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# JUSTIFICATIONS OF PRIVATE ACTORS IN THE PROVISION OF WELFARE SERVICES TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

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An example of support and matching companies  
providing employment services to Swedish foreign-born  
job-seekers

Who should help immigrants to get the job done?

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## Abstract

The support and matching program is a unique case of marketization of job-brokerage by the Swedish Public Employment Service since 2007. This program impacts especially the foreign-born population facing disproportionate unemployment rates in Sweden. The program has been extensively studied in Sweden through macro evaluations, due to political interest in research-based evaluation. This thesis proposes a new approach with a micro qualitative study of the justifications of support and matching companies. Through the framework of sociology of justifications and especially Boltanski and Thévenot's six orders of worth, this thesis analyses the justifications developed by three different companies where job-brokerage is sub-contracted through marketing materials and interviews of employees. These companies are now facing a critical moment as blames, criticism and grievances are exchanged. In order for this criticism to be evaluated, actors need to agree on orders of worth. The support and matching companies are pushing for a mix of justifications that is excluding the civic order of worth, central in the Swedish Welfare State. This shift of worth is feeding an internal discrepancy between the neoliberal logic behind marketization and the universalistic nature of the Swedish Welfare State. Private companies are then pushing a public program towards new orders of worth, raising the political question of marketization of job-brokerage as designed at the expense of the vulnerable immigrant population, which is its main target group.

**KEYWORDS:** Marketization, Labour Market, Employment, Immigration, Welfare State, Justifications, Criticisms, Orders of Worth

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## Definitions

Term	Definition	Source
Coach	Coaches and counsellors providing employment services within Support and Matching Companies <i>Swedish: Handleledare</i>	Own translation
Employment rate	Number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force (the total number of people employed plus unemployed).	OECD, 2016
Employment program	Active Labour Market Programs for unemployed workers and welfare recipients such as job search assistance, labour market training, wage subsidies, and direct job creation in the public sector	Kluve, 2010
Employment service	Service necessary to the completion of an employment program such as job search assistance and employer intermediation service	Brown & Koettl, 2015
Employment service providers	Public and private employment services whose main task is to provide employment service to job-seekers and/or employee-seeking companies	Andersen et al, 2015
Caseworker	Coaches and counsellors providing employment services within the Public Employment Service <i>Swedish: Arbetsförmedlare</i>	
Employer intermediation service	Support of employee-seeking companies through identifying employers' needs and establish contacts between potential employers and unemployed	Brown & Koettl, 2015
Foreign-born	Person living in Sweden who was not born in Sweden. The term encompasses more than "immigrants" since it also applies to persons whose parents were born in Sweden.	Pettersen & Øtsby, 2013
Immigrant	A person who is born outside the country to two foreign-born parents, and who at some point has immigrated to Sweden	Pettersen & Øtsby, 2013
Job brokerage	Process of matching job seekers with employers who are seeking to fill vacancies, include job-search assistance and employer intermediation service	OECD, 2016
Job-search assistance	Support of unemployed workers in finding a job through counselling and support services, access to and provision of information on the labour market situation and trend	Brown & Koettl, 2015
New Public Management	Management culture that emphasizes the centrality of the citizen or customer, as well as accountability for results.	Manning, 2000
Public Employment Office	Local entities of the Public Employment Service located all around Sweden	Andersson, Mansson & Sund, 2014

Public Employment Service	The core functions of public employment services include job search assistance and placement services; collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market information; development and implementation of targeted labour market programmes and services; the administration of unemployment insurance benefits, where applicable; and other regulatory services such as oversight of private employment agencies <i>Swedish: Arbetsförmedlingen</i>	ILO, 2009
Private Employment Agency	‘Any natural or legal person, independent of the public authorities, which provides one or more of the following labour market services: (a) services for matching offers of and applications for employment (b) services consisting of employing workers with a view to making them available to a third party, who may be a natural or legal person (referred below as a ‘user enterprise’) (c) other services related to job seeking, determined by the competent authority after consulting the most representative employers’ and workers’ organisations	ILO, 1997
Refugee	Persons, who move out of one’s country due to restriction or danger to their lives	OECD, 2016
Support and Matching Company	Private Employment Agency providing employment services within the Support and Matching Program in Sweden	Own translation
Voucher System	Arrangement where a number of providers (public or private) are authorized by public authorities to provide a certain service in a given geographical area	Blömqvist, 2004

## Introduction

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*In this introductory chapter, the background of the thesis is presented including the issue of employment for foreign-born in Sweden and job-brokerage as a solution. Following are the research question, the purpose and the disposition of the thesis.*

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### Immigrants' employment as a solution and a challenge for the Swedish Welfare State

The Swedish Welfare State is uniquely inclusive in its protection of citizens and such a costly support requires a substantial number of contributors. While population is ageing, immigrants might be the solution to keep the Welfare State financially solvent. This potential is currently under-utilized due to persistent unemployment, which also impacts the integration of immigrants within the Swedish society.

#### **A Swedish Welfare State facing financial insolvency**

The Swedish Welfare State has an extensive number of attractive characteristics, especially in the support of employment. The Swedish Welfare State is characterized by relatively generous systems for social protection and income replacement but also comprehensive and universalistic systems of public welfare service provision. In very few other countries, the majority of workers who face events such as layoffs, sickness, invalidity and parenthood are so well protected from income loss. This extensive system for social service is based on the political rationale that when the state provides high-quality services to all citizens, not just the ones in need, it secures broad public support and financial viability through income taxation (Rothstein, 1998). Such Welfare State is based on the will to contribute to the overriding goal of social equality through re-distribution of life opportunities and social integration (Olsson, 1993). However, providing such benefits is costly. Within the Swedish social welfare model, an individual qualifies by performing paid work. A comparatively high labour force participation of both men and women and the existence of a relatively generous income safety net are the major reasons currently keeping the Welfare State financially solvent. In the coming decades, financial insolvency might occur due to an ageing population and a rising number of pensioners compared to workers (Kesler, 2006). A possible solution to this challenge would be workers' immigration. In fact, Sweden has one of the largest immigrant populations among the European OECD countries with 16% of its population born abroad (OECD, 2016). Additionally, the country has accepted a large share of the asylum seeker. In 2012, it registered over 43,000 asylum seekers and in 2015, up to 163 000, the highest per-capita inflow registered in an OECD country (OECD, 2016). Sweden is a country with an extensive Welfare State which will soon face financial insolvency due to ageing population. On the other hand, the country has been welcoming a raising number of migrants. These newcomers can ensure the Welfare State stays financially sustainable by performing paid work.

#### **The inability of immigrants to contribute to the Welfare State**

If immigrants' employment is a possible solution to the lowering number of labour force participants, such positive outcome is unlikely due to the spread of joblessness among foreign-born today. Sweden faces striking inequality on workforce integration between foreign-born and natives. The gap between the employment rates of native-born and foreign-born populations/groups is the largest in the OECD. Swedish immigrant households are three times more likely than native-born ones to experience unemployment (Kesler, 2015). The high amount of unemployed immigrants dually affects the Welfare State : they do not contribute

through taxes and rely on social assistance for their subsistence (Hansen & Lofstrom, 2009). Within the immigrant population, refugees are even less likely to be employed for their whole life time in Sweden (Lundborg, 2013). Native-born and foreign-born Swedish citizens are not experiencing the same employment rate. Consequently, immigrants and even more refugees are unable to contribute to the Welfare State.

### **Unemployment also hinders the long-term integration of a whole population**

High unemployment among immigrants is not only a concern for the Swedish Welfare State cash flows. Joblessness long-lastingly affects material well-being, social integration and the future of immigrant second generations. As soon as 2004, the European Commission stated that "lack of access to employment has been identified as the greatest barrier to integration and thus the most important political priority within national integration policies." (Zeitlin et al., 2005). The long-term integration of refugees into the labour market is of major policy interests (Lundborg et al, 2016). Employment yields income for the individual, but also improves knowledge about language, culture and creates networks. All these factors facilitate the integration process (Lundborg, 2013). In Sweden, wide immigrant/native-born poverty gaps exist (Kesler, 2015). Unemployment among immigrants is hindering their long-term integration with an increased risk of poverty. Integration into employment is a fundamental first step towards long-term integration of newly-arrived migrants (OECD, 2011).

Unemployment of immigrants is a wasted opportunity to increase the number of contributors to the Welfare State, a pressing issue due to the Swedish ageing population. Employment is also directly linked to the integration of the foreign-born population as it gives new citizens the means to live to the standards of the Swedish society.

### **Understanding Swedish immigrants' joblessness**

The level of unemployment among foreign-born Swedish citizens has shifted in the 1970s from similar to native-born to relatively higher. The main difficulty for immigrants today is crystallized around applying for jobs and, even before, accessing job vacancies.

### **The shift in immigrants' employment**

High unemployment among the foreign-born population has started in the 1970s. Until then, the standards of living between native-born and foreign-born Swedish citizens were similar. During the Second World War, Sweden became a country of immigration rather than one of emigration. Sweden's industry remained intact after World War II and was in need of labour to rebuild Europe (Pettersen et al., 2013). The immigrants who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s, whether they came from Southern Europe as labour immigrants or from Eastern Europe as refugees, were easily integrated in the Swedish labour market (Lundborg, 2013). Earlier research refers to high employment rates and relatively high incomes among both female and male immigrants during this period (Wadensjö 1973; Ekberg 1983). These migrants had no difficulties in finding jobs and settling down in Sweden with their families (Bevelander, 1999). They were even able to rapidly acquire the same economic standard of living as native Swedes with similar qualifications (Bevelander, 1999). The immigrants who have come to Sweden since the 1970s have encountered much more difficulty to access the labour market, as shown in a number of cross-sectional studies (Ohlsson, 1975 and 1978; Bevelander, 2001; Ekberg, 2011). Both natives and foreign-born were negatively affected by the economic crisis of the



early 1990s, but the immigrant employment rate declined relatively more. The lower employment integration of immigrants who arrived in the 1970s also caused the average immigrant employment rate to decrease in the 1990s and early 2000s (Bevelander, 2012). As presented in the graphs below, since 2004, the Swedish employment rate of native population has been at least 10 percentage points higher than the standard in OECD while foreign-born is significantly lower and under the standard of OECD.

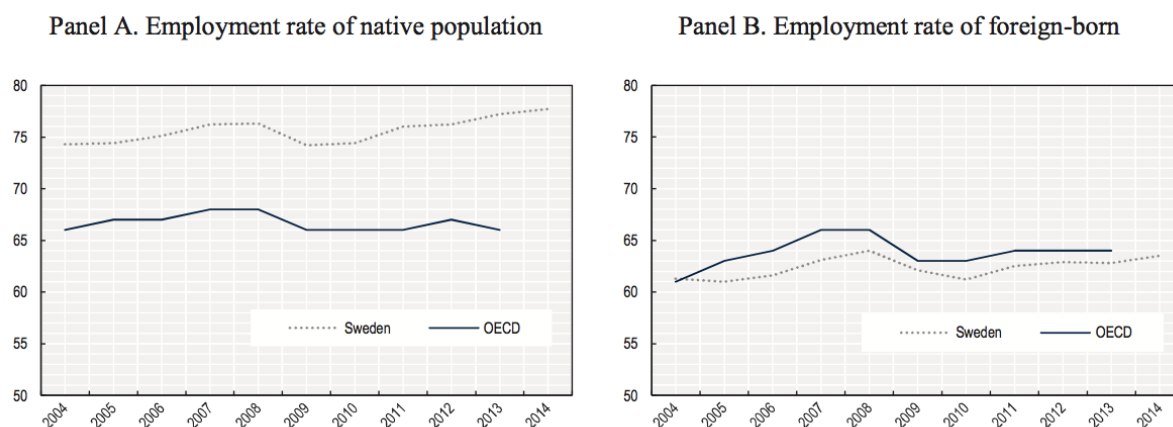


Figure 1 Employment among native- and foreign-born individuals, 2004-14 (OECD, 2016)

Percentage of the working-age population, 15-64

Sweden has shifted from high to low employment rate of immigrants in the 1970s. The discrepancies between the native-born and foreign-born employment rates were fostered in 1990s.

