycja’s case, her participation in a work-return program organized by NAV helped her *transit out of welfare benefits receipt* (FTC) and *find a job in her profession* (FTC).

During the last 3 months of her unemployment, Marta (29) participated in an internship organized by NAV. At an interview within the internship framework, one of the interviewers informed her about a job that could be relevant for her. After having passed the interview with the employer, Marta was employed as a secretary at a higher education establishment in Stavanger.

4.3.2 Financial independence and return to work

Financial independence (FTC) was already mentioned as a factor that influenced the duration of welfare benefits receipt among migrants. As the *duration of welfare benefits receipt* (FTC) is directly related to the exit from it, one’s *financial independence* (FTC) can moderate the *transition out of welfare benefits receipt* (FTC).

Thus, Jan (49) returned to work in the autumn 2010, after having been unemployed for one and a half year. One of his friends advised him to apply for a job in the same staffing agency where he used to work earlier:

“*I had always been interested in returning to work*. It happened that a friend [name] helped me to *catch up again*, so to speak. Precisely [at that time,] Company A needed people in my profession. So, I applied and immediately was hired. So for almost two years I worked, worked there at the Company A. That is to say, until [autumn month]... [autumn month] 2012.”⁶⁵ – Jan about returning to work after 1.5 year on unemployment.

Using the expression *to catch up again* (in Polish, *odnowa się załapać*), Jan might make a reference to the *protracted character of his unemployment* (SC). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Jan

⁶³ In Polish, “[...] znowu na urlop i znowu jest potrzebna siła robocza.”

⁶⁴ In Polish, “Mysle, że może mi... ja czasem myslie o tym, że tam mają zatrudnionych ludzi, litwinow, z firm posrednikow, wynajmujacych pracownikow. I oni pracuja, tak sie mowi, swiatek-piatek-niedziela. I w piatki, i w soboty. Tak ze... i placa im mniej, niz mi. Wiec, mysle, ze to na tym polega.”

⁶⁵ In Polish, “Caly czas sie tam interesowalem podjeciam pracy. Wyszedl taki moment, ze kolega [name], mi pomogl odnowa sie zalapac, ze tak powiem. [Name of the firm] potrzebowała/o akurat w moim zawodzie ludzi. Wiec, sie zglosilem. Odrazu zostalem przyjety. No i nastepne, prawie, 2 lata pracowalem, pracowalem tam w [name of the firm]. To ze tak powiem, do [autumn month]... do [autumn month] 2012 roku.”

does not say that he *was looking or searching* for a job, but instead he says that *he had always been interested* (SC) in returning to work. It may imply his *passive rather than an active position* (SC) in the job seeking process.

It may even be suggested that Jan *had* to return to work, as the period of his unemployment benefits receipt was about to expire (max. two years). In other words, in order to maintain himself in Norway without social welfare benefits, Jan had to quickly find a new job. Now when his current situation is similar to the earlier one, it is interesting to see how Jan looks for possible solutions. Thus, it was already mentioned that Jan reported having health problems. He has recently been to Poland where, from his own initiative, he had taken all the relevant medical tests. He admitted having *aimed at receiving an official diagnosis* (SC) which may allude to his determination *to remain on the welfare provision* (FTC).

Piotrek (42) also changed many jobs in Norway and often became unemployed. However, in contrast to Henryk (46), he never stayed unemployed for more than two months. Thus, the first time he lost his job in Norway, Piotrek registered as unemployed with NAV and was unemployed for two days. He immediately found a new job at another staffing agency through a private acquaintance. However, this job lasted for about one month. His next stay on unemployment lasted for about one week, as he shortly found a job in a small construction firm. The longest period on unemployment benefits receipt was in 2012 when Piotrek was unemployed for about two months. He refers to his *personal consumption* (SC) in Norway, as one of the factors that stimulated him in returning to work:

“Obviously, I have to pay 3 thousand kroner for housing, plus the electricity. It amounts to nearly 3200-3300 kroner [per month]. In addition, boarding costs should be counted, so...”⁶⁶ – Piotrek.

According my informants, a typical Polish single male worker might need NOK 7 000 - 8 000 per months in order to cover his living expenses in the country. This amount may, in fact, be often lower the average unemployment benefits paid in the industry. For instance, Jan (49) reported *being able to even save* (SC) some part of his unemployment benefits. However, there is an important difference between Jan and Piotrek. In contract with Jan, Piotrek has a *family to provide for* (SC) and he has also made some investments in Poland:

“Well, *supporting family* might probably not be so high expenses. But *I have made an investment* into a firm which constructed garages in Poland and which absorbed more than 100 thousand Polish zloty. [...] Apart from this, I am also *planning on constructing a new home* [in Poland].”⁶⁷ – Piotrek.

⁶⁶ In Polish, “Wiadomo, ja tu musze zaplacic za pokoj 3000 koron, plus prad. To wychodzi w prawie 3200-3300. Plus do tego jedzenie doliczyc, takze...”

⁶⁷ In Polish, “No wiadomo, utrzymanie rodziny moze nie jest takie wysokie koszty. No zainwestowal w budowe, budowe garazy w Polsce, która pochlonela ponad 100 tys. zlotych polskich. No oprócz tego, mam w planie budowe domu nowego.”

Thus, because of his *financial commitments* (SC) and *personal consumption* (SC) in Norway, Piotrek's *financial independence* (FTC) was always put under pressure. Piotrek concludes that it was mainly due to *financial commitments* (SC) why he did *not remain unemployed for very long periods of time* (SC):

“It's rather for *financial reasons*, I was... Those benefits... *the amount* of those benefits always *mobilized me* to find a job, as the living costs here are high.”⁶⁸ – Piotrek.

To conclude on the analytical outcomes of this chapter, the following series of fractured theoretical concepts (FTCs) and related to them selected codes (SCs) was chosen in order to construct the theoretical model in the next chapter. Thus, such key FTCs with its corresponding SCs are:

(1) *transition into welfare benefits receipt* (FTC):

(1.1) *formal entitlement to unemployment benefits* (“the right to unemployment benefits,” “a basis in order to have the right to unemployment benefits,” “a corresponding amount,” “a corresponding quote in order to receive the unemployment benefits” etc);

(1.2) *risks involved* (“to go for all the marbles”);

(1.3) *vulnerable periods at work* (FTC) and the following SCs: *seasonal-sensitive unemployment* (“contract finished,” “bad times,” “winter came,” “school vacated”); *consequences of the global financial crisis of 2008-2010* (“little slowdown,” “redundancies”);

(1.4) *system of privileges and punishments at staffing agencies* (FTC) and the following SCs: *long-term assignments* (“good contracts,” “big construction projects,” “permanent place of work”) vs. *short-term assignments* (“bad contracts,” “junk contracts”); *problems in earning enough money* (“not having assignments”); *troublesome workers* (“too demanding,” “problems with alcohol”) vs. *obedient workers*; *hierarchy of employees in staffing agencies* (“being in front” vs. “standing back”); *professional segregation in the construction industry*; *the predominance of staffing agencies*;

(1.5) *aspirations for an upward occupational mobility* (FTC) and the following SCs: *job according one's profession* (“a better job,” “a dream job,” etc); *professional ambitions*; *a better remunerated job*;

(2) *duration of welfare benefits receipt* (FTC):

(2.1) *moderating factors* (FTC): *financial independence* (FTC), *health* (SC), *lifestyle* (SC);

(2.2) *determination to remain on the welfare provision* (FTC) and the following SCs: *lack of agency* (SC); *aim at receiving an official diagnosis* (“disabled,” “sick leave,” “construction

⁶⁸ In Polish, “Radszej finansowo po prostu, bylem... Ten zasilek... wysokosc tego zasilku mobilizowala mnie po prostu do znalezienia pracy, no bo tu sa wysokie koszty utrzymania.”

sickness”), being interested rather than actively searching, protracted character of unemployment;

(3) *transition out of welfare benefits receipt* (FTC):

(3.1) *incentives to quickly return to work* (SC), participation in work-return programs;

(3.2) *country-specific skills* (FTC): Norwegian language skills, acquaintance with legal regulations (particularly on taxation), etc;

(3.3) *fractured employment trajectory* (FTC) with the following SCs: *short assignments* (“junk contracts”);

(4) *security* (FTC): not being at risk; not being afraid; not having to worry;

(5) *certainty* (FTC): being able to plan, knowing in advance;

(6) *comfort* (FTC): *reluctance to changes* (SC), “holy peace;”

(7) *dependency* (FTC): *reluctance to assume one’s responsibility* (problems with alcohol, “someone supposed help me,” “it somehow happened”), “NAV’s patient,” “someone supposed help me”;

(8) *financial independence* (FTC): personal consumption, financial commitments, investments (SC), being able to save, “a family to provide for.”

CHAPTER 5. THEORETICAL FINDINGS

This chapter, summarizing the outcomes of *theoretical coding*, integrates the fractured theoretical concepts (FTC) into relevant hypotheses (H) that form the basis for constructing the theoretical model of this study.

5.1 The role of security, certainty and comfort in work-welfare transitions

The analysis of the selected codes, fractured theoretical concepts and potential relationships among them yielded in the conclusion that security (insecurity), certainty (uncertainty) and comfort (discomfort) play the central role in my informants' transitions between work and social welfare benefits receipt in Norway.

5.1.1 Security

Despite the tautology, *security* (FTC) is the feeling of *being secure* (SC). It implies an *absence of worries or anxieties* (SC). Since the scope of this study is limited to economic migrants, security is mainly dealt with in relation to one's *financial independence* (FTC). As one's *financial independence* tends to change over time, *security* is therefore a *temporary* feeling.

Social welfare provision and one's *security* (FTC) are tightly connected. Thus, the very idea of having a comprehensive social welfare system is to guarantee people social security during challenging periods in life. Most people aspire to security by definition, but not all in the same way. Accordingly, security might be a far more sophisticated category for immigrants than it is for natives. By forming transnational spaces, migrants often aspire to a sort of security that transcends space. For example, most migrants tend to be part of more than one household. Therefore, this fact should be taken into account, when studying immigrants' relation to social welfare provision.

5.1.2 Certainty

Certainty is *a phenomenon that transcends time*. It is not a feeling, and this is how it differs from security. One can *feel secure* (SC) and at the same time *be uncertain* (SC) about the future. Certainty is the state of *knowing in the long run* (SC). It is therefore devoid of doubts. In the context of this study, *knowing* (SC) that the *security* (FTC) will last long provides *certainty* (FTC). Certainty, in fact, is an absolute category. One cannot be partially certain. However, different options open to an individual might be considered more or less certain. Although certainty *is* about *knowing in the long run*, it is not perpetual in itself. Certainty may never be achieved. If achieved, it does not necessarily last forever.

The pursuit of *certainty* (FTC) is due to the need to know that the *security* (FTC) will last. If an option does not provide the necessary feeling of security, it cannot guarantee certainty either. The

perception of *certainty* (FTC) may therefore play an important role in the decision making process. For example, the lack of *certainty* (FTC) seems to be the key factor that influenced Wiktor's decision to refuse the operation:

“[...] I came to the conclusion that I can still walk, but later *no one knows* whether I will [walk]. Basically, this operation on the spine involves *a very high risk*. We will see how it will go. NAV *continues to support me*.”⁶⁹ – Wiktor (61).

Notably, when speaking of the risks involved in his operation, Wiktor suddenly mentions NAV. This alludes to the role NAV might have for his *security* (FTC) and *certainty* (FTC). Thus, Wiktor seems to be uncertain whether the operation on the spine would not worsen his state. On the contrary, Wiktor feels *secure* and is *certain* because he knows that NAV continues supporting him through relevant welfare programs. At the same time, it prevents him from taking the risk involved in the operation. Thus, Wiktor refused the uncertain option of undergoing the operation and chose the more certain option of being '*NAV's patient*' (SC). Similarly, Henryk (46) and Jan (49) preferred a more certain future in Norway than a less certain in Poland. Therefore *certainty* as a theoretical category should be taken into consideration when studying immigrants' transitions between employment and welfare benefits receipt.