### Reasons for the foreign-born low employment rate

Reasons for low market integration among immigrants have been studied extensively in the last 30 years. These explanations can be classified as structural changes in economy, mismatch of skills, and discriminations among others. Bevelander and Lundh studied the influence of local factors on refugee employment in Sweden at a macro level, identifying differences in human capital structure of the local economy, discrimination in the labour market, changing composition of sender countries, economic transformation and institutional conditions as decisive factors, factors confirmed by Wiesbrock (Bevelander & Lundh, 2007; Wiesbrock, 2011). High unemployment rate among Swedish immigrants is linked to lower labour force participation and higher vulnerability to unemployment and underemployment (Kesler, 2006). Unemployment and underemployment are linked to structural changes in the economy. For Bevelander, the structural change of a shift in formal human capital increased the demand for specialised knowledge such as culture-specific social competence and language skills. These increased requirements negatively impacted foreign-born employment rate (Bevelander, 1999). Also, immigrants in Sweden are less likely to arrive with knowledge of the host country language, since Swedish is rarely used outside the country (Kesler, 2006). Another prime reason for immigrants' unemployment would be that they are discriminated and so less likely to be hired than natives. Results of several new field experiments show that a foreign name substantially decreases the probability of being called to an interview with a potential employer (Rooth & Ekberg, 2006). Consistently, register-based research indicates that when an immigrant changes his or her name to one signalling nativity, increased income follows (Arai

& Skogman Thoursie, 2009). The ‘refugee gap’ in employer's perceptions includes refugees being considered less skilled by default even in case of comparable skills (Peromingo, 2014; Lundborg & Skedinger, 2016). It is likely that structural changes in the economy, discriminations and other factors contribute collectively to low employment of foreign-born in Sweden.

### **Unequal access to job vacancies due to informal networks**

All the different factors for unemployment cited earlier must be studied to understand the mechanisms of foreign-born unemployment. This thesis focuses on the inequality in job search. Immigrants in general, and newly arrived immigrants in particular, lack the institutional know-how and the contacts to easily secure employment and face difficulty in finding job vacancies in Sweden (Joona & Nekby, 2012). A central component of job search in Sweden is labour market information collected through contacts from informal networks –including friends, relatives and previous employers. Up to two thirds of all filled vacancies in Sweden involve some form of informal contacts (Behtoui, 2008). This reliance on informal networks creates a substantial ethnic workplace segregation in the Swedish labour market (Åslund et al, 2009). Immigrants’ existing networks include fewer labour market contacts and a concentration of other immigrants in lower-skilled jobs. While it is not the only reason of foreign-born low employment, the ability to find job vacancies is a first step towards an improved employment rate among foreign-born Swedish citizens.

Foreign-born unemployment in Sweden is a complex social issue which has been evolving. A web of causes has been considered by research, including structural economic changes and discrimination. This thesis focuses on the issue of accessing job vacancies for immigrants, as a first step towards long-term employment.

### **Job-brokerage and its public and private providers**

A solution to unequal access to job vacancies is job-brokerage: matching the unemployed to a job in the open labour market corresponding to ones education and/or preferences (Althin et al, 2010). Such service has been historically provided by the Swedish Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*). However other actors are now involved through a marketization initiated in 2010.

### **Job-brokerage, a solution to unequal access to job vacancies**

The goal of job-brokerage is to match as closely as possible both the job requests from the individual and the requirements from the employer. The main elements of job-brokerage are job search assistance and employer intermediation services. Job search assistance helps unemployed workers find a job through counselling and support services, access to and provision of information on the labour market situation and trend. Individuals looking for a job can not only benefit from standard job information, matching of vacancies to applicants, but also from the ‘job-seeker activities’ like training courses on how to apply for a job and motivation-raising activities. Employer intermediation services identify employers’ needs and establish contacts with potential employers. Job brokerage is implemented by the Swedish government in parallel to investments in subsidized jobs; recruitment incentives and extra services. Job-brokerage is widely used in OECD countries and is considered the most cost-effective employment service. Matching approaches are thought to promote job quality and

lifelong learning (Andersen et al, 2015). Reviews by Calmfors (1994), Khöler and Thomsen (2009) and Kluve (2010) provide evidence on significant effects of job-brokerage on employment probabilities and sometimes earnings. For example, Kluve analysed the efficiency of job-brokerage among other policies for employment and found it to increase participants' employment with a 30 to 50 percentage points higher probability than training programs (Kluve, 2010). However, job-brokerage is often combined with various other employment programs, especially with sanctions, whereby it is difficult to distil the effects of this policy alone. The job-search is structurally unequal in Sweden, making it challenging for foreign-born citizens. The service of job-brokerage efficiently addresses these inequalities.

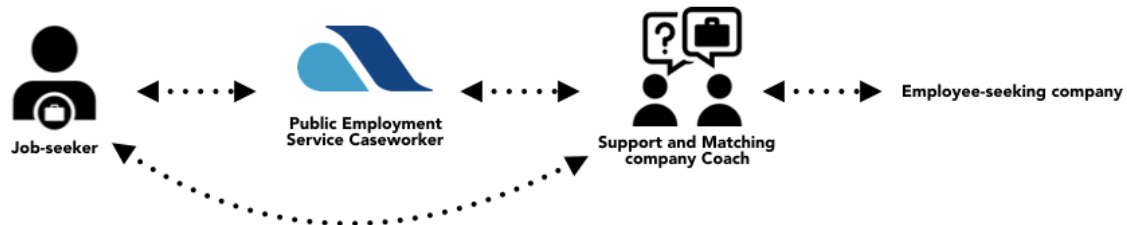
### **Historical provider of job-brokerage: the Swedish Public Employment Service**

The Public Employment Service in Sweden is responsible for employment services and employment programs including job-brokerage (Andersson, Månsson & Sund, 2014). The stated purpose of the Swedish employment program is to integrate unemployed and disadvantaged individuals into the labour force. To achieve this goal, the Public Employment Service provides various kinds of programs, some specifically targeted to the foreign-born population, and the rest open to anyone registered at an employment office. Immigrants are a specific target of the Public Employment Service and a sub-target of job-brokerage. Much of the practical implementation is done by the Public Employment Offices, located all around Sweden (Andersson, Månsson & Sund, 2014). Since the year 2000, several measures have been taken in order to facilitate the labour market integration of immigrants, via the provision of funds to job centres with a large immigrant population for instance (Wiesbrock, 2011). From a political impulse in 2007, in 2009, the Swedish government presented a bill (Prop. 2009/10:60) proposing reforms to the national integration policy. The 'Law on the establishment of certain newly incoming immigrants', speeds up the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life. Indeed, in 2015, 90 days after finishing the introduction program to Swedish life, 50% of former participants were still enrolled in other employment programs, while only 31% of participants were in work or education. Of these 31%, the majority (19%) were employed in the subsidised jobs (OECD, 2016). The Public Employment services are free of charge for both employee-seeking companies and job-seekers and entirely financed by the State. The Swedish Public Employment service has been the historical actor at the centre of the job-brokerage provision, with a specifically emphasis on migrants through policies.

### **Private providers of job-brokerage: Support and Matching companies**

In 2007, the Swedish centre-right government gave the instruction to the Public Employment Service to use private contractors more actively as an alternative to in-house provision of job-brokerage. The justification was that increased diversity among actors would improve the matching function (prop. 2008/09:1). Private contractors were commissioned to match hard-to-place unemployed to jobs, including immigrants, on the regular labour market within a trial launch in July 2007 (Sund, 2015). The trial was setup as an experimental intervention where unemployed were randomly assigned to either a private company or to a Public Employment Office. The trial was considered successful, leading to the birth of the support and matching program. As of December 2010 new arrivals have been assisted in finding a job by an independent 'introduction guide', working on the instruction of the Public Employment Service and which the immigrant can freely choose among the authorized providers without any cost (Wiesbrock, 2011). Support and matching companies are these introduction guides, providing job search assistance and employer intermediation services, paid by the Public Employment Service with a voucher system (Brown & Koettl, 2015). A job-

seeker who is considered suitable for the Support and Matching program choose any of the support and matching companies belonging to the adequate municipality. The job-seeker receives the service of job-brokerage for 3 months with a plan produced by its coach and weekly reviews with its caseworkers. After 3 months, the relevance of the program for the job-seekers is re-evaluated. Support and matching companies are paid each day they are counselling a job-seeker and receive an additional bonus when a job is integrated. The Public Employment Service is subcontracting job-brokerage with performance-based contract building in bonuses dependent on achievement of a negotiated job-placement rate (Andersen et al, 2015).



*Figure 2 Schematization of the Support and Matching program's actors*

Introduced by a trial program in 2007, the support and marching program is a marketization of employment services. Job-brokerage is a service towards both job-seekers and employee-seeking companies that aim at matching both. For the population of immigrants facing such difficulties in finding job vacancies, this service is a possible solution. Such service providers include the Public Employment Service, through its private companies, under the support and matching program.

## Research question and sections

### Research Purpose

The Public Employment service is cooperating with private support and matching companies to provide job-brokerage to vulnerable populations like immigrants. The critical importance of employment for integration of foreign-born populations emphasizes the importance of employment services and specifically job-brokerage. The support and matching program is a unique case of marketization which provides an opportunity to study how private actors perceive their role within the Welfare State. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to explore the roles, responsibilities and consequent justifications developed by private actors. Such exploration is building on existing literature composed of macro studies. The purpose of this thesis is to complement the existing research on private and public actors' justifications with a micro study within the support and matching companies.

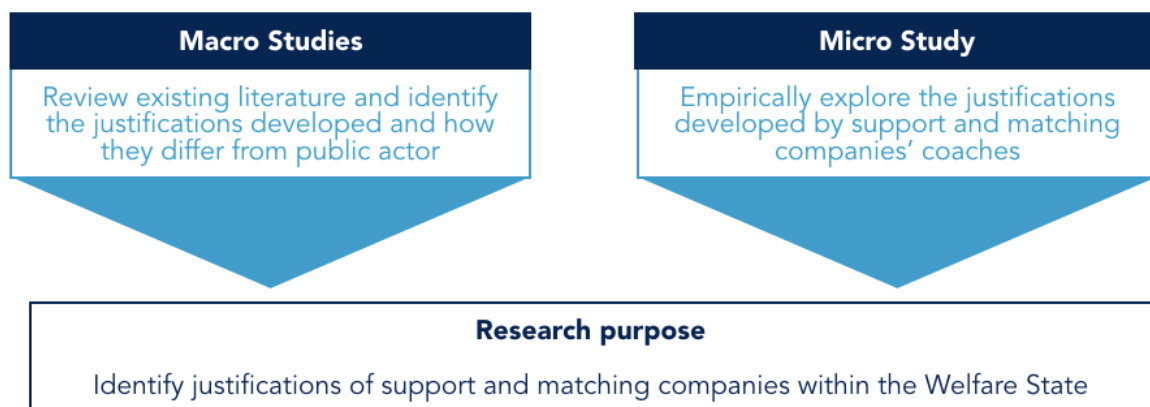


Figure 3 Research purpose

### Research question

What are the justifications developed by private actors in the job-brokerage market aimed at decreasing immigrants' unemployment??

### Disposition

To answer this research question, a literature review of both public and private actors' specificities, evaluation and justifications is presented in the Section 1. The summary of the research on marketization in employment services emphasizes the current research gap of micro qualitative studies, which allows a deeper and subtler understanding of the justifications developed by an actor. Additionally, the theoretical framework of sociology of justifications allows a more complex analysis of the justifications within actors. The Section 2 on design and methods presents the specificities of the research to extract valuable data. The data including companies' narratives, perceptions of themselves and others and views on the whole support and matching program are presented in Section 3. Using Boltanski and Thévenot's theoretical framework, this data is then analysed based on the notions of blames and criticisms and orders of worth. Conclusions in terms of both practical and theoretical contribution, as well as further research, are finally presented in Section 5.

## Section 1: Literature review on privatization of employment services

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*This chapter presents the thesis' theoretical framework. The framework is primarily based upon previous research in the marketization of employment services. Research on how the Public Employment Service justifies providing job-brokerage is first presented, including specificities, evaluation and rationales. Following are the studies on support and matching companies based on the same three components. Further, the research gap is defined as well as the framework to tackle it: the sociology of justifications of Boltanski and Thévenot.*

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In most developed countries, welfare services are provided directly, and, at least in part, financed by the state (Gilbert, 2002). Being costly services, policy makers have been attracted to the idea of making them more cost-efficient and raise their quality through marketization (Blomqvist, 2013). An increasing amount of private companies were able to be involved on the public service domain (Svedberg Helgesson & Mörth, 2013). Full privatization stays still often rejected both by policy makers and citizens, as this would imply an uneven access to services which are seen as essential to a dignified human life. Therefore, most states have chosen to continue to finance such services and retain regulatory control over them through a subcontracting mechanisms (Gilbert, 2002). The perceptions of private actors in such cases present specificities, evaluations and justifications. Sweden presents a rich literature on both actors around these thematic. However, a research gap is observable on the justifications of private actors about providing welfare services.

### The Public Employment Service and immigrants' unemployment

The Swedish Public Employment Service has been responsible for job-brokerage since its inception as for all publically financed national employment programs. The main specificities of this Employment Service as a job broker include the learnings from previous programs as well as reach within the foreign-born job-seeking population. However, Public Employment Offices have been evaluated by research as being sub optimally efficient. The main justifications of the Public Employment Service as job-broker are the values of the Swedish Welfare State.

#### **Specificities of the Public Employment Service as a job broker**

The Swedish Public Employment Service has been designing, testing and developing a variety of employment programs from as early as the 1930s (Sianesi, 2008). Beginning in the year 2000, different measures to facilitate labour market integration for immigrants were experimented (Wiesbrock, 2011). From September 2003 to December 2005 one of these experiments was “Work Place Introduction” which provided assistance to foreign-born jobseekers at an early stage in their application process, in particular by identifying the job-seekers' qualifications and aspirations, matching them with the wishes of interested employers (Wiesbrock, 2011). Learning from this pilot project were followed up by two new employment-related measures introduced as part of the 2010 integration policy reform. Therefore, the organization has a long and large-scale experience of programs with this specific population. Additionally, the Public Employment Service has an advantage for job-brokering due to its reach. The cash benefit rules states that an unemployed person has to be registered at the Public Employment Service to be eligible for the benefit so the coverage rate for unemployment is generally high (Andersson et al, 2013). In 2003, roughly one third of the stock of unemployed had participated in labour market programs (Carling & Richardson, 2004). The reach of the Public Employment Service influences the size of its vacancy database and its relationship with



employers. Sweden is actually one of the few European countries in which the unemployed consider the Public Employment Service as the most important job-search method (Eurostat, 2013). The vacancy database used to be almost exhaustive as employers in Sweden were required to notify every new vacancy. However, the notifications have been made voluntary and the ratio of registered vacancies to total new hires has fallen to 44% (OECD, 2016). This drop in notifications created a vicious circle as employers who do notify their vacancies report are overwhelmed by the number of applications from inappropriately qualified individuals. These individuals still apply to irrelevant vacancies because the benefit receipt is contingent on their demonstration of active job search (OECD, 2016). The reach of the Public Employment Service which was its main advantage is therefore challenged. As the vacancy database is dangerously contracting, the relationship of the Public Employment Service with employers is even more important. However, a recent report by the Swedish National Audit Office states that Swedish employers do not consider that the Public Employment Service identify adequate candidates and lack sufficient industry knowledge. The caseworkers and employers' relationships are limited as counsellors do not work with employers as part of their job description (OECD, 2016). The specificities of the Public Employment Service activities are the variety of pilot projects this actor was able to learn from and its unique reach among foreign-born job-seekers. Nonetheless, the relationship with employee-seeker companies is crumbling.

### **Evaluation of the Public Employment Service as a job-broker**

The efficiency of job-brokerage by Public Employment offices has been on the political and research agenda in Sweden since the early 1990's (Andersson, Månsson & Sund, 2014). Sweden produces large and rich administrative data to an extent that is comparable only to a few other countries (Carling & Richardson, 2004). The efficiency of the Swedish Public Employment Service for all job-seekers has been studied repeatedly starting with data in 1993 (Althin & Behrenz, 2004, Althin & Behrenz; 2005, Althin et al; 2010; Andersson, Månsson & Sund, 2014). These studies converge on a possible increase of the efficiency of Swedish public employment offices. For Althin and Behrenz, the main result is that there are major differences in efficiency and productivity among the offices, and that there is a large potential for cost savings (2004, 2005). Between 2006 and 2008, a trial program of intensive counselling and coaching of newly arrived immigrants had a significant effect on employment probabilities. At the end of the observation period, immigrants with intensive coaching had a 6 percentage points higher probability of being employed. When only 14 percent of regular program participants were employed at this time, intensive coaching improved employment chances by 43 percent (Joona & Nekby, 2012). For Althin et al, the Swedish employment offices mainly produce non-matching jobs, training, and continued unemployment instead of jobs on the regular labour market or transitions to the education system (Althin et al, 2010). Also Andersson et al. found an average yearly inefficiency between 7 and 10 percent among offices with the inefficiency unevenly distributed (Andersson, Månsson & Sund, 2014). Since the early 1990's, the programs of the Swedish Public Employment Services have various levels of efficiency. The results lack consensus but point towards sub-optimal delivery. These disparities are especially observable among the different Public Employment offices.

### **Rationale of the Public Employment Service as provider of job brokerage**

The Public Employment Service involvement can be justified by workforce integration being a social citizenship right for which the Welfare State is responsible. Swedish social citizenship has been strongly linked with the Welfare State developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Workforce integration is a social citizenship right based on Y. H. Marshall typology: "the

responsibility of the state to ensure basic levels of economic security to its citizens as well as the ability to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society (Svedberg Helgesson & Mörtz, 2013). During the post-war era, Marshall's notion of social citizenship became incorporated in the idea of the modern Welfare State. More recent citizenship theories have addressed the struggle of marginalized groups to be granted full citizenship rights, or gain recognition of their specific needs in order to be able to fully exercise such rights (Kessler-Harris, 2001). A strong and broad political commitment to social equality is expressed in the right of all citizens to have access to high quality welfare services on the same conditions (Svedberg Helgesson & Mörtz, 2013). The public actor producing welfare services, both in its financing and provision, is still widely supported in order ensure the social equality, an idea which started to be challenged on a broad base in Sweden only in the 1980s (Burström, 2015). The main justification of the involvement of the public actor in job-brokerage is political, and relies on the idea of the Welfare State as a provider of social citizenship rights.

The public actor's involvement is justified through the understanding of workforce integration as a social citizenship right, which requires a universalistic and equal distribution. Specificities of the public provision of employment services in Sweden include a wide vacancy database, learnings from previous and current programs but challenges with employee-seeking companies. Research tends to challenge the efficiency of Public Employment offices, a central argument in the introduction of private actors.

### Support and matching companies: the marketization of employment services

In Europe, the field of employment services is the centre of a strong trend of subcontracting. The European Union has been pushing towards cooperation between public, private and non-governmental providers of employment services. This kind of partnership comes with its own kind of specificities, impact evaluations and justifications.

#### **Specificities of Support and Matching companies as job-brokers**

The support and matching companies are market actors and their main clients are employers. Their services are mostly targeted at delivering the best candidates for vacant positions. Some of these companies offer job-search services but unlike the Public Employment Service, they have no legal obligations to specifically target unemployed jobseekers (Andersen et al, 2015). Subcontracting allows the involvement of civil society organisations that may better advocate and serve the needs of specific target groups like immigrants. Support and matching as providers of employment service can specialize either in the skills and barriers facing a given target group or the competence requirements of a specific sector (Andersen et al, 2015). Private companies have stronger incentives to invest in cost saving technologies and quality improving innovations based on the framework of Grossman and Hart (1986), Hart and Moore (1990) and Hart (1995). This claim should be tempered by the fact that private contractors may have strong incentives to reduce costs, which can undermine the quality of the provided services (Shleifer, 1998; Hart et al, 1997). Support and matching companies rely in part on different working methods than the Public Employment Service, they have a stronger emphasis on improving job search technology (Bennmarker et al, 2013). They innovate job-brokerage in the sense that they use a more labour intense technology when providing employment services; unemployed at private providers meet their case worker 2.4 times as often. The job-seekers also felt that they received more help in improving their job search strategies and more help in finding vacancies, than those at the Public Employment Service



(Bennmarker et al, 2013). The support and matching companies are therefore providing a similar service as the Public Employment Service but with specialization, more time invested and more innovation.

### **Evaluation of Support and Matching companies as job-brokers**

Marketization is based on the assumption that private contractors are better at providing welfare services than public providers, an assumption that has been challenged by research. Based on the subcontracting practices of the European Public Employment Service, private providers have been evaluated to improve labour market outcomes for particular groups and bring innovation to service delivery. In Sweden, two main studies on evaluation of marketization of job-brokerage are by Bennmarker et al., and Sund (2013; 2015). Bennmarker et al conducted a randomized experiment that found no overall difference in the chances of finding employment between support and matching companies and the public employment offices and any effects fading away over time. Nonetheless, unemployed at private providers were much more satisfied with the job-brokerage received; the share that says that they have received sufficient help to find a job is an increase of 83% (Bennmarker et al, 2013). Sund found that the labour market areas of Sweden that cooperated with private actors had lower turnover to employment than labour market areas that did not. This result could be explained by the contract agreement with private contractors being not optimally designed with a poor incentive structure. Another explanation is that the introduction of private contractors increased the administrative burden upon the staff of the Public Employment Service. More than 60 % of caseworkers answered that their administrative burden had worsen since the introduction of subcontracting. The time spent on administrative task could have been spent on assisting jobseekers (Sund, 2015). If at the European level, subcontracting has been evaluated to provide positive outcomes for some population, the Swedish research on the topic do not confirm a positive evaluation of support and matching companies.

### **Rationale of Support and Matching companies as job-brokers**

Marketization policies are drawn from neoclassical economics and neo-liberal thought with markets being inherently more effective in producing goods and services than the State, since these are exposed to competitive forces and price signals (Savas, 2000). The two main characteristics are therefore centrality of the citizen or customer, and accountability for results (Manning, 2000). It does not exempt government from performing tasks nor suppress tasks, it is mainly about improving efficiency and responsiveness to political principles through customer choice and competition (Manning, 2000). The introduction of marketization in welfare services is an opportunity for private service providers to enter into areas which had previously been largely protected from market forces. ‘Choice’ is then introduced to citizens as a novel policy feature (Blömqvist, 2004). Private alternatives to the Swedish Welfare State used to be highly marginalized (about 1-2 per cent of total service provision), creating a system where there were very few opportunities for choice. This fostered criticism after 1980, arguing that this virtual all-public system provided too little opportunity for service users to choose between different alternatives. Marketization was introduced in the early 1990s, opening the Welfare State to private service providers and by that, widened the scope of user choice. ‘User choice’ is allegedly a powerful market mechanism allocating resources between competing service providers and giving them signals about how users view the quality of their services. Then the choices of users will both enhance the competition and improve the service quality. Marketization also implies the *individualization of responsibility* for one’s well-being. Citizens do not only need to be more active in order to realize the full potential of their welfare services,

but they are also more responsible for the *outcomes* of these choices. While the freedom of making such choices gives more power to the individuals, it also involves the possibility of making bad or 'wrong' choices (Svedberg Helgesson & Mörtz, 2013). There is a responsibility for making informed choices that implies that they are also exposed to the uncertainty and risks that come with making such choices (Giddens, 1990). In opposition to this active citizens making choice to fully utilize their citizenship rights, the form of citizenship that was created in the post-war Swedish Welfare State was more 'passive' with the State making the informed choice for the citizens and providing only one outcome (Johansson & Hvinden, 2007).