Furthermore, *certainty* (FTC) can be conceived as *one's ability to plan* (SC). Thus, Henryk compares his ability *to plan anything* in Norway and Poland:

“*One knows* that the economy here [in Norway] is relatively stable. Here, *one can simply plan anything*, any life. And in Poland, unfortunately, it's not possible. Even despite these prices here, as the prices are high, but with those salaries that are [in Norway], the life is much better.”⁷⁰ – Henryk.

When asked about his plans regarding his stay in Norway, Henryk answered:

“To continue working in Norway [laughing]. To continue working in Norway. And then we will see, but for the moment... For example, if I worked directly for a Norwegian firm at a production factory [name of a renowned company] or [another renowned company] and so on, then I would consider bringing eventually my family here. *Because I cannot count on retirement in Poland*.”⁷¹ – Henryk.

Remarkably, Henryk justifies his determination to continue living and working in Norway by the lack of *certainty* in his future in Poland. Notably, Henryk seems to understand *certainty* in the long run, rather than in the short run. By referring to retirement, Henryk alludes to his *aspirations* (FTC) to be *able to plan* (SC) in the long run.

⁶⁹ In Polish, “[...] doszedłem do wniosku, że jeszcze chodzę, a potem niewiadomo, czy będę. Jest bardzo duży ryzyk poprostu tej operacji przy kregoslupi. Zobaczymy, jak to będzie. NAV w dalszym ciągu mi wspiera.”

⁷⁰ In Polish, “Wiedza o tym, że tutaj gospodarka jest w miarę stabilna, tutaj można po prostu zaplanować... cokolwiek, jakiekolwiek życie. A w Polsce – niestety się nie da. Tym paczej, że tutaj przy tych cenach, bo to są wysokie ceny, ale przy tych zarobkach, jakie są, no to żyje się o wiele lepiej.”

⁷¹ In Polish, “Dalej pracować w Norwegii (laughing). Dalej pracować w Norwegii. A co dalej – no to zobaczymy, ale w momencie... na przykład, jakby bezpośrednio pracował w norweskiej firmie na zakładzie przy fabrykacji [name of a renowned company] czy [another renowned company in Rogaland] i t.d., to bym myślał też, że... o ewentualnym sciągnięciu tu rodziny. Bo na polską emeryturę mogą nie liczyć.”

Certainty is a phenomenon that transcends space. As it was already mentioned, migrants tend to be part of transnational spaces in general, and a transnational family/household in particular. Accordingly, the certainty in this context implies knowing that the security of the transnational family/household will last. Therefore, in the pursuit of certainty migrants are likely to be motivated by transnational considerations.

5.1.3 Comfort

In terms of this study, *comfort* (FTC) is conceptualized as a feeling that can be achieved if, and only if, both security and certainty are attained. When feeling comfortable, the individual stops aspiring to any changes, because changes may imply a threat to the attained feeling of comfort. Deriving from security via certainty, comfort is sensitive to any changes and disappears immediately with the certainty. However, *a lack of comfort* does not necessarily imply *discomfort*. If security is still preserved, although not certain in the long run, a change might not occur. Only when security turns into insecurity and certainty into uncertainty, the person starts feeling discomfort – and the change is likely to happen.

When Barbara (38) began working in 2011 and her family's budget started combining two incomes, the family attained a higher degree of financial security, certainty, and comfort:

“It's a *holy peace*. *One knows* that there is his salary, [and] there is my salary. The amount we have to pay to the bank for the apartment is another topic (laughing). But *we can save*,” – Barbara (38) about her family's current financial situation.

“We feel *comfort*,” – adds her husband.

“Yes,” – she agrees. – “We do not *have to worry*, [saying] *'Holy Virgin, or oh God! We cannot make ends meet!'*”⁷²

Interesting is how Barbara and her husband express their feeling of *security* (FTC). A *holy piece*⁷³ is a fixed expression in Polish which is commonly used to say that *something is over* or *something is done*. By using it, Barbara may refer to the end of their *worries* (SC). She repeats further that they *do not have to worry* (SC). *Being able to know* (SC) about their income and expenditures gives them *certainty* (FTC). Furthermore, *feeling secure* and *being certain* are *comfortable* (SC).

5.1.4 Hypothesis H1: (In)security, (un)certainty, and (dis)comfort in the long run

Thus, summarizing the main points presented in 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3, the Hypothesis H1, illustrated on the Figure 5.1, presents the relationship between (in)security, (un)certainty, and (dis)comfort as a line stretching over time.

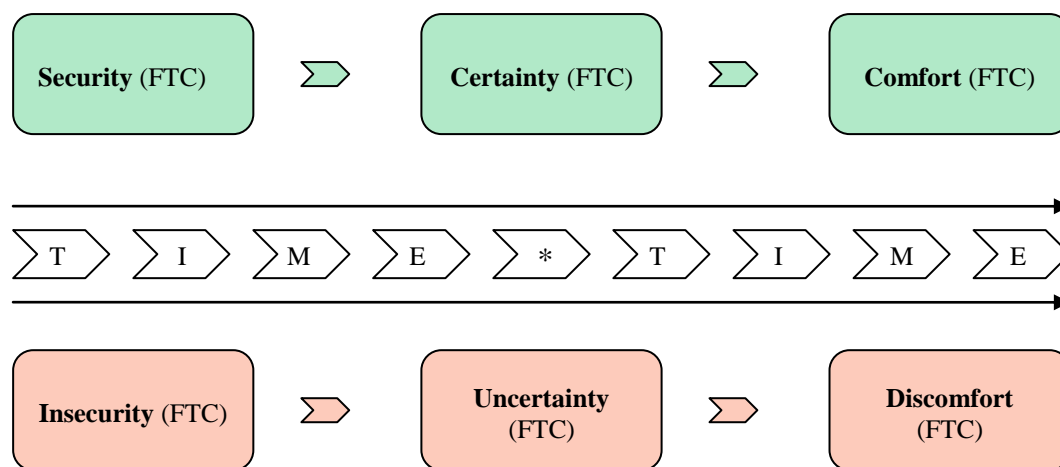
As it has been already mentioned above, comfort (FTC) as a feeling can be exclusively achieved if, and only if, both security (FTC) and certainty (FTC) are attained. However, a lack of certainty

⁷² In Polish, “Jest swiety spokoj. Wiadomo, ze jest jego pensja, jest moja pensja. To co mamy wydac do banku za kredyt za mieszkanie – to jedna sprawa (laughing). Ale zostaje, tak.” – “Jest comfort.” – “Tak. Nie trzeba sie martwic, Matko Bozka, czy tam Boze, z koncami!”

⁷³ In Polish, “swiety spokoj”

(FTC) does not necessarily imply discomfort (FTC). In fact, an individual can remain on welfare benefits provision for a very long time if he/she feels secure, despite being uncertain. Similarly, one can have strong attachment to work if it provides a necessarily feeling of security, though lacking certainty in the long run. Under such conditions, a transition from welfare benefits receipt to work, or from work to welfare benefits receipt may not occur. Only if security turns into insecurity and certainty into uncertainty, the feeling of discomfort is likely to cause a corresponding work-welfare transition.

Figure 5.1 Hypothesis H1: (In)security, (un)certainty, and (dis)comfort in the long run



5.2 Moderating factors in the dynamic model of work-welfare transitions

As it has been already mentioned, a number of selected codes were conceptualized in this study as *moderating factors* in work-welfare transitions. Among the most common moderating factors that influenced individual decisions to transit into, remain on and exit from welfare benefits receipt among my informants were financial independence, country-specific skills (e.g. language skills, knowledge of legislation, cultural awareness), lifestyle (e.g. contacts and acquaintances, alcohol abuse), and health.

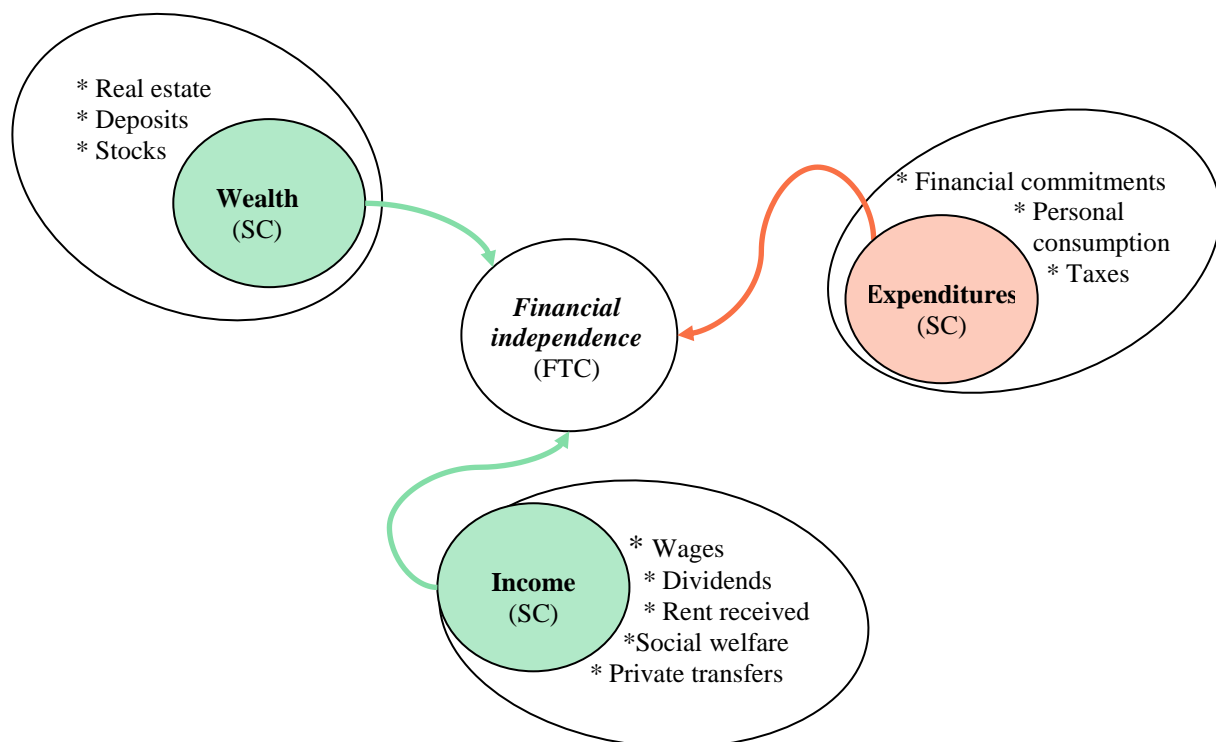
5.2.1 Hypothesis H2: Financial independence: wealth, income, and expenditures

As this study is mainly concerned with economic migrants, one's *financial independence* (FTC) appears to be the key moderating factor. It comprises *wealth* (SC), *income* (SC), and *expenditures* (SC). Wealth refers to all types of assets that can either bring a regular income (deposits, stocks, leased accommodation, etc) or can be sold (e.g. real estate). Income designates all possible revenues in the form of wages, salaries, dividends, rent received, private social transfers, and social welfare benefits. Expenditures include personal consumption (rent paid, bills, board, transportation, fuel,

insurance costs, etc), financial commitments (loans, debts, financial obligations to others), and taxes.

The Hypothesis H2 on the Figure 5.2 suggests that one's *income* (SC) and *wealth* (SC) are positively correlated with one's *financial independence* (FTC), whereas one's *expenditures* (SC) – negatively. For example, as it was discussed in the previous chapter, being able to profit from *tax reductions* (SC) strengthens the *financial independence* (FTC). A commitment to pay a *mortgage* (SC), on the contrary, puts pressure on the *financial independence* (FTC).

Figure 5.2 Hypothesis H2: Financial independence: wealth, income, and expenditures



Financial independence (FTC) seems to particularly influence or moderate one's feeling of *security* (FTC). The more financially independent one is, the more secure it feels, and vice versa. As it includes numerous variables, *financial independence* (FTC) is a complex concept that tends to constantly change over time. As a result, *security* (FTC) is a dynamic category as well. The hypothesis H3 in the following section demonstrates how *financial independence* (FTC) influences *security* (FTC).