Marketization is a policy trend rooted in neoclassical economics and neo-liberal thought for which it empowers citizens through 'user choice' and competition with the elimination of virtual monopolies. The justifications of the provision of job-brokerage by private actors is based on competition and consumer choice. These features are presented as improving the quality of the service provided through the voucher system, while research has failed to identify such positive outcomes in Sweden.

### Research gap: justifications & theoretical framework

Based on the literature review, it appears that the subcontracting of job-brokerage has been researched merely as the support and matching companies' actions towards job-seeking citizens and employee-seeking companies. This research has been composed of macro and quantitative studies. Perceptions of the private actors while producing job-brokerage which is intrinsically linked to the Welfare State have yet to be analysed, requiring a theoretical tools adequate for justifications. The sociology of justification encompasses exchanges of justifications in complex situations while providing a simple overview. Based on this framework, the support and matching actors seem to have reached a critical moment and are engaged in a distribution of blames and criticism for the lack of success of integration. The justifications and order of worth within the introduction of private actors are a crucial element to understand such criticism, as well as the question of how public and private companies interact.

### **The job-brokerage market at a critical moment**

The political choice of marketization has led to the program of support and matching, which has been running for seven years now. The author argues that this program is now at a critical moment as more investments are done, but, in parallel, its impact on the Welfare State is questioned. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Mikael Damberg, Swedish Minister for enterprises, announced a governmental funding of SEK 50 million for these new actors. This investment is justified by the drastic in numbers of foreign-born job-seekers with the 2015 refugee crisis, with employment integration at the centre of the political agenda. There is a political support towards the support and matching companies even if their introduction has profoundly transformed the political tradition of the Swedish Welfare State (Blömqvist, 2004). The Swedish Welfare State has been and is still undergoing a transforming process whereby it risks losing one of its main characteristics, namely the belief in and institutional support for social egalitarianism. The gradual privatization and market-orientation of the welfare services since the 1990s is theorized to undermine previous Swedish notions of a "people's home" where uniform, high-quality services are provided by the state to all citizens, regardless of income, social background or cultural orientation: a critical moment with possible shift of worth is therefore observed by Blömqvist (2004). A critical moment is theorized by Boltanski and Thévenot as following

"people (...) who are doing things together (...) and who have to coordinate their actions, realize that something is going wrong; that they cannot get along any more; that something has to change." Such critical moment is a time of both retrospective turn and expression of discontent from actors encompassing blames, criticisms and development of justifications (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999).

### The orders of worth developed to evaluate criticisms

To understand perceptions among multiple actors during critical moments, Boltanski and Thévenot developed the idea of "imperative of justification". Support and matching companies are developing justifications of their involvement in job-brokerage following the rule of acceptability. Such justifications are plural, but cannot be reduced to a direct expression of selfish interests nor to an anarchic and endless confrontation of heterogeneous world-views. There is therefore an imperative of justification and of answer to the criticisms. If the experiences following one another in conflict processes are legitimate, they firmly bind actors to claim the universality of their reasoning according to the order of worth they refer to. The actors of the dispute will then ground their stances on a legitimate worth. However, all the forms of behaviour are not gathered under a single principle of equivalence. There are different possible orders of worth which permit to develop different justifications. Boltanski and Thévenot identify six of them in their article in 1999: civic, industrial, inspired, domestic, market and opinion. The **Inspired** worth is completely independent of recognition by other so its mode of evaluation includes grace, nonconformity and creativeness. The **Domestic** worth is based on a hierarchy of trust based on a chain of personal dependencies and therefore evaluating someone's worth means knowing the place occupied by this person in the network of dependencies. A **Civic** order of worth is based on the intrinsic value of human beings as a group since people are not individual beings but collective ones. Being part or a representative of a group ensures the highest evaluation while particular are evaluated as less relevant. The **Opinion** worth states that evaluation is totally independent of personal dependencies and self-esteem and instead based completely on number of individuals who grant their recognition. The last two orders of worth are particularly relevant for economic actions. **Market** worth is based on the position of one as buyer or seller with resources and opportunities. The **Industrial** order of worth is based on efficiency, it is a more technical order of worth, that evaluates the situation in terms of the outcome.

	Inspired	Domestic	Civic	Opinion	Market	Industrial
Mode of evaluation (worth)	Grace, nonconformity, creativeness	Esteem, reputation	Collective interest	Renown	Price	Productivity, efficiency
Format of relevant information	Emotional	Oral, exemplary, anecdotal	Formal, official	Semiotic	Monetary	Mesurable: criteria, statistics
Elementary relation	Passion	Trust	Solidarity	Recognition	Exchange	Functional link
Human qualification	Creativity, ingenuity	Authority	Equality	Celebrity	Desire, purchasing power	Professional competency, expertise

Table 1 Orders of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999)

Facing a critical moment, an actor in a critical moment is submitted to an imperative of justification. To ground its stances on a legitimate worth, the actor is then faced with the choice of an order of worth among six identified by Boltanski and Thévenot. The order of worth will be the evaluation of justifications of all actors.

### **A proxy to orders of worth: blames and order of criticisms**

The criticisms exchanged during a critical moment are the result of the retrospective turn of each actor and fed by past interactions between actors. They are also rooted in particular orders of worth or on challenging the order of worth that is currently used in justifications. According to Boltanski and Thévenot's framework, criticisms can be of first or second order depending on the acceptance or not of the orders of worth. A first order criticism is denouncing a discrepancy between the order of worth used to evaluate a situation and the situation it is trying to evaluate. The situation is then criticized as unfair because a kind of worth relevant inside one world has been carried into another. In this order of criticism, this is not the order of worth itself that is challenged but its components of evaluation, a new and purer evaluation process is ought. In opposition, the second order of criticism is much more radical as it aims at substituting another order of worth, relevant in another world, to the current one. Then the dispute is no longer turned towards the way the evaluation of the situation must be designed so as to be fair, but towards knowing what kind of order of worth, relevant in a certain world, would really fit the situation, a situation that Thévenot and Boltanski qualify as a *shift of worth*. Blames and criticisms are therefore a proxy to understand the order of worth actors are choosing to evaluate a situation. Based on the perceptions of the other actors and self, the shift of worth presented permits to grasp the justifications of ones' actions.

The Support and Matching program is currently in a critical moment as its impact on the welfare services as social citizenship rights is challenged. The neoliberal arguments are presented as creating a rupture with the historical Swedish Welfare State and undermining the political rationale of social equality. Such retrospection creates the urge of a distribution of blames and criticisms, all rooted in orders of worth based on Boltanski and Thévenot's sociology of justifications.

### **Theoretical framework summary**

The development of the marketization of job-brokerage is challenging the historical values of the Swedish Welfare State. Support and matching companies have been operating in complementarity with the public services, ensuring the provision of a welfare service and therefore falling under the Swedish Welfare State. In the case of the support and matching sector, the measurement of the organizational phenomena can be found in previous literature. However, such measurement repeatedly excludes justifications, mainly focusing on the specificities, evaluation and rationales of either public or private actors. If macro studies are necessary to grasp the movements within this market, conceptualize the role of private actors in job-brokerage requires a closer look at these companies' perceptions of the program and a deeper understanding of the justifications of their own involvement. The theoretical framework of "imperative of justification" of Thévenot and Boltanski is an interesting tool to understand perceptions of actors during complex critical moments. Blames and criticisms are both a symptom of a critical moment and a proxy to understand the orders of worth used by private actors. The criticisms allow to understand better the perceptions of other support and matching

companies, the job-seeking population, the employee-seeking companies, and the structure paying the voucher, the Public Employment Service. Each justification of an actor is rooted in an order of worth which is observable of the blames distributed, drawn from either inspired, domestic, civic, opinion, market and industrial. The study of these relationships will therefore permit to conceptualize how support and matching companies perceive their role within the Welfare State. However, the literature on this sector remains at a macroeconomic level without researching the blames, grievances, criticisms and justifications developed by support and matching companies.

### **The blames, criticism and grievances within the support and matching market**

The analysis of perceptions is then necessary to answer the research question of the justifications developed by private actors in the job-brokerage market aimed at decreasing immigrants' unemployment? This theoretical framework also allows to answer the additional questions by first providing a classifications of blames, criticisms and grievances

- What are the blames, criticism and grievances expressed within the support and matching market and regarding which actor?

### **Consumer choice and Welfare State**

Using the orders of worth, it is then possible to conceptualize justifications of support and matching companies and if they include notions that have been identified in the theoretical framework: welfare services, competition and consumer choice.

- How are competition and consumer choice incorporated as justifications in formal and informal communication?
- What are the justifications developed by coaches in support and matching companies regarding the welfare aspect of their work?

### **Differences in justification among support and matching companies**

Another complementary question is if there is a difference between justifications of support and matching companies

- Are there differences in justification among support and matching companies?

## Section 2: Design and Methods

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*This chapter presents the thesis' methodological choices. The abductive research approach is presented, followed by a discussion on data collection including research methodology. Further, the quality aspects of the design are critically assessed: reliability, validity and objectivity.*

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This thesis looks at the Swedish Private Employment Agencies who have been specifically working towards the employment integration of foreign-born unemployed. This is a highly diverse group of private actors including multinational companies like EducationNetwork or extremely small structures that evolved from non-profit activities like MigrantSpecialist. To better understand the companies' perception of their own role in the welfare service, their employees are important information providers. These employees are at the forefront of the system, they are the ones who deliver the welfare service to citizens and ultimately they are the crucial links in delivering the service the whole system rests upon. The coaches of support and matching companies have a unique insight on the market but also on their justifications at this critical moment and on their perceptions of the other actors including the Public Employment Service. In order to understand the different justifications and orders of worth developed by the Support and Matching companies, both informal and formal communication produced by support and matching companies have been analysed in an abductive process.

### Motivations for an abductive research approach

This thesis was written from an abductive perspective in the goal of exploring justifications. The literary review was a continuous process, feeding both the analysis of interviews and the constant re-writing of the interview guides. The chosen research tools are a qualitative research design of formal communication material followed by interviews, which allows to move from *generative* to *evaluative* research, where the initial generation of diverse insights (inductive) can be more directly tested in specific hypotheses in the later stages (deductive). The combination ensures better internal validity in the overall research design since potential cofounders can be discovered in the first and more inductive stages.

### Data collection: Motivations for the Chosen Research Tools

#### **Motivations for a qualitative research method**

Qualitative research enables the author to expand thinking and research, as well as learn from larger and collective experience and avoid misdirection (Lee et al, 1999). Qualitative research is concerned with the meaning rather than the measurement of organizational phenomena (Daft, 1983). This is an assumption from qualitative research procedures that organization realities are not concrete, but are the projection of human imagination (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Direct involvement in organizations and the use of human senses to interpret organization phenomena are necessary for understanding the clashing justifications existing in this sector. In order to analyse blames, grievances and criticism, the orders of worth were studied in terms of both formal and informal positions. Formal communications are the marketing material produced by the support and matching companies. Such material includes



brochures, social media content and websites. This content is developed to convince the job-seeker in the Support and Matching Program to choose the company over its competitors. Another goal of such content is also to attract job-seekers who are not aware of the existence of the program. Therefore, the justification is high both as a specific company and for the program. The formal communication produced by support and matching companies is used to extract inductive knowledge. An alternative would have been participant observations between Public Employment Service caseworkers and Support and Matching coaches. This method was discarded because of a lack of resources. Conducted by a team of researchers with sufficient access and method, such a participant observation would provide extremely valuable input in terms of justifications and criticism. To complement this analysis, interviews were conducted with counsellors in Support and Matching Companies. Interviewing these companies instead of Public Employment Service was a choice made due to the time constraints of a master thesis. However, additional research on the justifications developed by the Public Employment Service through formal and informal communication would provide additional understandings of the phenomenon studied in this thesis.

## **Participating companies**

### *Sampling of companies*

The Swedish Public Employment Service gives access to the names, location and classification of all companies working within the support and matching program. The classification concerns only suppliers who have at least 18 participants during the measurement period. The supplier receives one, two or three stars depending on the percentage of participants who have been given a job or have begun to study after termination of service, taking into account the individual's specific circumstances. The list of ratings is updated every three months. Based on the latest version of this list at the beginning of the research process (December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016), a first selection of companies was developed, from which companies with less than 18 participants were discarded, as they could be either too new or inefficient. Companies operating outside Stockholm were also discarded since long-interviews produce more valuable information when performed face-to-face rather than by phone. Both the sampling of companies and of interviewees inside the companies were performed non-randomly. All of the companies that were situated in Stockholm were included in the Public Employment Service list from December 2016 and had more than 18 participants had their formal communication studied and were contacted for semi-structured interviews. Three companies were chosen to be studied in-depth through interviews of coaches.

### *Presentation of the three companies*

The three companies studied in depth have been anonymized through new names: MigrantSpecialist, IdealNGO and EducationNetwork. On a spectrum from private actors to non-profit generating revenues, EducationNetwork is the most purely profit-oriented actor and IdealNGO the least with the administrative status of a non-profit. MigrantSpecialist has the administrative status of a for-profit while emphasizing a goal of support of vulnerable populations. These differences were present in both the formal and informal communications. The three companies were proposing education programs before starting a support and matching offer. None of them proposed solely support and matching, it was rather an additional offer among others. Both MigrantSpecialist and IdealNGO were already involved with Swedish For Immigrants, a part of the introduction program. EducationNetwork, on the other side, was proposing for-profit education. In the opposite of MigrantSpecialist who is an extremely young

organization, IdealNGO was founded in 1960 and EducationNetwork in 1898. MigrantSpecialist started to provide the program as a complement to its offer of Swedish for foreigners, traineeships, mentorship and speaking groups, all targeting newly arrived (populations). IdealNGO provided it as an additional feature as well. On the other hand, EducationNetwork created this new offer as a response to the Swedish State expanding the reach of the program. It was a business opportunity, outside of the population usually targeted by the company.

### **Semi-structured interview design**

Semi-structured interviews are preferred in qualitative research as generating deeper insights since interviewees can bring up aspects they personally find relevant (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Edmondson & McManus, 2007). The interviews were based on an interview guide covering a range of questions, where room was left for the respondent to elaborate further in order to gather more reliable data and thus support the research question in a way that is difficult through standardized questions.

#### *Motivations for a semi-structured interview design*

Questionnaires allow the reach to wider populations but it was not a chosen method as there is an important need to know much beforehand the phenomena enough to formulate adequately the question. Using semi-structured interview guides in the long interviews allows to gain flexibility, to follow where the respondents' train of thoughts when still covering common areas in each interview, increasing the construct validity of the research design. Based on the research question of justifications, semi-structured interview was chosen as the order and length in which the topics are developed by interviewees are just as important as the words used. through receiving in-depth information and enabling dialogue with follow-up questions and misunderstanding checked directly. The semi-structured interview also fits the most the abductive scientific position of this thesis by permitting to cover the same areas but allow the interviewees to develop their own most important points. The approach of these interview was to "treat individuals as heroes of their own drama" in order to access valuable sources of particular information and at the same time "allow *both* parties to explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved" (Brenner, Brown & Canter, 1985). Throughout the interview, questions were kept varied and the follow-up questions depended on the respondent's answer, enabling the interviewers to steer the dialogue in directions of interest (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). Own insights on this topic are currently limited as there is little qualitative research on relationships between Public Employment Service and subcontractors in a Swedish context. Mullins points towards the strengths of long interviews to extract issues whose identity neither the interviewee nor interviewer know yet - *unknown unknowns* (Mullins, 2007). The long interview can generate answers to key questions the researcher needs to know without biasing the respondents, and an open-ended semi-structured format allows the identification and exploration of questions that the interviewer do not even know they should ask at this stage.

#### *Interview guides structure*

The interview guides have been drafted following Mc Cracken guide on "The Long Interview" (1988). The guides were created as a funnel structure, starting broadly with general thoughts about their daily jobs, their companies, their position within the market, their relationships with different actors and their beliefs on the future of both their companies and the support and matching sector. The interview guide consisted of five parts: a) background, b)



role as a coach, c) support and matching company, d) support and matching program and d) concluding questions. The interviews started in rather basic questions in part a), not requiring too much reflection, but instead intuitive answers from the respondents, addressing the interviewees' educational and professional background. It also provided the researchers with the opportunity to become more familiar with the interviewee. Further, the background section also aimed to discover the respondent's experience with job-seekers and the public Employment Service and their reason for choosing their support and matching company as employer. The following part b) role as a coach, aimed to discover the perception of the daily work within a support and matching company. In addition, the interviewer wished to gain insight into the interactions with other actors of the support and matching program did the coach experience daily. Section c) aimed to provide insight into the company as itself, what the interviewees' perceptions of the service provided and to who. The section d) was expanding the questions to support and matching as a program, its successes and areas of improvements. The concluding section e) looked into the interviewees opinion regarding what is key to understand the employment services and the support and matching program and closed the interview session by asking if there was anything else the interviewer may have overlooked.

### *Sampling of interviewees*

The interviewees were selected based on the fact that they were working in the front-line with Mintzberg's strategy of direct research on managers (1973) and decision making (Mintzberg, Raisinghani, & Theoret, 1976) illustrates how powerful first hand knowledge can be. The interviewers presented diverse age, educational background and seniority in their respective organizations. The researcher has chosen a non-random sampling method where the aim was to recruit diverse interview subjects across generations, seniority in the company, educational and professional backgrounds and an even distribution of gender. While a larger randomized sample grants higher external validity, the limited sample size better allows the researcher to investigate differences between different companies in depth.

### *Data documentation and analysis*

As the researcher was unable to lead discussion and take notes simultaneously, the interviews were recorded and transcribed within 24 hours, providing a closer knowledge of the insights gained from the data (Bazeley, 2013). Before each interview, the interviewer asked for permission to record what was said in order to attain comprehensive data documentation and ensure the quality of research. All interviewees allowed to record their answers for this purpose. When analysing collected data, a thematic analysis method was used for categorizing qualitative data through emerging themes that are considered important to the description of the research phenomenon. A theme is described as "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Mainemelis et al, 2002). Hence the researcher developed categories, words or phrases that function as labels for segments of data (Mainemelis et al, 2002). An overview of the process is schematically presented

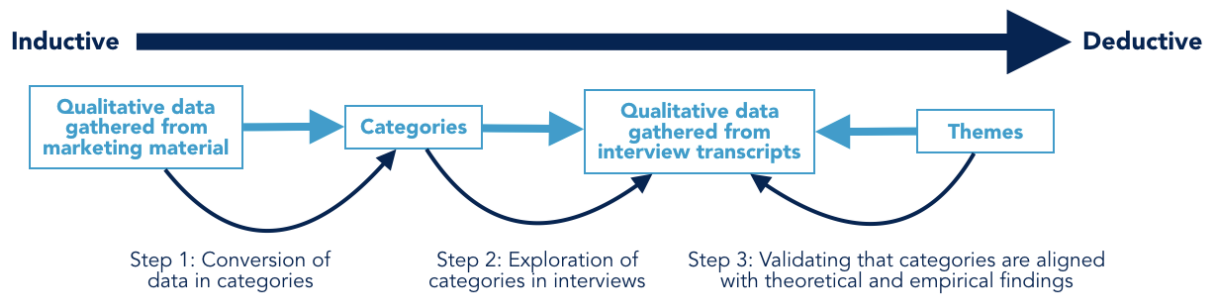


Figure 4 Data Analysis Process

In the case of this thesis, the approach is theoretically thematic, starting from theory with analysis of formal communication. The findings are then sorted into temporary categories. The interviews were then designed around these interviews to provide answers to what is essential in finding out. The themes from the literature review was additionally feeding the data from transcripts. This was due to the fact that the researcher felt the need to get the initial theoretical insight necessary to formulate the proper research question and carry out the thesis in a reliable way prior to being able to oscillate between empirics and theory abductively throughout the rest of the thesis process. An inductive approach was taken as a first step (Step 1), where the researchers coded all data from the marketing material of the three companies. Through this approach, categories were identified without connecting them to theory. The exploration of these categories during interviews allowed to keep only the most pertinent categories to be analysed (Step 2). In the first phase of the analysis of transcripts, the researcher compared the answers from all the interviewees to identify which categories the coaches perceived to be most central. In the following phase, transcripts were searched for quotations and “between the lines” indications in the interviews that disclosed either support or incongruities in relation to the orders of worth of Boltanski and Thévenot. The analysis has been mainly in pattern identification among the different interviewees, trying to draw the justifications developed by support and matching companies. A deductive approach was taken as a third step (Step 3), the researcher entered a sorting process of relevant categories into themes identified in the literature reviewed. This way the researchers verified that the theoretically identified themes remained relevant for the thesis findings, from both a theoretical and empirical perspective.

## Quality consideration

Reliability and validity are two concepts most often associated with quantitative research. However, these concepts are also relevant for qualitative research methods. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in that it is not seeking prediction, causal determination and generalisation of results but rather understanding of situations of similar character. Consequently, the meaning of reliability and validity change slightly. Often in qualitative research one can instead use the words such as credibility, trustworthiness and transferability (Golafshani, 2003).

### Reliability

Reliability describes the degree of exactness in measurement and defines to which extent a study can be repeated by different researchers and over time (Flick, 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) consider this difficult to achieve due to the impossibility in freezing a social setting.

This tends to have a negative impact on the transferability of the research to another context. This thesis tries to be as exhaustive as possible on the process of data collection and analysis in order to ensure comprehensiveness and potential for future research replication. Internal reliability (Cohen et al. 2011) regards the subjectivity of the researchers' empirical interpretation. This was a particular challenge for a thesis where interview and analysis were conducted by only one person. The process of categorization and then thematic analysis was put into place in order to limit the subjectivity of the findings. Although precautions have been taken in order to assure a higher reliability, acknowledgement must still be made to the fact that a bias to some extent still is an inevitable part of the process (Timulak, 2009), deriving from the experiences and interpretations of the researcher.

## **Objectivity**

Three different forms of objectivity can be distinguished and used to evaluate research quality: objectivity in the data collection, objectivity of the analysis and objectivity of the interpretation. In order to achieve full objectivity, the research result should be totally independent of the researcher. This implies that if different researchers use the same method to the same people, their results need to be identical (Flick, 2011).