5.2.2 Hypothesis H3: Work stability, financial independence, and work-related security

Throughout the interview, Marcin (56) often contrasted his situation at work against the situation of some other employees. For example, he reported being places on *good assignments* (SC), that is to say *big projects* (SC), whereas other workers often had to work on *short assignments* (SC):

“We have a *big project* [now]. Also *I am happy that I have this job*, that I do not have to go to find a cafeteria, that I have a locker where I have all my work tools, [and] that I don’t have to carry it all with me. Everything is located on the construction site, on the spot. *A construction usually lasts for half a year or [more] in the same place*. But as I said earlier, there are people who work for two weeks here, then one week there, and then go for one week to NAV, or have no work at all. That is to say, *they do not have stability*. So, those who work on *big projects* perceive it in a slightly different way. Of course, they complain, as everyone else complains, for they would like to have more. But not necessarily.”⁷⁴ – Marcin.

By being placed on *big projects* (SC) which usually last relatively long (at least, half a year) Marcin attains a feeling of greater *stability* (FTC). *Stability* for Marcin, I argue, implies no unexpected changes at work during some time. Thus, he does not need to worry that after having worked “for two weeks here, then one week there,” he will have to “go for one week to NAV.” This kind of *stability* (FTC) in work may therefore enhance his *work-related security* (FTC). When asked how he feels at work, Marcin explained:

“*Secure. Because I know that... that I have... that I wake up in the morning and I know that I will have work [today]. That next week, when I come back after holidays, I will have work. But some do not know whether they will have work the next week. And such is the difference. Because... what I have said earlier, one can engage oneself [struggle], one can quarrel [bargain], one can try to do something, but then a moment comes when one knows that the line is so thin that it has to be stopped. And one cannot go further. At least, I cannot. But there are some who go further and later do not have the same standard [conditions] and... and such security as I have. Because I know that when I come after holidays I will go to [city district] because I have [my] work there. Because I left there my work tools and I have everything there, right?*”⁷⁵ – Marcin.

The extract above confirms that Marcin’s feeling of *security* (FTC) stems off his work. Thus, having a stable work (*stability*) provides him with the necessary feeling of *work-related security*. At the same time, he mentions again that there is a thin line in any sorts of negotiations with his employer that he cannot cross. *Crossing the line* would mean “*loosing the conditions*” (SC) and *the security* (FTC) he has.

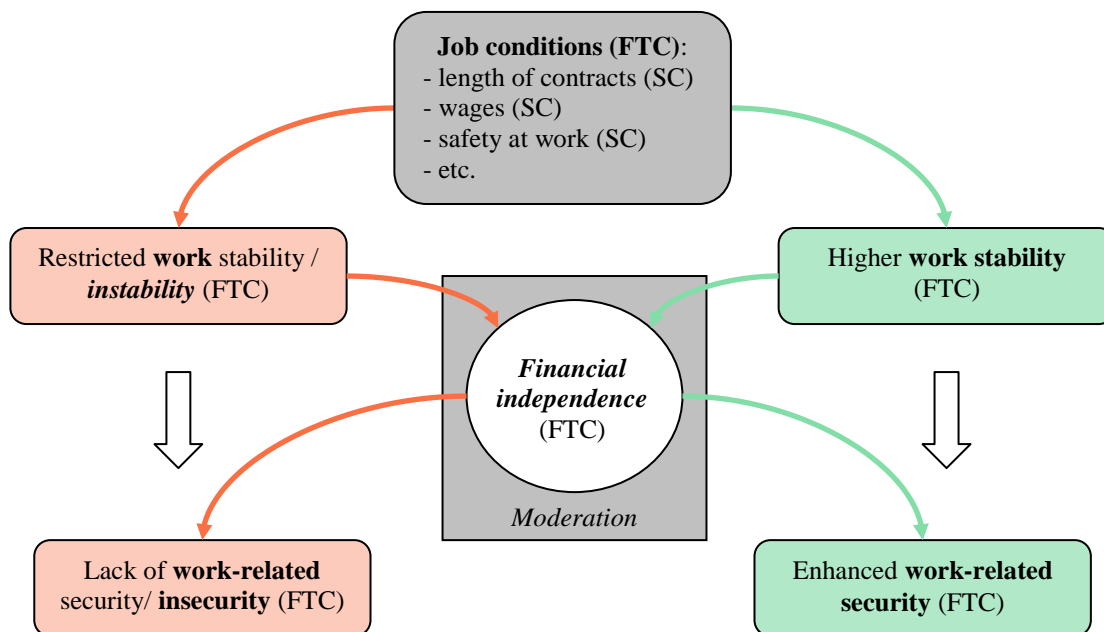
Graphically presented on the Figure 5.3, the Hypothesis H3 explains how varying *job conditions* (FTC) affect subjectively perceived *work-related security/insecurity* (FTC). As the length of contracts and wages has direct implications for one’s income, the *financial independence* (FTC) moderates the relationships between *work stability/instability* (FTC) and *work-related security/insecurity* (FTC). Thus, when one’s *job conditions* do not ensure the sense of *work stability*, it may result in failures in receiving stable income. Putting pressure on the *financial independence* (FTC), it causes a lack of *work-related security* or even lead to *insecurity*. On the

⁷⁴ In Polish, “Mamy duży projekt. Też, człowiek tak trochę ciesze, że ma to prace, a nie idzie na stolowke, na szatnie, ma kontener, gdzie ma narzedzia. Nie musisz to nosic wszystkiego. Wszystko jest jak na budowie, na miejsce. Conajmniej budowa trwa pol roku albo w jednym miejscu. A sa ludzi, ktorzy wczesniej mowilem, to pracuje dwa tygodni tu, pozniej tydzien tam, pozniej tydzien idzie do NAVu albo w ogole nie ma pracy. I tak jest w takim jakby niestalym... Wiec, ci, ktorzy pracuja na takich duzych projektach, to troszeczek inaczej to postrzegaja. Pewnie, narzekaja, jak wszyscy narzekaja – chcieliby miec wiecej. Ale to... to nie tak do konca.”

⁷⁵ In Polish, “Bezpiecznie. Bo ja wiem, ze... ze mam... ze ja wstaje rano i znaje, ze bede miał prace. Ze w przyszłym tygodniu, w przyszłym tygodniu, po swietach – bede miał prace. A niektorzy nie wiedza, czy w przyszłym tygodniu beda mieli prace. I to jest taka roznica. Dlatego... to co mowilem wczesniej, do pewnego momentu mozna sie angazowac, mozna sie klocic, mozna wszystko zrobic, ale dochodzimy do pewnego momentu, gdzie wiadomo ze jest tak cienka granica i to juz jest stop, nie? Dalej, dalej sie nie przekrocze. Przynajmniej ja nie przekrocze. A sa tacy, ktorzy przekrocza, ale pozniej juz nie maja takiego, takiego standartu i... i takiego bezpieczenstwa na prace, jak ja mam. Ze ja wiem, ze ja przyjade po swietach i ja pojade na [city district], bo ja tam mam prace. Bo ja tam zostawilem narzedzie, ja tam mam wszystko, nie?”

contrary, when the *job conditions* provide the sense of *work stability*, an enhanced feeling of *work-related security* can be achieved.

Figure 5.3 Hypothesis H3: Job conditions, work stability and work-related security

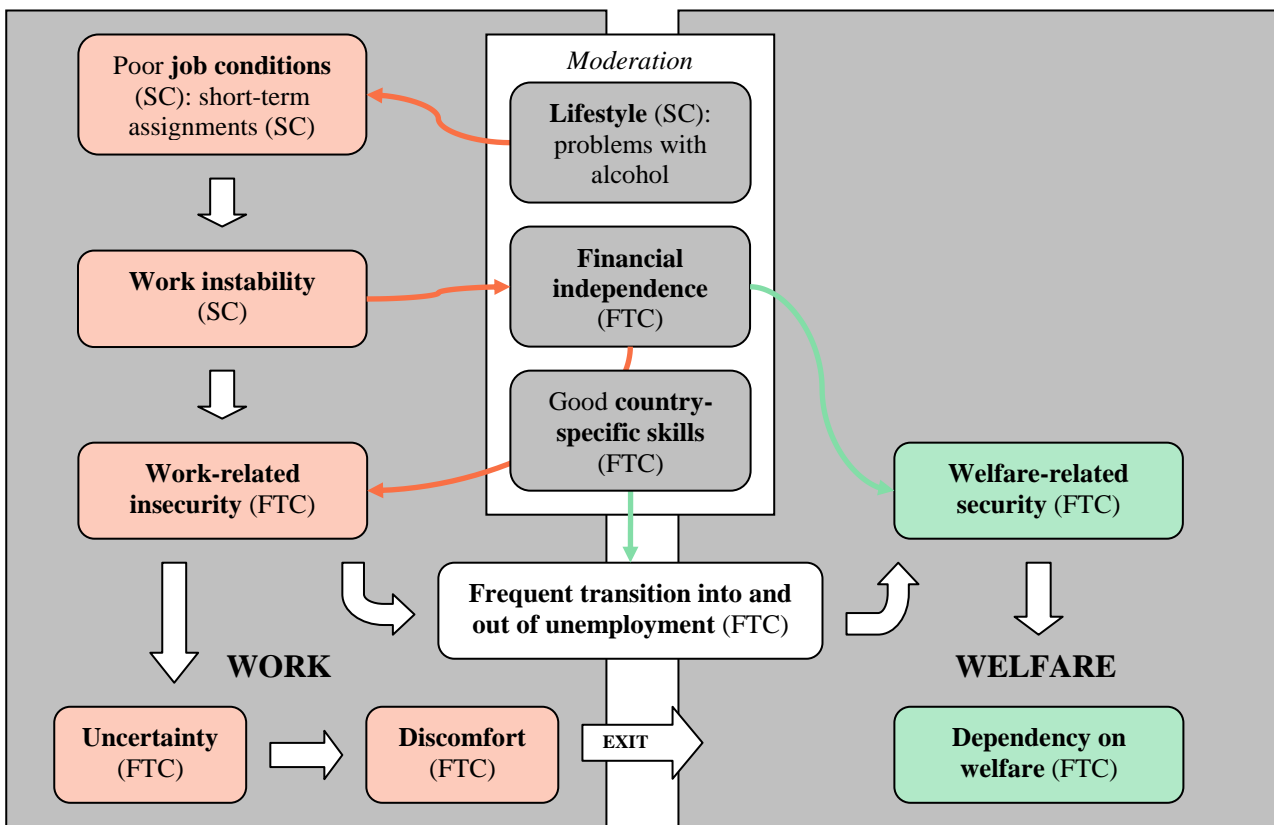


5.2.3 Hypothesis H4: Transition from work into welfare benefits receipt

Having changed more than six jobs and often becoming unemployed during the last five years, Henryk (46) seems to have failed in achieving the *work-related security* (FTC) in Norway. As his last resort to unemployment has proved to be of a protracted character (>6 months), Henryk may be assumed to have found a *welfare-related security* in the Norwegian welfare system.

Thus, the hypothesis H4 (on the Figure 5.4 above) suggests that, having failed in achieving *work-related security* (FTC) in the long run, an individual may find it *welfare* (FTC) and decide to exit from work and remain *dependent on the welfare* (FTC). As it can be seen from Henryk's experience, *work instability* (SC) results in *work-related insecurity* (FTC) because of reduced *financial independence* (FTC). Consequently, frequent *transitions into and out of unemployment* occur. However, one's good *country-specific skills* (language skills) may in fact promote frequent return to work preventing the person from becoming dependent on the welfare. Thus, during such a period, a person bounces between work and welfare. As the time passes and the situation repeats, the *work-related insecurity* (FTC) causes *uncertainty* (FTC) and *discomfort* (FTC). At the same time, frequent *transitions into welfare benefits receipt* (FTC) may compensate for the lack of *work-related security* (FTC).

Figure 5.4 Hypothesis H4: Transition from work into welfare benefits receipt



5.3 Dependency and work-welfare (im)mobility

Dependency is one of the central theoretical concepts that were identified by the GT method. More specifically, I distinguish two types of dependency relevant to this study: a *dependency on work* (FTC) and a *dependency on welfare* (FTC). Dependency here is not treated as an absolute phenomenon and, therefore, it may have different degrees. The higher the degree of dependency, the higher is one's reluctance to changes. For instance, when highly dependent on work, one is reluctant to change the job or become voluntary unemployed. Similarly, when highly dependent on welfare, one becomes reluctant to returning to work. I call the reluctance to change jobs, voluntary become unemployed, or return to work as *the work-welfare immobility* (FTC). As dependence is not necessarily comfortable, the *reluctance to changes* (FTC) here should not be confused with the reluctance to changes due to the feeling of *comfort* (FTC), discussed above.