### *Objectivity of data collection*

The researcher strived to achieve objectivity in the data collection by standardizing the interview process and protocol as much as possible. Despite this, full objectivity was not mainly due to language. A bias emerged from the interviewer to be a non-Swedish speaker. A few interviews were refused on the basis that the interviewees did not feel confident to express themselves in English, leading to a risk of selection bias. Also the respondents might have been culturally inclined to give overly positive justifications and avoid criticism. This phenomenon known as social desirability bias can dramatically lower the construct validity of the research design. Thus, the interviewer was careful to state in the demand of interview, the following exchanges and the interview itself that she was not linked to the Public Employment Service in any way and that the names of both the interviewee and the company would remain anonymous in the publication. Qualitative research inevitably involves a risk that researchers and interviewees interpret questions and answers differently, depending on their own personal backgrounds and perspectives. This risk was mitigated during interviews by thoroughly explaining questions and definitions as well as recurrently asking for clarifications and examples. The researcher believes a high degree of mutual understanding was reached.

### *Objectivity of analysis and interpretation*

Objectivity of the analysis refers to how far the classification of answers is independent of the researcher (Flick, 2011). In order to reduce individual biases in this stage, the findings were classified and analysed compared to existing literature. However, the researcher acknowledges that cultural backgrounds, as well as other individual traits, inevitably have influenced the classification of answers. This issue also concerns the objectivity of interpretation, which has naturally been affected by subjective views and values. According to Flick (2011) qualitative research is mainly built on communication, interaction and the researcher's subjective interpretations. The objectivity of interpretation is evaluated as internal and external validity.

## **Internal and external validity**

Validity addresses the integrity of the conclusions generated in the research (Cohen et al. 2011) as well as the measuring of the right things. Internal validity denotes generalisation of conclusions within a study, whereas external validity refers to the ability to generalise the findings further than the present study (Yin, 2003). Cohen et al. (2011) highlights a risk of lower validity since analysis of qualitative data is built on the researchers' individual interpretations. Validity can be segmented into two parts, internal and external (Yin 2013; Cohen et al. 2011).

### *Internal validity*

Internal validity refers to the match between researchers' observations and the developed theoretical ideas (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982), which is a strength of qualitative research due to lengthy participation of a group in the social life over a long period of time (Cohen et al. 2011). According to Mishler (1986) the concept of validity can be reformulated in qualitative research; instead of assessing the "state of validity" he suggests a focus on the "process of validating", which is defined as the social construct of knowledge and used to evaluate the trustworthiness of observations and interpretations in a study. There was no control group design in this research and therefore, it cannot be ensured that the results are fully unambiguous. However, the researcher has strived to increase the validity by scrutinizing interview situations for any sign of strategic communication by the interviewees, as well as by constantly questioning the interpretations against the empirical data.

### *External validity*

External validity of a study refers to the degree to which the findings can be repeated or replicated, and if the study's results are consistent over time (Golafshani, 2003). In accordance with Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007), the participants sampling might decrease validity as the sample number is relatively small and can not be proven to be representative. Sampling biases skew the learning from research when only a selection of the market is investigated (Denrell, 2005). Due to the richness of data and necessary analysis, the researcher made the choice of focusing on three companies that present sufficient disparities. There is a possibility that these companies present similar behaviours or needs, and only investigating one of these might reveal a false correlation between certain behaviours or characteristics and the justifications developed; leading to an overestimation of the importance of the explanation (Collier & Mahoney, 1996). As the sample of companies have not been proven to be representative, the external validity of the thesis is relatively low. Due to the variety of methods, justifications and actions of these companies, the author argues that the risk of overestimation has been mitigated. Recurring themes in all interviews point toward the study containing trustworthy and accurate results. The researcher has aimed to reach a relatively high external validity by focusing on three companies from different parts of the spectrum for-profit and non-profit and a diverse sample within these companies of interviewees in regard to age, gender, educational and professional background. The transferability of the results to other points in time is questionable.

This thesis analyses justifications of support and matching companies based on marketing material and in-depth interviews of coaches. The design and method have been

chosen to fit the abductive method with an emphasis of iterative learning from data. In order to study the justifications developed by support and matching companies, semi-structured interviews have been chosen as they allow a richness of data, completed with formal communication. Three companies representing a variety of organizations are studied more extensively. The coaches have been chosen as interviewees as they are the most directly in contact with all Public Employment Service, job-seekers and employee-seeking companies. The data collected from both formal and informal communications are now presented in terms of perceptions and evaluations of the support and matching program.

## Section 3: Empirical data

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*In this chapter the results from the data collection from formal and informal communication are presented. To understand the web of perceptions, the findings are presented thematically first as perceptions of other actors of the support and matching program and then perceptions of the program itself.*

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The empirical data is composed of a cross-analysis of formal and informal communication. Formal communication data is extracted from marketing content by the three support and matching companies and informal communication from in-depth interviews with career coaches from these companies. The main findings are presented on two central topics: the perceptions of the other actors within the support and matching program and the program itself.

### Perceptions of other actors inside the support and matching program

The support and matching companies are regularly in contact with job-seekers and the Public Employment Service. With less regularity, they interact with employee-seeking companies and other support and matching companies. The perception of each of these actors collected through formal and informal communication are now presented.

#### **Perceptions of other support and matching companies**

Neither the formal nor the informal communication of the companies address directly the question of the other support and matching companies as competition. The interview guide included one question on the companies' perception of their competitors. This question was met with carefulness and especially IdealNGO emphasized the fact that it was not "thinking in terms of competition". One of the interviewees from this company also added that he "just hope(d) everybody was working well with people who come to them".

However, and perhaps in contradiction the perception of companies was not always so neutral. IdealNGO emphasized that they were not comparable to commercial enterprises and public authorities, being driven by "neither profit nor obligation". One of the coach emphasized how, compared to other companies, IdealNGO "see everybody who comes to us, we are not a big corporation. All the money is reinvested in the company, we are not a corporation that takes money and gives it to others". One of the coaches from MigrantSpecialist responded that "the notion of consumer choice is for people to freely choose which providers they want for support and matching. They also have the possibility to change. I am fairly open with that, then the companies have to deliver".

There was therefore a confirmation of the stance of competition increasing the quality of the service delivered. However, this declaration was preceded by the one that MigrantSpecialist was the biggest support and matching organization in Malmö.

#### **Perceptions of job-seekers and employee-seeking companies**

Even though the interview guide included questions on job-seekers and employee-seeking companies as clients of the support and matching program, a first finding was how little

interest the coaches were willing to talk about employee-seeking companies. IdealNGO and MigrantSpecialist both reformulated the question to talk only about job-seekers. EducationNetwork was the only case where there was a reflexion around the employee-seekers, even if it was rather limited. When asked about the service they were providing, a coach identified the Public Employment Service as the company's main client and the job-seekers as a secondary client. The employee-seeking companies were not even mentioned at this point of the interview. Employee-seekers were later described as choosing job-seekers as "doing Corporate Social Responsibility" and not Human Resources. One of EducationNetwork's coach stated that companies were a "picky client" for the support and matching company. Employee-seeking companies were also presented as too rigid on their expectations from applicants, including in terms of fluency in Swedish.

Job-seekers were approached with a recognition of a difficult situation. All coaches stated a difficulty to integrate within a competitive job market. They noticed a vicious circle of job-seekers staying in the support and matching activities for a long time, leading to demotivation. When asked to identify the main challenge on their respective job, coaches cited "people are here for 30 years and do not speak Swedish". The perception of job-seekers included the lack of understanding of the job market and unwillingness to fully immerse themselves in the program. Job-seekers were perceived for having too high expectations due to ignorance of the job market. "Job searchers should be more flexible too, be aware of what the job markets looks like and match themselves to the companies need". A particular example given by a coach from MigrantSpecialist was that "7 out of 10 women I talk to want to work in childcare, they all want to do the same thing. It is my job to tell them to apply for jobs, to open opportunities". One coach from EducationNetwork declared that some job-seekers were actually not searching, as they preferred to live on benefits from the Welfare State.

The perceptions of job-seekers and employee-seeking companies differ widely. Employee-seeking companies were scarcely mentioned while job-seekers are at the centre of discussions. The perceptions of job-seekers were also centred around challenge, expectations and abilities.

### **Perceptions of the Public Employment Service**

The perception of the Public Employment Service as an institution and its design of the support and matching sector was a redundant theme among interviewees. This perception was focused around the excessive administrative burden, lack of flexibility and the lack of understanding of ground situation. The administrative tasks (action plan, monthly report and attendance) were described as an integral part of the task of support and matching. However, these tasks were considered as taking over time that could be spent with job-seekers. At IdealNGO, a coach presented his daily work as followed: "A regular day for me is meetings with people, the contestants, 6 or 7 a day, each of them being between 30 minutes and an hour. There is also a lot of administration, I take notes, I give a schedule, I am in contact with Arbetsförmedlingen (the Public Employment Service). This is a lot of computer time, on Arbetsförmedlingen's computer software. Some rules are quite hard: you must do a schedule for a person (30 hours/week) and then write what they are doing."

The Public Employment Service was in most interviews perceived as an overly rigid structure. IdealNGO complained about the one-way direction of information: "Arbetsförmedlingen set the rules for us and we must follow them". A common theme was that support and matching companies had ground experience with job-seekers but did not feel that



the Public Employment Service was implementing these learnings. For a coach from MigrantSpecialist, the relation was "weird", mainly due to the situation of the Public Employment Service "renting out its service to others" and that some caseworkers had low opinion of support and matching companies. This administration is also perceived as an inconvenience for job-seekers. One coach recalled several examples of contestants finding an adequate job and wanting to start right away but having to wait for official papers to be signed.

All companies emphasized their value-added as having direct contacts. The role of the Public Employment Service was confined to an administrative one, a central organization sending applicants. The necessity of such a role was even challenged in itself: "Without Arbetsförmedlingen, maybe we could do a good job, it will be more important that the organisation who work with job-seekers has good contact with employee-seeking companies" or "Support and matching companies can work with more freedom than Arbetsförmedlingen". EducationNetwork also has a long-term plan to leave the support and matching program to become an independent Private Employment Agency, using the example of ManPower. This decision was justified as a mismatch between the expectations of the Public Employment Service and the company standards.

While the three companies show variations in their perceptions of the other actors in the support and matching program, common trends are observable including limited perception of employee-seeking companies, diverging attitudes towards other employment companies and ambivalent relationships with job-seekers and Public Employment Service

## Perceptions of the Support and Matching program

The Support and Matching program itself is perceived differently depending of the company. The main questions addressed are the place of the company within the program, the objectives of the program and its future.

### **Services provided by own company within the program**

If employment services are the core of the support and matching program, each company has a different perception of the nature of these employment services.

MigrantSpecialist emphasizes a specialisation in the target population of migrants. The pictures used on the formal communication are presenting a high diversity of individuals enjoying the service provided by MigrantSpecialist. The ideas of a one-on-one relationship with numerous coaches that are multilingual, caring and motivated is heavily emphasized as well as the respect gained among the foreign-born populations. Such respect is viewed by coaches as the direct results of a long-term involvement through Swedish for Immigrants but also the ability of this small enterprise to try new programs in order to better fit the needs of the migrants' population. One coach clearly stated that this proximity was not something a caseworker could develop. The coach is presented as the centre of this relation, a provider that is caring and listening but also inherently driven "All efforts on (MigrantSpecialist) are based on each person's driving forces, experience and skills to motivate and speed up learning". The company emphasized coaches having contact networks with recruiting employers in restaurants, hotels, healthcare, school, construction, transport, care, IT, logistics etc.



IdealNGO presented a different vision of the service provided. The discourse is the one of corporations being systems taking money from individuals and so helping only the ones who have resources to offer. IdealNGO is presenting itself as an alternative figure where the amount of resources does not impact the ability to join the program and the money is reinvested in a sustainable business model. One of IdealNGO coach stated that it was more important to have contact with other companies than to work with the Public Employment Service, leaning toward the expertise of IdealNGO is found in its network within the non-profit sector. The investment in the business community is presented formally as coaches are recruited based on long experience in specific industries leading to a "widespread network of contacts in the labour market".