5.3.1 Hypothesis H5: Financial commitments, dependency on work, and feeling settled

Buying own property in Norway is a costly investment, despite relatively low interest rates (4-6% p.a.). It is especially relevant for the Greater Stavanger Area with its escalated prices for real estate. Often regarded as the petroleum capital of Europe, Stavanger hosts a number of petroleum-related companies with highly remunerated employees. Therefore, real estate prices have escalated notoriously in the past decades. Accordingly, the decision to buy property in Norway may indicate

immigrants' determination to *settle* (SC) in the country for good. However, it also requires a strong commitment of the buyer to remain employed in order to be able to repay the loan.

The feelings of being *settled* (SC) versus *unsettled* (SC) among immigrants may have serious implications for their perception of *certainty* (FTC). The former seem to be tightly connected, but not exclusively limited, to acquisition of own property in the host country.

At the time of the interview, Joanna (40) with her family lived in a rented apartment. However, she said that they were planning on buying their own housing in Norway. The family reported experiencing a lack of *stability* (FTC) when living in a rented apartment. The following extract from the interview presents Joanna and her husband's reflections on accommodation and *certainty* (FTC):

- “We want [to have] our own housing. It is our first priority, I guess, to have our own. [When renting], *one is always afraid* that at any moment [the landlord] will come and ask you to move out. It's not easy to find accommodation here,” – Joanna (40).
- “*One lacks* some...” – her husband continues.
- “... *stability*...” – finds a word Joanna.
- “*Stability*, that...” – her husband agrees.
- “...[or] such *certainty*,” – elaborates further Joanna.
- “... *certainty*. *The certainty* that I live here and [*I know that*] nobody can do anything to me. And a year or a half year later one won't come and tell me to move out. This is the worst [that can happen].”⁷⁶ – concludes Joanna's husband.

Thus, Joanna makes a very important distinction between *stability* (FTC) and *certainty* (FTC). From the passage above one can infer that *stability* implies *an absence of changes*, while *certainty* may refer to *knowing that there will be no change*. Therefore, I conclude that both Joanna and her husband aspire to greater *certainty* by planning on buying their own accommodation.

In the autumn 2012, Barbara (38) and her husband secured a loan from bank to buy own apartment, and since then they have been paying the mortgage. By acquiring own property, Barbara feels that the family has attained a certain sense of *security* (FTC):

- “It feels somehow *secure*. Thus, it is somehow *good*.”⁷⁷ – Barbara (38)

Furthermore, when asked whether they were planning on settling in Norway, she said:

- “I mean yes. Well, *settling*, *we have already settled*. Yes. But what will happen, *one does not know*. *We do not know*.”⁷⁸ – Barbara.

According to Barbara's husband, after having bought the apartment they have attained *psychological comfort*⁷⁹ (SC). Remarkably, both Barbara and her husband seem to aspire to more

⁷⁶ In Polish, “Mieszkanie chcemy własnie. To jest taki pierwszy, chyba, priorytet nasz. Zeby miec swojego. Czlowiek zawsze boi sie tego, ze za chwile przyjdzie i da wypowiedzenie, wyprowadzic. Znalezc mieszkanie, to tez nie jest tu latwo.” – “Czlowiek nie ma jakiej takiej...” – “... stabilnosci...” – “Stabilnosci, ze...” – “...takiej pewnosci.” – “... pewnosci. Pewnosc, ze tu mieszkasz i nic mi nie zrobicie. Tylko jest to, ze za rok, czy za pol roku ci powie, ze uciekajcie. To jest najgorsze to.”

⁷⁷ In Polish, “Jest nam jakos tam bezpiecznie, jakos tam dobrze, tak.”

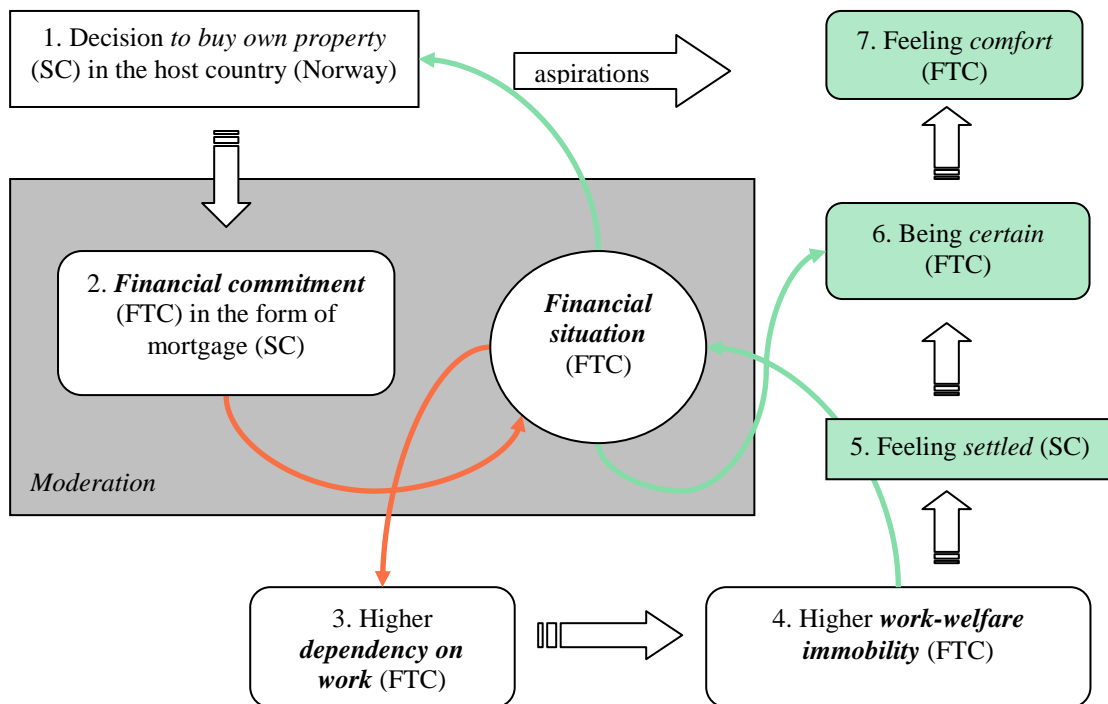
⁷⁸ In Polish, “To znaczy tak. No, osiedlic sie, to sie juz osiedlilismy, tak. A co bedzie dalej, nie wiadomo. Nie wiemy.”

⁷⁹ In Polish, “Komfort psychiczny.”

certainty (FTC) and, consequently, more *comfort* (FTC). Thus, they are planning on selling their apartment and buying a detached house.

The hypothesis H5, depicted on the Figure 5.5, suggests that the decision to *buy own property* (SC) in Norway implies higher *financial commitment* (FTC) in the form of the *obligation to pay the mortgage* (SC) which, in its turn, might result in higher *dependency on work* (FTC). The latter contributes to a lower propensity to change jobs or become voluntary unemployed, or, in general, higher *work-welfare immobility* (FTC). Thus, the *feeling of being settled* (SC) might be achieved. When combined with a secure *financial situation* (FTC), it leads to *certainty* (FTC) and the eventual feeling of *comfort* (FTC). Notwithstanding, the state of *certainty* and *comfort* may not necessarily be achieved, if the *financial situation* (FTC) is under stress.

Figure 5.5 Hypothesis H5: 1-7 Financial commitments (FTC), dependency on work (FTC) and feeling settled (FTC).



And as an illustration for this hypothesis, Marta’s current attitudes towards changing job can be exemplary. Despite she still does not feel *settled* (SC) in Norway, she is grateful for her job as a secretary at a higher education institution:

“And because *I have income* and because *I was able to get a loan to buy the apartment*. This is what I am grateful for. Though I will surely [have to] work for thirty years (laughing).”⁸⁰

Although she *aspires to a more fulfilling job* (SC), Marta admits:

⁸⁰ In Polish, “I ze mam dochod i moglam otrzymac kredyt na zakup mieszkania. Za to jestem bardzo wdzieczna. Napewne 30 lat bede pracowac.”

“But, *I am not actively... I am not actively searching for a job.* I am not registered with NAV. Because when I decide to change my job I would like to find a perfect job.”⁸¹

She concludes:

“*I do not think that I would change my job this year.*”⁸²

Thus, as changing jobs while paying mortgage can be a risky enterprise, immigrants’ professional *aspirations for an upward occupational mobility* (FTC) might be substantially *moderated* (FTC) by this kind of risks.

Although both Barbara and Marta seem to be *reluctant to changes* (FTC), they might do so for different reasons. Thus, Barbara reported having attained *certainty* (FTC) and *comfort* (FTC), therefore her reluctance to changes might be due to the feeling of *comfort*. Notably, she is permanently employed and works full time. Marta, on the contrary, has mainly worked on temporary contracts. Accordingly, she reported having to think in advance about her future actions when each contract was about to expire. Therefore, I argue, Marta is *not certain* (FTC) and *does not feel comfortable* (FTC). Consequently, her *reluctance to change* (FTC) might be due to her *dependency on work* (FTC).

5.3.2 Hypothesis H6: Financial commitments, welfare-related security, and dependency on welfare

Henryk (46) would wish to bring his family to Norway, but a set of factors moderate his aspirations. First and foremost, he is unemployed and receives financial support from NAV. As his *financial independence* (FTC) is at risk, Henryk he is not entitled to reunification with his family in Norway. As a result, he might often need to visit his family in Poland. Secondly, Henryk’s entitlement to the tax class 2 personal allowance and the tax reductions due to the commuter status in Norway would vanish if he had his family reunited with him in Norway. Thus, on the one hand, the *extra tax reductions* (SC) positively contribute to Henryk’s *financial independence* (FTC). Hence, he is both able to frequently visit his family in Poland and support them financially. On the other hand, the available tax reductions add to Henryk’s *reluctance to quickly return to work* (FTC). It may be conceptualized as a *work-welfare immobility* (FTC) and *dependency on welfare* (FTC).

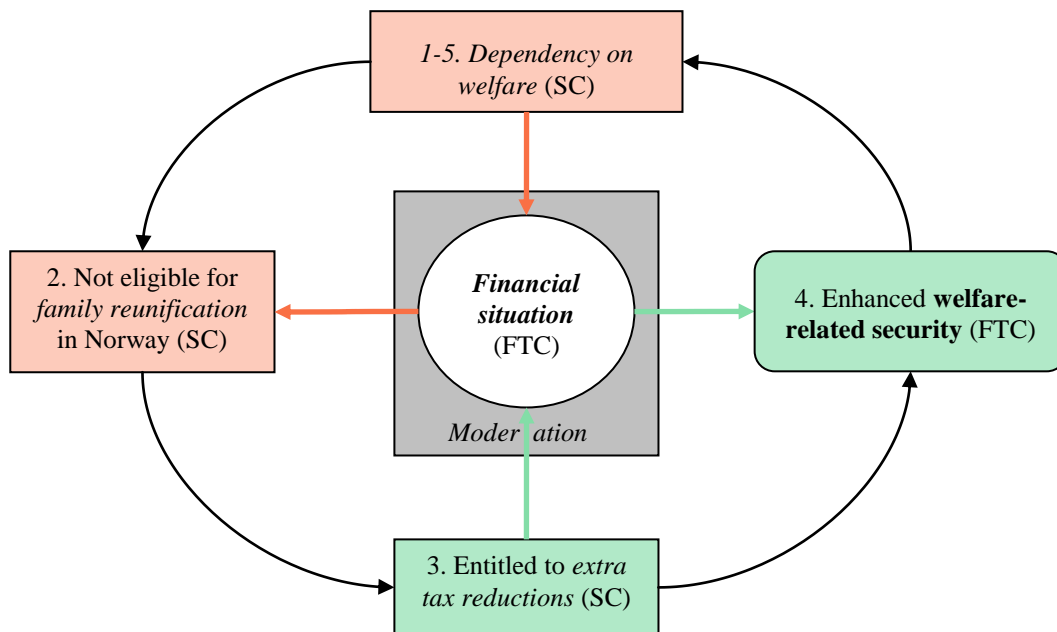
Depicted on the Figure 5.5, the hypothesis H6 states that *welfare dependency* in some cases can be self-perpetuating. Thus, an unemployed immigrant with a family in the home country might have a greater *financial independence* (FTC) than if the family was with him/her in the host country (Norway) due to the differences in living costs in Norway and abroad. Being able to profit from corresponding tax reductions, the unemployed improves his/her *financial independence* (FTC) and

⁸¹ *In Polish*, “Ale, to nie jestem aktywnie... nie szukam aktywnie prace, nie jestem na NAVie zarejestrowana... bo gdy by zmienilam prace, to chcialabym znalezc perfekcyjna prace.”