EducationNetwork coaches emphasize how their connection to the industry is the main service provided to job-seekers including workshops but also special events organized with employee-seeking companies willing to do it as Corporate Social Responsibility. The organization of such events is perceived as something the Public Employment Service is unable to provide itself, that is why it "needs private companies". Connection with industries and employee-seeking companies are a recurring theme in the employments services provided within the support and matching programs.

MigrantSpecialist emphasize a specialization in migrants' problematic, IdealNGO adds values of a non-profit, and EducationNetwork is presenting specific events with employee-seeking companies. The service provided is therefore centred around one argument. For IdealNGO, the main advantage is on the non-selection approach, to "see everybody who comes to us, we are not a big corporation". Their formal communication is focused on this presentation of a service provider that refuses no-one, reinvests all profits in developing new activities and is looking for the good of all job-seekers. For MigrantSpecialist, it is the implications on other programs for the migrant population that give them an advantage. One of their brochure emphasizes that a job-seeker choosing them will have access to "a straightforward and honest response; a personal environment that you will enjoy (and) many multilingual coaches". The variety of coaches and of additional offers are all targeted directly towards the migrant population. This position goes as far as making their websites accessible in ten languages including Albanian, Arabic, English, Kurdish, Pashto, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Magyar and Persian. EducationNetwork is using its network from the adult education that is their core business. The discourse is more centred on the contact with companies as well as professionalism. Their networking events with companies are also heavily advertised as a proof of the close ties between the company and different industry leaders

### **Support and Matching role and objectives**

The Support and Matching program's goals are not perceived unanimously among the three companies. Discussion around the relationship between job-seekers and the Public Employment Service provide a reflection around the underlying rationale of the program. The design of the support and matching program was perceived as another trial from the public Employment Service without real innovation. One of the coaches emphasized lack of knowledge of the program specificities by caseworkers, leading to the perception of the Service not knowing its own programs. The Public Employment Service was perceived as having blurry goals when designing the program. EducationNetwork, which joined in 2014, discussed the inadequate job-seekers that will be sent by caseworkers: they "sent the wrong kind of people, people who were not job ready".

A recurring analysis was that the Public Employment had been running similar programs and that the differences among them were confusing for both the support and matching companies and the caseworkers themselves. It leads to an inaccurate starting date of the program for one coach from EducationNetwork who thought that the program started in 2014 instead of 2010. One of EducationNetwork coach was particularly vocal on the still diverging expectations existing around the program among job-seekers, the coaches and the caseworkers. When one coach from MigrantSpecialist defined his work, he used the words "As a coach, my role is to give a role, to convince the people who come and see me that they can do everything they want, they can if they want". This is a discourse of support and guidance whereas one of the coaches of EducationNetwork instead declared "You have to convince people on expectations, that you focus 100% on jobs. It is a strict program, only for full-time jobs, obligation to search for jobs from 8:00AM to 5PM so 30 hours a week and activities are mandatory. If you get a job, you have to take it".

The service is perceived as demanding. EducationNetwork insists on exclusively receiving applicants ready to apply for jobs from the Public Employment Service. IdealNGO aims at such a position at the end of the process of looking for a job but is less clear-cut on receiving applicants that are not exactly ready to work. One of the coaches from IdealNGO drew from a professional experience as a soccer coach: "Players in the field are almost professionals and they are focused in becoming good players. On the opposite side of the line, the people I coach in support and matching are far away from being professionals."

### **The future of the program**

During the interviews, the coaches demonstrated worries around the future of the support and matching program. The relationships with the Public Employment Service led to an understanding of support and matching as an ineffective system. Evolutions wished upon included more trust from caseworkers, more modularity in the program and the simplification of the administrative tasks. One coach however called for more evaluation of the support and matching companies, which would in practice require more administration.

The perception was that the Public Employment Service rented out their projects while limiting the amount of freedom necessary for support and matching companies. The job-brokerage was therefore presented as a lost bargain due to the administrative burden and micro-managing from caseworkers. A particular perception of the program itself was the infantilization of job-seekers by extremely rigid rules with the program being described as "hard" and "strict". An IdealNGO coach declared "The rules are for a reason but sometimes it is too much for the people in the program." The fact of having to make schedules for individuals of 30 hours per week and then write down if they successfully completed them felt as an unnecessary harsh rule. Interviewees talked about the assumption of job-seekers being in active searching 8 hours per day, from 8:00 AM to 5 PM, and the constant checking. Another rule that was criticized was the obligation to accept a job if offered, with the example of an Egyptian engineer not being given the choice to refuse a cleaning job. One coach drew a peculiar comparison with the Orwell book *1984* "I believe a person should want a job or an education and Arbetsförmedlingen acting as Big Brother is not a way to go".

The critics focusing around the Public Employment Service led towards two options for each company according to coaches: staying within the program or leaving. The idea that the program in itself would stop was not considered seriously by any company, with the direct assumption that even if it stopped under its current form and name, a similar one would be

piloted by the governmental authorities : "Maybe the election will start a new program, but it will be the same". Therefore, the need of such a program in itself was not challenged, only the relevance for each company within the program. The inability of the Public Employment Service to provide employer mediation services for employee-seeking companies was also a justification for such a program: "Arbetsförmedlingen is more a controlling company that is not really recruiting. They need private companies". One interviewee however expressed the idea support and matching will get more influence with the Public Employment Service losing political: "The government talks about quitting Arbetsförmedlingen, laying it down, it will disappear. Private companies will have a bigger influence over unemployed so we will have more influence". The support and matching program is not only perceived at in an ambiguous situation currently, its future is also discussed by coaches of support and matching companies.

The data extracted from formal and informal communication draws a complex perception of the three support and matching companies. The words used to describe the four other actors of the program are cues on the relationships developed with each and the vision of the relationships among these actors. The support and matching program in itself is discussed as each company emphasized its own value added and challenging the program's rationale, operation and future. Based on this data, an analysis of criticisms, orders of worth and finally justifications are possible.

## Section 4: Analysis

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*In this chapter the results presented in the empirics' section are analysed. The chapter aims at identifying and presenting the blames, criticisms and grievances directed to each actor in order to grasp the orders of worth adopted by each company. The identification of orders of worth will contribute to explaining the justifications of the support and matching companies as providers of employment services.*

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Support and matching companies are voicing blames and criticism to the other actors. Analysing such criticism gives an understanding to the orders of worth that are preferred in the shift of worth. Such orders of worth are a powerful part of the justifications of the private companies in the Welfare State.

### Blames and criticism within the support and matching program

Based on the perceptions of the different actors, a particular distribution of blames and criticism is observable, being towards specific actors or the support and matching program in itself.

#### **Distribution of blames and criticism**

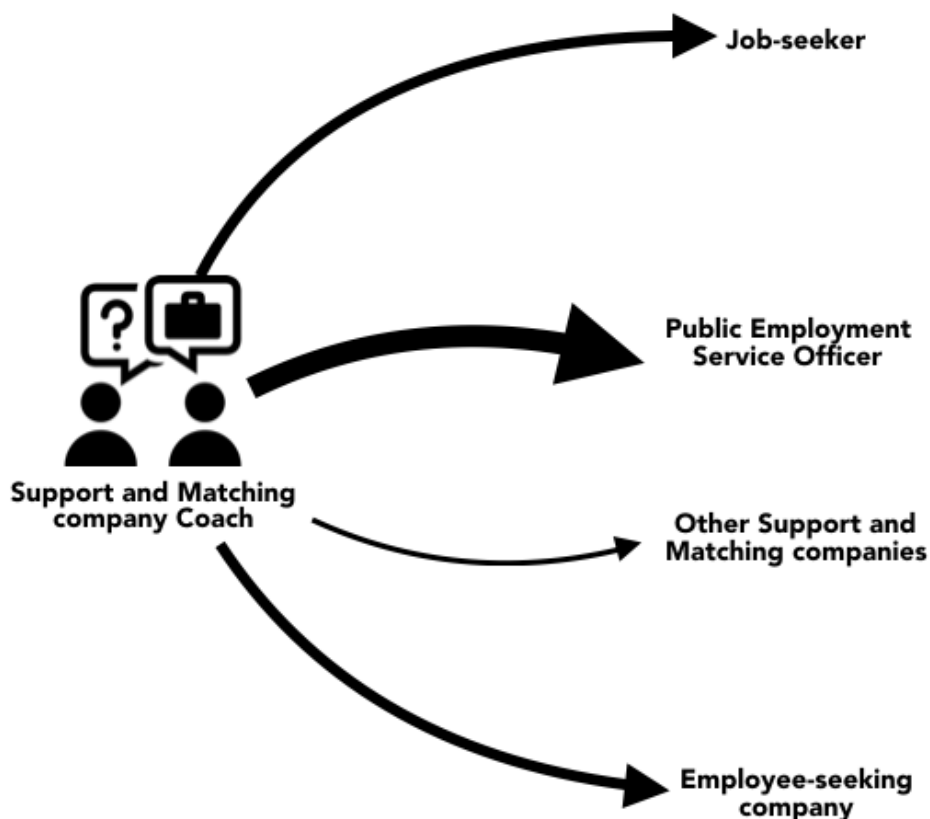
A critical moment is a window of opportunity to start a “discussion in which criticism; blames and grievances are exchanged” (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). The blames and criticism were totally absent from the formal communication, which could be expected as this marketing content is produced to convince job-seekers to choose the company as a support and matching provider. But the sharing of information and choice of words during the interviews could be observed as critical. The actors that are the support and matching companies all reported discontent towards other support and matching companies, the employee-seeking companies interested in using the job-brokerage, the job-seekers in the program and the Public Employment Service.

Some blames were targeting the private actors that are providing the same service: the other support and matching companies. When acknowledged, the other support and matching companies are presented as providing a service of lesser quality. IdealNGO is presenting itself in opposition to big corporations, companies that would be more profit-driven. Blames that were implied in the negative connotation of the words, around three themes: the use of individuals to make profit, the selection of job-seekers and a questionable quality of the service. In a similar fashion, MigrantSpecialist refuses to use the word competition but imply that the quality of the service among support and matching companies is variable. It is therefore a criticism shared of lack of service quality that is distributed.

Employee-seeking companies were blamed by EducationNetwork and MigrantSpecialist but not mentioned altogether by IdealNGO. The two former's main blames revolved around the lack of flexibility of these companies, their unwillingness to look past rigid application criteria like fluency in Swedish. The job-seekers are also blamed for their inability to join the workforce. The blames are formulated around the inability to recognize the difficulty of the job market, too high expectations and a lack of motivation. Such a discourse raises the question of how the coaches interviewed did not seem sensible toward the power imbalance

between job-seekers and employee-seeking companies. An EducationNetwork coach defined both job-seekers and employee-seeking as lacking of flexibility as if settling down job requirements would ask as the same amount of efforts as meeting high requirements. These criticisms were however always balanced by coaches enouncing an emotional support to job-seekers' hardships.

The coaches from the support and matching companies were especially vocal in their criticisms towards one actor: the Public Employment Service. The daily interactions were considered sub-optimal and the different caseworkers were presented of unreliable quality. The institution itself was challenged. Through mechanisms such as jokes, the constant renaming of the same programs and the administrative burden made the Public Employment Service the main responsible for the program's failures. Its administrative role is described as an additional difficulty instead of a simplification. The company is therefore represented as the bottleneck in the chain production that is the support and matching program.