⁸² *In Polish*, “Ja nie sadze, zeby zmienilam w tym roku prace.”

therefore has fewer *incentives to quickly return to work* (FTC). It culminates in the recreation of the *dependency on welfare* (FTC).

Figure 5.5 Hypothesis H6: 1-5 Financial commitments (FTC), welfare-related security (FTC), and dependency on welfare (FTC).



The example of Jan (49) also confirms that reduced *financial commitments* (FTC) contribute to one’s *dependency on welfare* (FTC). Thus, Jan admits having come to work to Norway for economic reasons. But when his family situation changed, so did his motivation to live in Norway:

“[I came] mainly in order to earn money. But it happened that while earning the money my life also changed, because my wife, whom I had been with, left me. Consequently, I changed my mind that I would remain, so to speak, stay in Norway as long as it is possible.”⁸³ – Jan.

When Jan began working in Norway, he *was committed* to financially supporting his son. But when the son became self-sufficient, the need for support exhausted:

“I had to maintain [my] son. *I sent money* [to him]. It can be said that I had supported him until he reached the age of majority, and in principle, even longer, until he was 24... He now has a girlfriend. He works, has a job. Thus, as for now he is doing quite better than I am. So, *I withdrew from, so to speak, sponsoring* [my] son.”⁸⁴ – Jan.

Thus, at the time of the interview Jan reported having *no financial obligations or commitments* (FTC) to support anyone economically:

⁸³ In Polish, “Głownie, żeby zarobic pieniedzy. No wyszlo tak, ze... to juz przy tym zarabianiu pieniedzy ze po prostu zycie tez sie zmienilo, no bo... zona, z ktora bylem do tej pory, odeszla. Wiec, po prostu juz zmienilem nastawienie, ze po prostu juz... juz zostane, zostane po prostu w Norwegii ile sie da, jezeli tak powiem.”

⁸⁴ In Polish, “Mialem na utrzymaniu syna. Wysylalem pieniedzy. Tam, moze tak powiem, sponsorowalem go do osiegniecia pelnoletnosc, i, w zasadzi, takiej wieksza pelnoletnosc, bo do 24 lat... On teraz ma kobiete, juz tam pracuje, ma prace, wiec w tym momencie juz sie jemu dosyc lepiej powodzi, niz mi. Wiec, odstapilem od sponsorowania, ze tak powiem, syna.”

“I do not feel obliged to work here. *I have no loans, I have no debts.* I don’t have a wife so that I would have to participate in buying [things]. I am in Norway basically for my choice. [...] *I will not face harm here in the way I did in Poland when I was left with no means to subsistence.*”⁸⁵ – Jan.

Jan explains that his stay in Norway is no longer due to the economic need, as it used to be at the beginning. Facing no major economic challenges in terms of debts or *financial commitments* (SC), Jan *does not feel obliged to work* (SC) in Norway. It implies that if he had to either provide for someone or to repay his debts, Jan would have additional *incentives to transit out of the welfare benefits receipt* (FTC) and would have possibly quickly returned to work.

To conclude, different *financial commitments* (FTC) that can directly influence migrants’ *financial independence* (FTC) tend to have considerable implications for immigrants’ *dependency on work and welfare* (FTC). Thus, financial commitments that put more pressure on the financial independence may result in one’s stronger dependency on work. For a person in work it implies higher *work-welfare immobility* (FTC), whereas for a person living off welfare – *incentives to transit out of the welfare benefits receipt* (FTC). Accordingly, financial commitments that relieve pressure from one’s financial independence may lead to a lesser dependency on work. For a person in work it may suggest higher *propensity to changing jobs or becoming voluntary unemployed* (FTC), whereas for a person living off welfare – diminished *incentives to transit out of the welfare benefits receipt* (FTC).

5.4 The dynamic model of work-welfare transitions

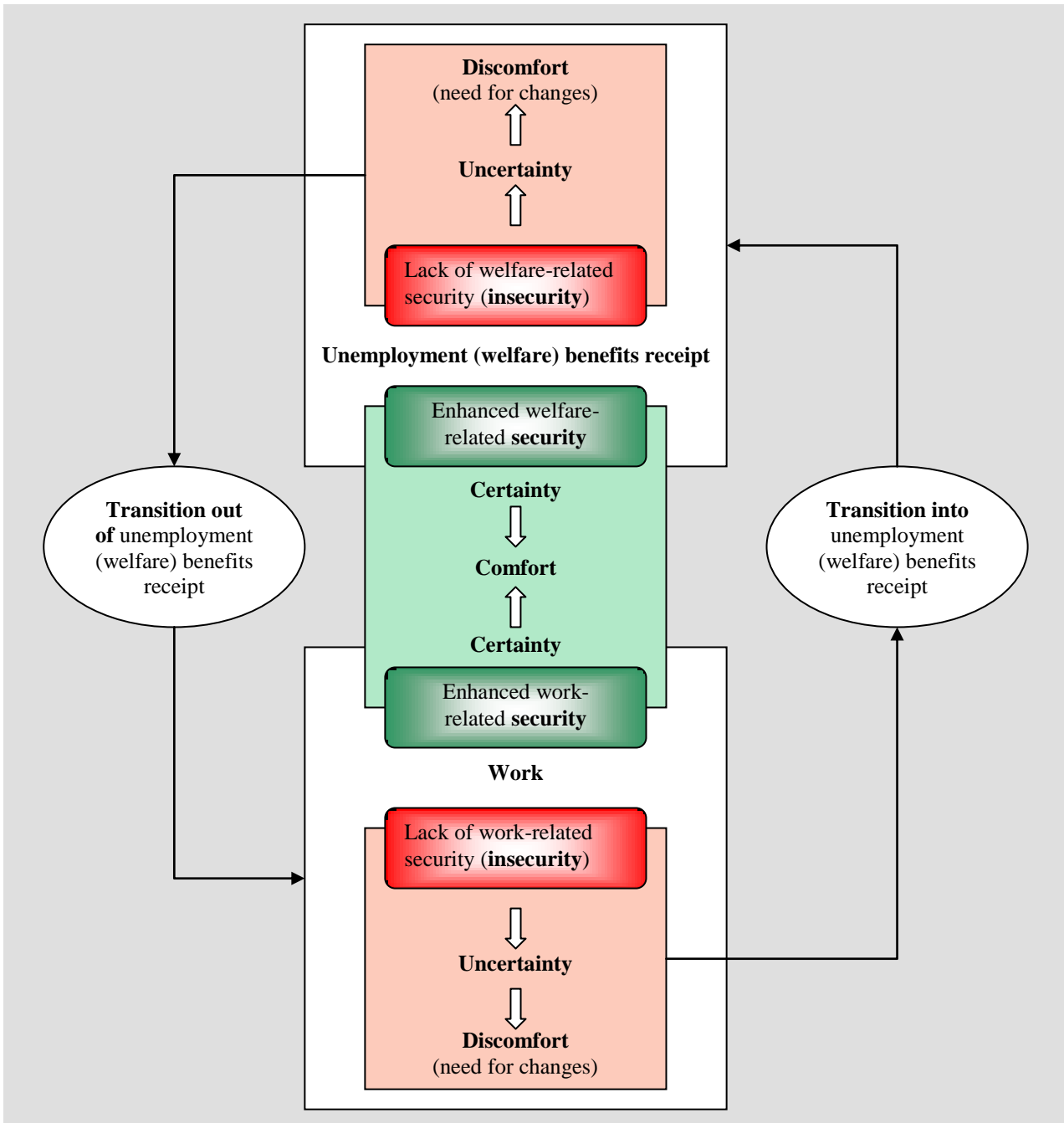
The **dynamic model of work-welfare transitions** on the Figure 5.7 is the main theoretical outcome of this study. It is built upon a series of hypotheses H1-H6 that explain the relationships between such fractured theoretical concepts as work- and welfare-related security/insecurity, certainty/uncertainty, comfort/discomfort, transition into and out of welfare benefits receipt, financial independence and other moderating factors, dependency on work/welfare, work-welfare (im)mobility, reluctance to changes, propensity to change jobs or become voluntary unemployed, and incentives to transit out of the welfare benefits receipt among others.

The dynamic model of work-welfare transitions explains in general terms how *transitions into and out of* welfare benefits receipt occur. As all people in general and immigrants in particular are believed to aspire to security, certainty, and comfort throughout the lifetime, their subjective perceptions of such categories influence their behaviour on the labour market. However, this model is not to explain casual transitions into or out of unemployment benefits receipt at a given point of

⁸⁵ *In Polish*, “Nie jestem zmuszony tutaj pracować. Nie mam żadnych kredytów, nie mam żadnych długów. Żony nie mam, żeby tam w jakiś sposób tam uczestniczyć w jakiś tam zakupach. Prosto jestem w Norwegii z wyboru. Całkowicie z wyboru. [...] Prosto krzywdą mi się nie stanie w ten sposób, jak w Polsce, że zostałem zupełnie bez środków do życia.”

time, for it operates with such time-dependent categories as security, certainty, and comfort. Therefore, the dynamic model of work-welfare transitions explains one's behavior on the labour market from a larger time perspective.

Figure 5.7 The dynamic model of work-welfare transitions



Thus, the transition into welfare benefits receipt (e.g. unemployment) may occur when an individual does not succeed in achieving the necessary security at work. When living off welfare provision, he/she might find security stemming from welfare. If this type of security lasts enough long, the state of certainty and comfort can be attained. Accordingly, the individual becomes reluctant to any changes that would affect his/her state of certainty and comfort. However, if the individual feels

insecure when living off the welfare provision, the state of uncertainty and discomfort force him/her to exit the welfare benefits receipt and return to work. The subjective perceptions of security, and therefore certainty and comfort, are influenced by the so-called moderating factors that tend to constantly change over time. Among the most important moderating factors are financial independence, health, and lifestyle. As the perceptions of security, certainty and comfort are rather dynamic, the model explains work-welfare transitions as dynamic processes. For instance, under some circumstances, an individual can continuously transit into and out of welfare benefits receipt and never achieve certainty and comfort.

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation, unlike most studies in the field, addresses the issue of welfare and migration from a micro perspective. Instead of looking into aggregate data from extensive databases and applying to it preconceived categories, this qualitative research analyzes ten narrative interviews with ten Polish migrant workers living in Norway through the lenses of the grounded theory method.

Aiming at filling the void of knowledge on the micro foundations of immigrants' interactions with the host country's welfare, this study offers a model of work-welfare transitions built upon six reverse formulated hypotheses. I call this model the dynamic model of work-welfare transitions. It explains how transitions into and out of welfare benefits receipt occur in the long run.

Focusing on social welfare benefits receipt, in general, and on unemployment benefits receipt, in particular, this study generated a series of unique theoretical concepts that were integrated into the dynamic model of work-welfare transitions. Among the key theoretical concepts that emerged in the process of data analysis, security, certainty and comfort appeared to be the main driving forces that shape migrants' behaviour in relations to the Norwegian welfare system.

Security is conceptualized in this study as a feeling of being secure. Since it implies no worries or anxieties, people are believed to aspire to security by definition. As this research is focused on labour migrants, security is mainly dealt with in relation to financial independence. The latter is one of the factors that moderate one's perceptions of security, certainty and comfort. The higher the degree of one's financial independence, the stronger is the feeling of security, and vice versa. As financial independence appears to be directly related to work and welfare, I distinguish between two types of security that are mutually exclusive, namely the work-related security and the welfare-related security. The dynamic model of work-welfare transitions suggests that the failure of achieving the work-related security leads to a transition into welfare benefits receipt where the welfare-related security may be attained. Similarly, the failure of achieving welfare-related security may result in a transition out of welfare benefits receipt and, consequently, return to work. Since one's financial independence tends to constantly change over time, security is a dynamic category as well.

Certainty is conceptualized in this study as a state of knowing that may develop if security lasts over time. On the contrary to security, certainty is an absolute category for one cannot be partially certain or partially uncertain. However, different options available to immigrants, such as living off welfare vs. living off work, may imply varied degrees of certainty. Certainty is a concept that transcends time. Since people tend to aspire to knowing in the long run, certainty might be a goal that stretches over lifespan. Hence, some of my informants mentioned that they aim at earning the

right to retirement in Norway. Furthermore, certainty is a phenomenon that transcends space. It is particularly relevant for immigrants who often are part of transnational spaces, including the transnational family. Therefore when immigrants' financial independence as the main moderating factor is to be studied in detail, transnational considerations should be taken into account. Certainty is supreme to security, as it provides knowledge in the long run. Knowing in the long run is comfortable.

Comfort is conceived in the dynamic model of work-welfare transitions as a state where any aspirations to further changes are exhausted. As comfort derives from security via certainty, it can be achieved either in work or on welfare. Consequently, comfort designates the state of the maximal work-welfare immobility, a point where transitions into or out of welfare are unfeasible. As security, certainty and comfort are time-dependent categories, the dynamic model of work-welfare transitions does not aim at explaining single time-specific transitions from work into welfare, or vice versa, but is rather meant to explain migrant's interactions with the host country's welfare in the long run.

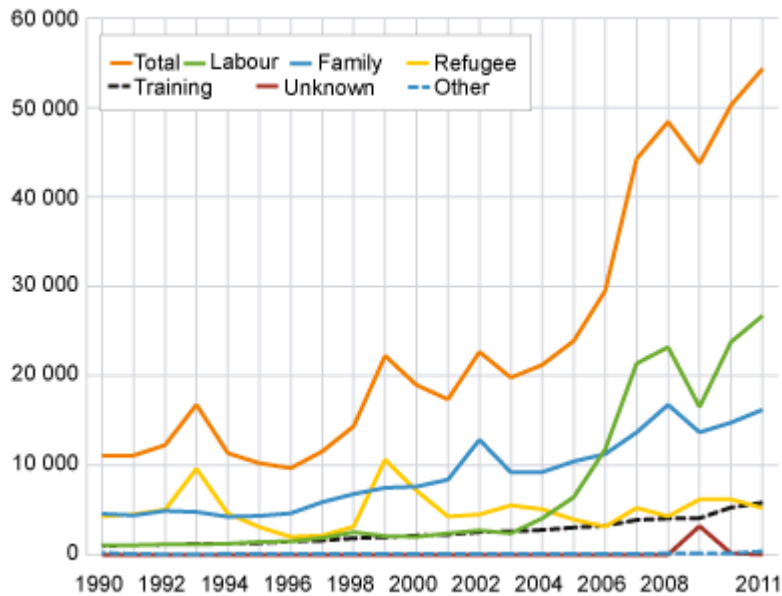
With regards to possible directions of future research in this field, further studies of moderating factors can substantially contribute to the scarce body of qualitative research on welfare-migration nexus. For instance, immigrants' health might have particular implications for the host country's health care and, consequently, welfare system. Thus, occupational segregation of some immigrant groups in particular niches of the labour market may have long-term consequences. For instance, the recent increase in the number of sick leaves in the construction industry in Norway may be attributed to the fact that more and more immigrants enter this niche. New construction companies are being frequently established among immigrants where work safety conditions may not always be the priority. As health is directly connected to work conditions, more studies on the latter can yield in relevant policy recommendations in the field of immigrants' health and welfare. Furthermore, the findings of this research can be used for improving design of future quantitative studies on welfare-migration nexus. Thus, the unemployment incidence and welfare benefits receipt can be studied by differentiating between immigrants who live alone in the host country and those who have immigrated with the family. Such related factors as the number of dependent children, the employment status of the spouse, mortgage in the bank or other financial commitments can be included in the quantitative models.

Although this qualitative research particularly focused on a group of Polish labour migrants living in the Greater Stavanger Area (Norway), I argue that its theoretical findings can be used to design further, both qualitative and quantitative studies addressing immigrants' interactions with the host country's welfare in other contexts.

APPENDICES

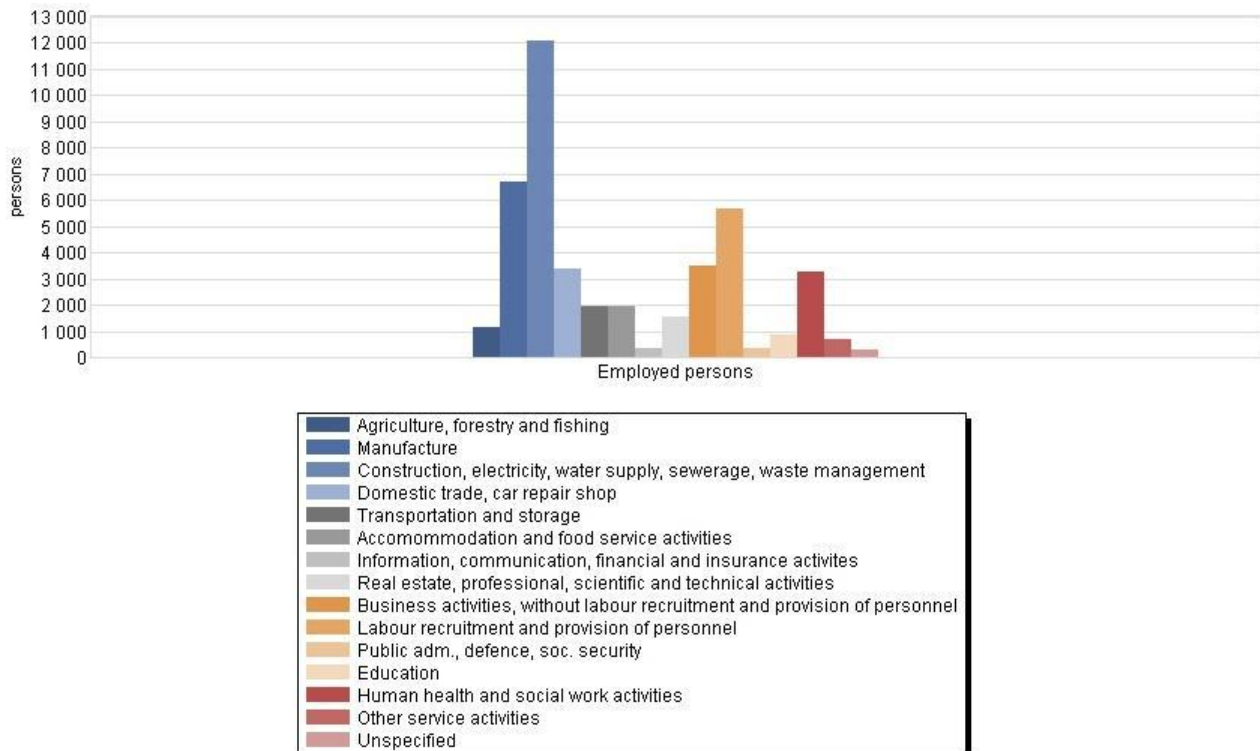
Appendix A

Figure 2.1 Immigrations to Norway by reason for immigration, 1990-2011.



Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

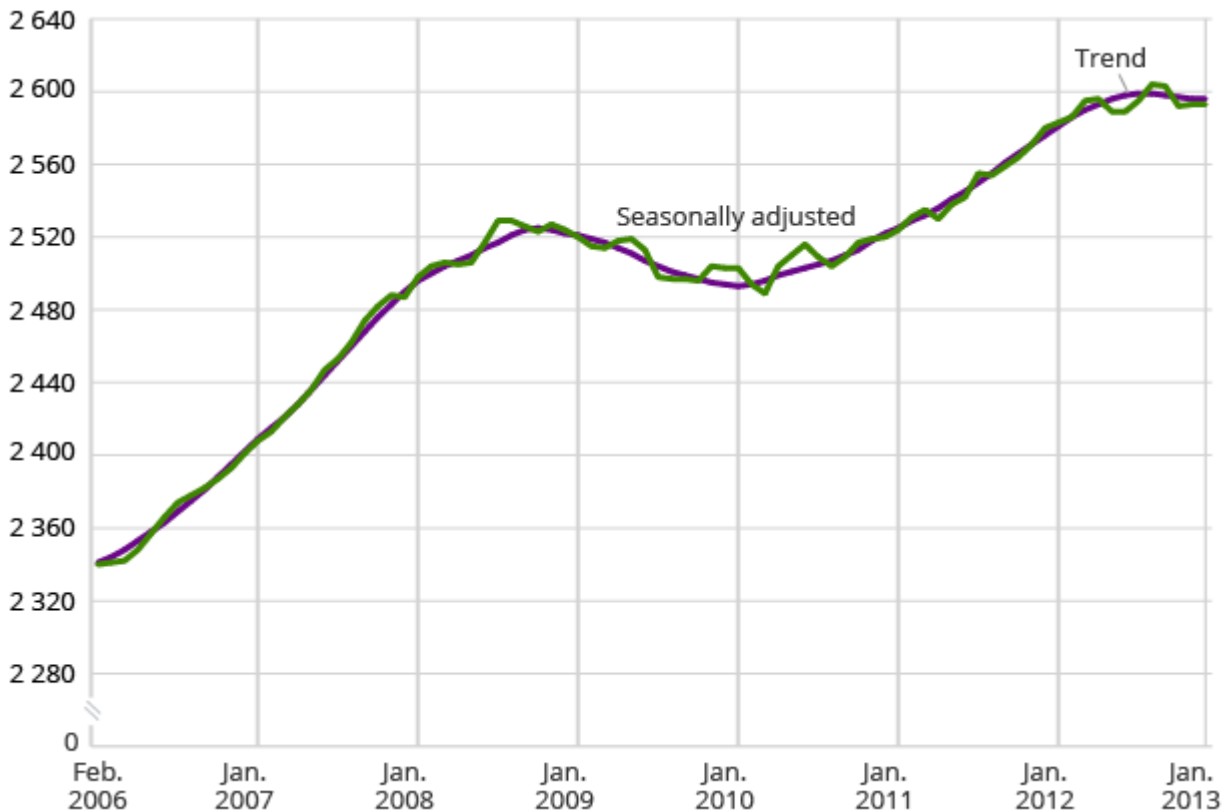
Figure 2.2 Employed persons registered as resident from Poland, aged 15-74 years, by industry (SIC 2007) and contents, 2001K4



Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

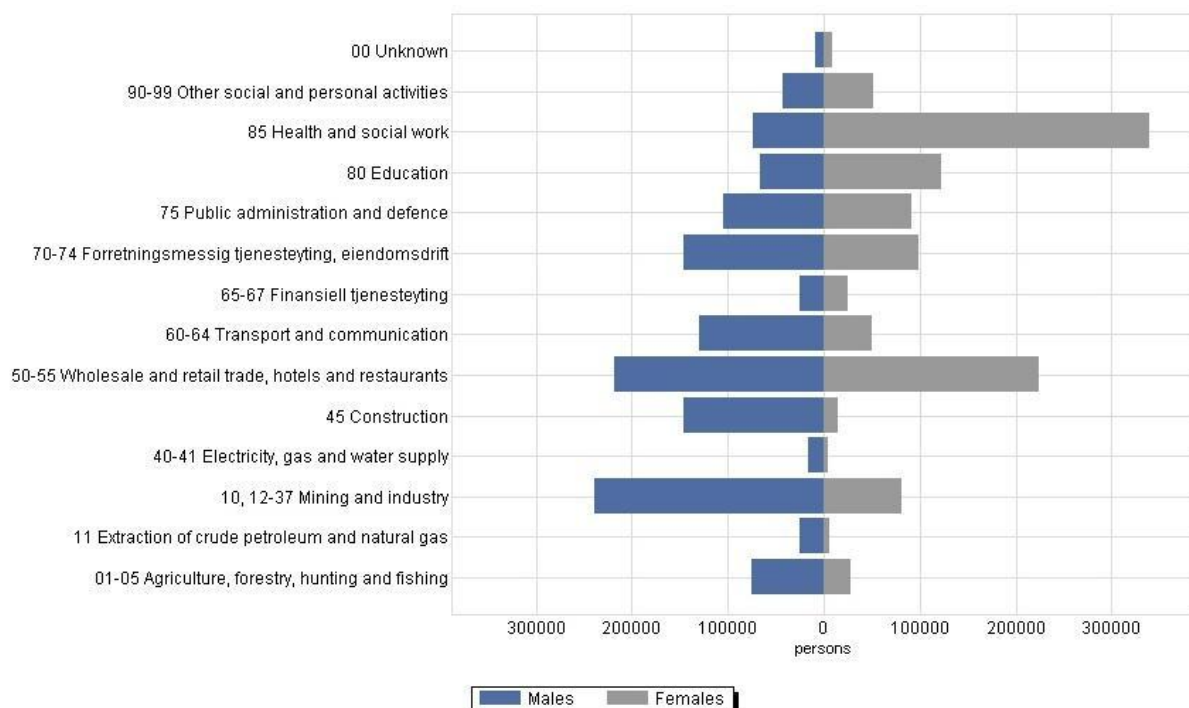
Appendix B

Figure 2.3 Employment (LFS) in Norway, 2006-2013. Seasonally adjusted figures and trend figures, three-month moving average, in thousands



Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

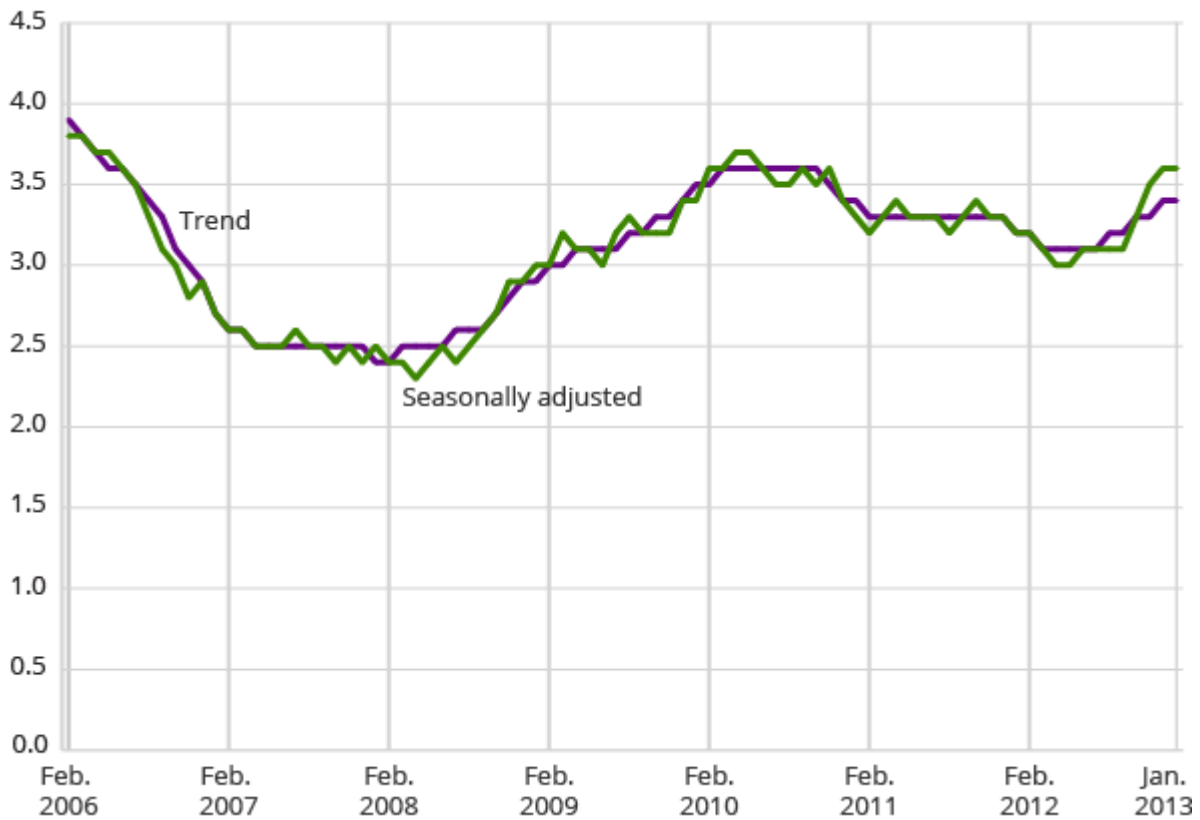
Figure 2.4 Persons aged 15-74 years employed 100 hours or more per year in Norway in 2001, by sex and industry.



Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

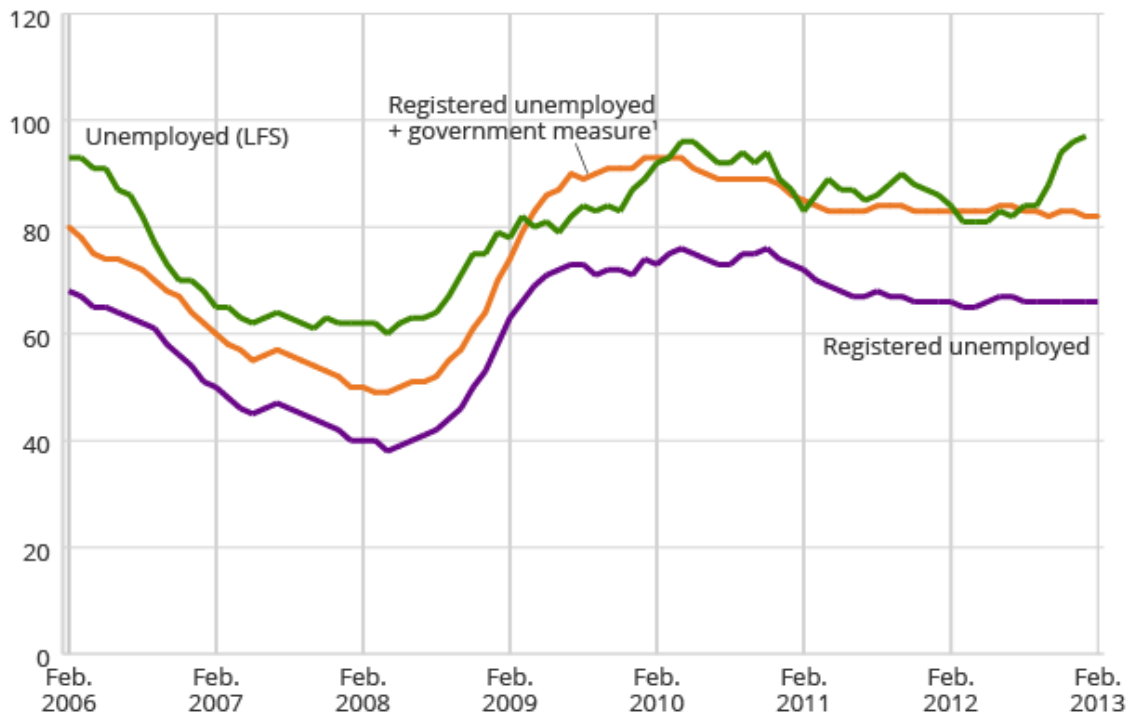
Appendix C

Figure 2.5 Unemployment (LFS), as percentage of the labour force in Norway, 2006-2013. Seasonally adjusted figures and trend figures



Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

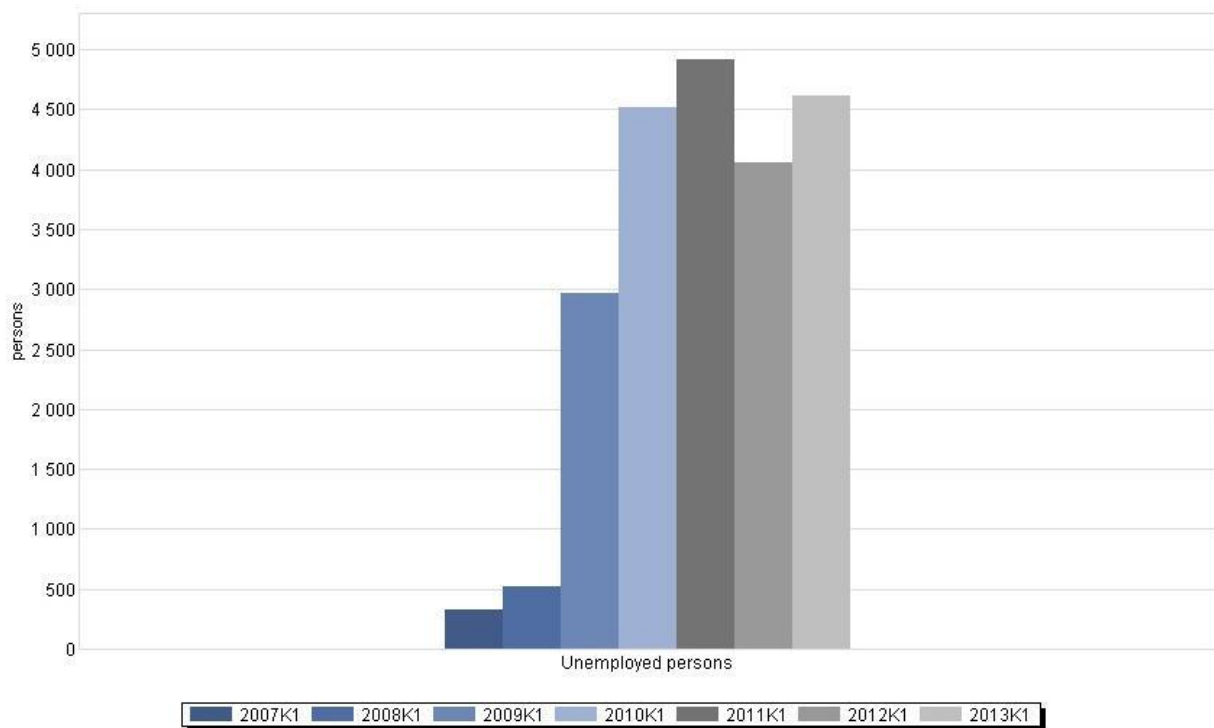
Figure 2.6 Unemployed (LFS), registered unemployed and registered unemployed plus government measures to promote employment, in thousands, 2006-2013. Seasonally adjusted figures, three-month moving average



¹ These figures are monthly and not three-month moving average. Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

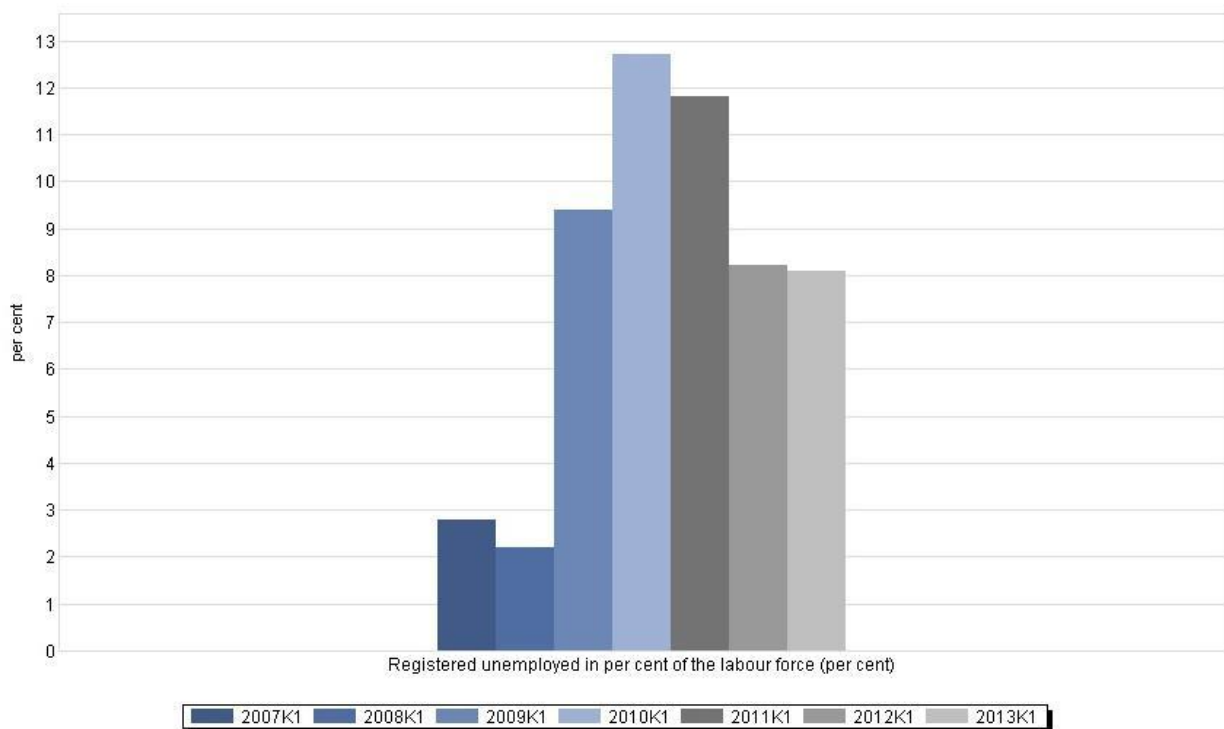
Appendix D

Figure 2.7 Registered unemployed persons from Poland aged 15-74 years in absolute numbers, 2007K1-2013K1.



Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

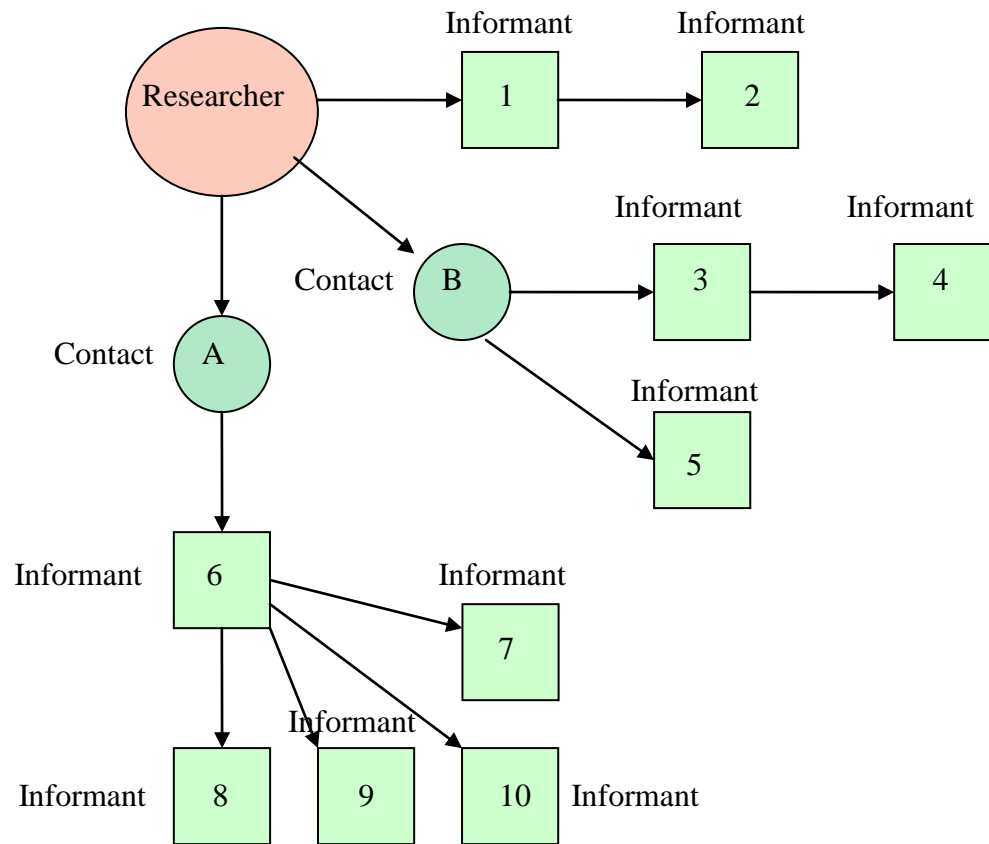
Figure 2.8 Registered unemployed persons from Poland aged 15-74 years in per cent of the labour force, 2007K1-2013K1.



Source: © Statistics Norway, 2012

Appendix E

Figure 3.1 Process of recruiting the informants



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books, articles, and papers:

- Baba, M. L. & Dahl-Jørgensen, C. (2010). Work Migration from Poland to Norway: A New Institutional Approach. In: A. Dawson & C. Dahl-Jørgensen (Eds.), *Work Life: Flexibility, Globalization, Life-Project and Identity*, iNtergraph: journal of dialogic anthropology, vol. 2, issue 2. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from: <http://intergraph-journal.net/enhanced/vol2issue2/2.html>
- Blanchflower, D. G. & Lawton H. (2009). The Impact of the Recent Expansion of the EU on the UK Labor Market. In M. Kahanec & K. F. Zimmermann (Eds.), *EU Labor Markets After Post-Enlargement Migration* (pp. 181-218). Berlin: Springer Verlag.
- Boeri, T. (2010). Immigration to the Land of Redistribution. *Economica* 77, 651–687.
- Borjas, G. J. (1999). Immigration and Welfare Magnets. *Journal of Labor Economics* 17 (4), 607-637.
- Borjas, G. J. & Hilton L. (1996). Immigration and the Welfare State: Immigrant Participation in Means-Tested Entitlement Programs. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 111 (2), 575-604.
- Bowel, G. A. (2006). Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts. In: *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(3), Article 2.
- Bratsberg, B., Raaum, O., & Røed, K. (2007). When minority labor migrants meet the welfare state (IZA Discussion Paper No. 2872). Bonn: [Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit](http://www.forschungsinstitut-zur-zukunft-der-arbeit.de/). Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/34477>
- Brochmann, G. & Kjeldstadli, K. (2008). A history of immigration: the case of Norway 900-2000. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Brücker, H., Epstein G. S., McCormick, B., Saint-Paul, G., Venturini, A., & Zimmermann, K.F. (2002). Managing Migration in the European Welfare State. In T. Boeri, G. Hanson, & B. McCormick (Eds.), *Immigration Policy and the Welfare System* (pp. 1-168). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cielen, P. L. (2011). *Integration of Polish Workers in Poland – the Role of Labour Unions* (Master dissertation). Available from Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education, University of Tromsø.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London, UK: Sage.
- Ekhaugen, T. (2005). Immigrants on welfare: Assimilation and benefit substitution (Memorandum No. 2005, 18). Oslo: Department of Economics, University of Oslo. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/62994>
- Esping-Andersen, G. (2006). Three worlds of welfare capitalism. In C. Pierson & F.G. Castles (Eds.), *The welfare state reader: Second edition* (pp. 160-174). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Friberg, J.H. (2010). Working Conditions for Polish Construction Workers and Domestic Cleaners in Oslo: Segmentation, Inclusion and the Role of Policy. In R. Black, G. Engbersen, M. Okolski, & C. Pantiru (Eds.), *A Continent Moving West? EU Enlargement and Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe*. Amsterdam: IMISCOE Research, Amsterdam University Press.
- Friberg, J.H., Tronstad, K., & Dolvik, J. (2012). Central and Eastern European labour migration to Norway: trends, conditions and challenges. In: *Free Movement of Workers and Labour Market Adjustment: Recent Experiences from OECD Countries and the European Union*, OECD Publishing.

Giulietti, C., Guzi, M., Kahanec, M., & Zimmermann, K.F. (2011). Unemployment Benefits and Immigration: Evidence from the EU (IZA Discussion Paper No. 6075). Bonn: Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/58518>

Giulietti, C. & Wahba, J. (2012). Welfare Migration (IZA Discussion Paper No. 6450). Bonn: Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/58967>

Glaser, B. G. (2001). *The grounded theory perspective: Conceptualization contrasted with description*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Gustafsson, B. (2011). Disparities in social assistance receipt between immigrants and natives in Sweden (IZA Discussion Paper No. 6129). Bonn: Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/58485>

Hansen, J. & Lofstrom, M. (2003). Immigrant Assimilation and Welfare Participation. *Journal of Human Resources* 38 (1), 74-98.

Longva, P. (2001). Out-migration of immigrants: Implications for assimilation analysis (Memorandum No. 2001, 4). Oslo: Department of Economics, University of Oslo. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/63116>

Riphahn, R. T., Sander, M., & Wunder, C. (2010). The Welfare Use of Immigrants and Natives in Germany: The Case of Turkish Immigrants (LASER Discussion Paper 44). Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.laser.uni-erlangen.de/papers/paper/117.pdf>

Rodríguez-Planas, N. (2012). Determinants of immigrants' cash-welfare benefits intake in Spain (IZA Discussion Paper No. 6547). Bonn: Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/58632>

Timonen, V. & Doyle, M. (2009). In search of security: migrant workers' understandings, experiences and expectations regarding "social protection" in Ireland. *Journal of Social Policy*, 38 (1), 157-75.

Valenta, M. & Strabac, Z. (2011). State-assisted integration, but not for all: Norwegian welfare services and labour migration from the new EU member states. *International Social Work* published online 15 March 2011. doi:10.1177/0020872810392811

Electronic reports:

Czapka, E. A. (2010). *The Health of Polish labour immigrants in Norway: A Research Review* (NAKMI report 3/2010). Oslo: Norwegian Center for Minority Health Research (NAKMI). Retrieved 30 June 2013, from www.nakmi.no

OECD (2011). Jobs for Immigrants: The Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Norway. Paris: OECD. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/43247521.pdf>

Official Norwegian Report (NOU) 2011:7 Welfare and Migration (English summary) submitted by the Welfare and Migration Committee to the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 10 May 2011. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/BLD/IMA/nou_2011_7_perspective_andsummary.pdf

SOPEMI (2011). International Migration 2010-2011: SOPEMI Report for Norway. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/AD/publikasjoner/rapporter/2012/SOPEMI_Report_2011.pdf

Online resources:

Arbeidsdepartementet (2012a). *The Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme (Survey)*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/AD/publikasjoner/veiledninger_brosjyrer/2012/Trygdesysteme_2012_engelsk.pdf

Arbeidsdepartementet (2012b). *Residence in Norway for EEA citizens*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ad/topics/labour-market-policy/labour-immigration/work-permits-and-settlement.html?id=86695>

EFTA (2011). *Social security: Unlawful restrictions on unemployment benefits for migrant workers in Iceland and Norway*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.eftasurv.int/press-publications/press-releases/internal-market/nr/1476>

NAV (2007). *NAV*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.nav.no/English/The+Norwegian+Labour+and+Welfare+Administration>

NAV (2013a). *Organization*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.nav.no/English/The+Norwegian+Labour+and+Welfare+Administration/Organization>

NAV (2013b). *Unemployment benefits*. Retrieved 30 May 2013, from <http://www.nav.no/English/Work+in+Norway/Dagpenger+under+arbeids%C3%B8stet.286402.cms>

SSB (2011). *Immigrations by reason for immigration and citizenship*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from http://www.ssb.no/a/english/kortnavn/innvgrunn_en/tab-2012-08-30-03-en.html

SSB (2013a). *Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/innvbef>

SSB (2013b). *Population and housing census, employment and education, 2011*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/fobsysut/hvert-10-aar/2013-04-18>

UDI (2009a). *EEA nationals do not need to apply for residence permits*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/News/2008/EEA-nationals-do-not-need-to-apply-for-residence-permits/>

UDI (2009b). *Permanent right of residence*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Work-and-residence/Work-and-residence-EUEEAFTA-citizens/Permanent-right-of-residence/>

UDI (2012). *Registration scheme for EEA nationals*. Retrieved 30 June 2013, from <http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Work-and-residence/Work-and-residence-EUEEAFTA-citizens/Temporary-registration-system-for-EEA-citizens/#b>

Web-sites:

Norwegian Directorate for Immigration: www.udi.no

Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service: www.nav.no

Statistics Norway: www.ssb.no