*Figure 5 Distribution of blames, grievances and criticisms towards support and matching program's actors*

## **Challenging the existence of the support and matching companies as job-brokerage and welfare service providers**

The Public Employment Service is the target of most of the blames coming from support and matching coaches. Such concentration of blames is symptomatic of a deeper criticism of the relevance of the public actor's involvement in job-brokerage and so of employment integration as a welfare service. The support and matching program is presented as poorly designed including infantilization of job-seekers, lack of understanding of the job market and poor trust in support and matching companies. If the program is not living up to expectations, the designer should be the one to blame. Employees declaring that their companies would provide a better service without any involvement of the Public Employment Service is a deep criticism of the overall program but also of the involvement of public actors in employment support.

Based on the neoliberal idea of corporations being more efficient than a public actor, the Public Employment Service is perceived as unable to provide adequate support to newly arrived and instead private actors such as support and matching companies should take on this responsibility. Such critics are eluding the central aspect of the Public Employment Service in ensuring the fair treatment of each job-seeker. State involvement in a market is presented as an interference instead of a facilitator through planning. Challenging the relevance of the State in such a domain is linked to challenging welfare as a concept, opposite to neoliberalism. The grievances observed belongs to the first or second order of criticisms as they are both denouncing a reality test features and the relevance of the reality test. The support and matching companies seem to take distance with the idea of employers as the only customers with also a new system of funding by the Swedish Public Employment Service.

The access to employment is a social citizenship right in Sweden, which is therefore heavily infused of Civic order of worth. In the civic polity, civil peace depends on the authority of a sovereign whose position, above the selfish lusts of individuals, secures the common good. But Rousseau's sovereign in the Social Contract is disembodied. In the civic world, a sovereign is formed by the convergence of human wills, as citizens give up their particular interests and direct themselves exclusively towards the common good (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). The Swedish Welfare State relies on both aspects of the Civic order of worth: a disembodied sovereign that is directed towards the common good and a limitation of personal interests.

Based on the data collected, the support and matching program is currently the theatre of an exchange of blames, grievances and criticisms among actors, at least according to the job-brokering companies involved. These blames are unequally distributed among actors with a heavy emphasis on the Public Employment Service. The institution is challenged on its execution of the support and matching program but also in its design. This opens the door to a more global challenge of the relevance of State involvement in employment integration.

## **Orders of worth are developed around companies and not unified**

The blames, grievance and criticisms are heavily focused on the Public Employment Service and calling for a shift of worth. The perceptions of themselves and the other actors influence the order of worth that each company would like to be used for the support and matching program. The author analyses the content of interviews and marketing materials against the six possible justifications.

## **Developing and combining different orders of worth**

As blames have been voiced towards other actors, support and matching companies also need to defend themselves against grievances targeting them and are submitted to a constraint of justification. To position the disputing process in a context that is favourable to them, support and matching companies are expected to develop justifications around their own order of worth. Knowing the orders of worth therefore allows to understand the justifications of an actor.

One of the main assumptions of this thesis was that the support and matching companies would weigh on an Industrial order of worth due to neoliberal justification. But the analysis of the formal and informal communications has shown a tendency towards a less unified order of worth. As presented by Boltanski and Thévenot, actors trying to ground their stances on a legitimate worth does not imply that all the forms of behaviour must be gathered under a single principle of equivalence. Therefore, the support and matching actually worked on different order of worth to justify the multiples aspects of their work within the support and matching programs

MigrantSpecialist uses a combination of Domestic and Opinion orders of worth. The Domestic order of worth is focused around an evaluation on esteem and reputation. Such esteem is emphasized in both formal and informal communication as MigrantSpecialist presents itself as a company with positive relationships with migrants as they have specialized on providing services for this target population. By emphasizing the multi-linguism, the motivation of coaches and the proximity towards migrant population through other programs, the role of MigrantSpecialist as a job-broker is justified through the Domestic order of worth. A second and complementary order of worth is the Opinion, created from an elementary relation of exchange. Such recognition of the value of the work of the coaches takes sense outside the relation between job-seeker and coach and needs to come from other actors in the program. However, this recognition is merely a nice addition to what is the main order of worth MigrantSpecialist is trying to be judged upon: the Domestic order of worth.

IdealNGO is pushing two different orders of worth: the Inspired and the Industrial. The Inspired order of worth is evaluated towards nonconformity and creativeness with the relevant information being emotional. The formal communication is therefore focused on pictures of workshops and events among job-seekers but where the nonconformity of IdealNGO is presented. The non-conformity is also emphasized through the situation of being an installed non-profit since the 1960s and having kept distance from becoming a corporation. Building on this narrative the Industrial order of worth which is evaluated towards productivity and efficiency with the human qualifications of professional competency and expertise is used in this alternative model. IdealNGO is therefore linking the competence through an Industrial order of worth and commitment with an Inspired order of worth. This surprising mix is possible thanks to the history of 70 years as an NGO with governmental subventions to operate.

EducationNetwork is pushing towards an Opinion and an Industrial orders of worth being extremely linked. The recognition is perceived as coming directly from the expertise of the company inside the program and from other operations as such expertise is fed by recognition. In the formal communication, the fact that the company was started more than a hundred years ago is repeatedly stated. The recognition is centred around the other operations of the company as the program was joined in 2014 while they are presented as a token of excellence. The productivity mode of evaluation is also emphasized through videos, minutes



and reporting of special events organised for companies to meet job-seekers. This success in creating direct contact between companies and job-seekers is presented as the justification of EducationNetwork in the support and matching program.

Analysis	Education Network	MigrantSpecialists	IdealNGO
Inspired			X
Domestic		X	
Civic			
Opinion	X	X	
Market			
Industrial	X		X

Table 2 Overview of the orders of worth by support and matching companies

### Advocating for ones' own orders of worth

The multiple orders coexist in the same social space but some might be more present than others. Each company is developing a coherent narrative of its role in the support and matching program based on one or two orders of worth. Market or civic orders of worth are noticeably lacking even if they were assumptions in this thesis.

The market order of worth is evaluated through price with relevant information being monetary. None of the coaches interviewed mentioned how much the program of support and matching was costing to the Public Employment Service or how their work was increasing or decreasing its budget. One coach from EducationNetwork mentioned the pricing system based on days spent in the program and jobs reached. This statement was not accompanied with an argumentation on whether it was a fair price or not. The argument of job-brokerage being an effective program to increase employment and benefit the population was absent from all communications, both formal and informal.

The civic order of worth is evaluated towards the collective interest with an elementary relation of solidarity and a human qualification of equality. This is the order of worth that is heavily present in the Welfare State marketization and its justifications in the Swedish political history. None of the coaches interviewed mentioned the importance of employment for foreign-born populations' integration, nor the advantages of diversity in the labour market. In the opposite, one of the coaches from EducationNetwork framed the employee-seeking companies as providing Company Social Responsibility, which entails a view of job-seekers as beneficiaries of charity instead of valuable assets for the company. By not presenting this order of worth, the companies are all creating a conversation in which the notions of collective interest, solidarity and equality are absent. This has strong implications for the program, the job-seekers and the Welfare State. The justifications developed by support and matching companies to justify their implication in the integration process of these new citizens are not emerging as a consensus. On the opposite, each company seems to be advocating for its own combination of orders of worth to become the common one in a coming *shift of worth*.



There is therefore a *shift of worth* with the situation being criticized as unfair because an actor is judged based on an order of worth that is not relevant. Support and matching coaches refuse to be evaluated in the same way as caseworkers, as they do not feel the civic order of worth elements of the evaluation are relevant. The support and matching companies are refusing to be submitted to a test based on the civic order of worth and are trying to substitute it for ones that is more advantageous towards their work, being inspired, domestic, opinion or industrial. If they are not presenting a united front on which kind of evaluation would be relevant for job-brokerage, there is a consensus among them on civic not being the one that would really fit the situation.

## Justifications by private actors in job-brokerage

This thesis aimed at exploring the justifications developed by private actors in the job-brokerage market aimed at decreasing immigrants' unemployment. Such justifications have been found to be multiple but centred in different orders of worth than the ones that is central in the Swedish Welfare State. When looking at the complementary questions:

### **The blames, criticism and grievances within the support and matching market**

The blames, criticism and grievances are heavily concentrated on the Public Employment Service for its daily interactions and its design of the support and matching program. The blames go as far as advocating for a stop of the Public Employment Service being involved in job-brokerage, challenging the core of support and matching. The job-seekers and employee-seeking companies are also blamed as inadequately understanding the job market and unwilling to cooperate. Other support and matching companies face a minor amount of criticism on the quality of their service

### **Consumer choice and Welfare State**

Consumer choice is a central part of both formal and informal communication for all three companies. The industrial order of worth, feeding of consumer choice, is also present for some companies. Through the lack of civic order of worth, it is observable that coaches do not consider their work as a welfare service: it is, for them, a service provided to job-seeker but without any imperative of equal treatment. They are thinking their service outside of the traditional Welfare State, including its value of equality of treatment.

### **Differences in justification among support and matching companies**

The companies with the strongest link to the civil sector are pushing for inspired orders of worth, while for-profit structures root their justification on an industrial order of worth. On the other hand, the opinion order of worth is present in different companies, with no link to the administrative status. There are differences among support and matching companies, additional research is necessary to find a correlation with the non-profit/for-profit status.

During interviews, the hypothesis of a critical moment was confirmed by the coaches in support and matching companies. The current situation between these actors and the Public Employment Service qualifies as a critical moment as it is a distribution of blames, grievances and criticisms but also the development of orders of worth. These orders of worth are not unified among support and matching companies. Such a variety of orders of worth creates an additional layer of complexity in the distribution of responsibilities within the support and matching program. A lacking order of worth for all companies studied is the civic one, central in Welfare

State. A shift of worth around the ideas of welfare and integration is observable, opening the doors to diverging actions. Justifications are being developed by private actors in the job-brokerage market outside of traditional justifications of marketization or the Welfare State. These justifications are multiple, based partially on the belonging of these actors to a for-profit or non-profit model.

## Section 5: Contributions and further research

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*This last chapter summarises the thesis' main conclusion. The theoretical and practical contributions are presented. The chapter ends with limitations and recommendations for further research.*

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This thesis provides a theoretical contribution by presenting the lack of unification of justifications by private actors in job-brokerage. The main practical contribution is a consideration on the relevance of the support and matching program design. As important as these findings, it provides a starting point for more qualitative studies of the relations of different actors in response to this marketization. If the results are not aiming to be replicated, it is an attempt to provide a new perspective on the discussion around marketization with an increased focus on vulnerable populations. However, the analysis has limited external validity and further research at higher scale is needed to completely grasp the criticism, justifications and orders of worth developing in the welfare employment service.

### Theoretical contribution

This thesis applied a new theoretical framework, the sociology of justifications, to the question of marketization of welfare service. By presenting the multitude of orders of worth developed by each company, it opens a new lead in the research on welfare services marketization, especially the ones targeting vulnerable populations. Even if macro-studies focusing on efficiency are extremely important for policy-makers, micro and qualitative studies on the justifications of marketization are necessary to bring perspective on the services provided, their providers and their role on the Welfare State. By interviewing employees that are in direct contact with the three different actors of the support and matching program, relations have been presented. The blames, grievances and criticisms distributed are merely a means to understand how critical is the support and matching situation. The main theoretical contribution will therefore be the fragility of the Welfare State in Sweden increasing when the subcontractors of a service are pushing for a non civic order of worth. The idea of support and matching creates a new customer in job-seeking citizens, at least of equal value than the company giving job. As the support in access to work is a social service, the order of worth expected would move towards civic when the justification of these companies should stay within efficiency. This challenges the goals and the means in marketization, emphasizing the negative effects those can have on vulnerable population like foreign-born job-seekers. Even if defended by proponents of marketization as a powerful tool of empowerment of citizens, marketization and social equality present inherent tensions in terms of individualization of responsibility and de-politicization of the Welfare State.

Support and matching is at the centre of the Swedish politics of marketization of the welfare service of job brokerage. These justifications open the possibility for additional research. The biggest reflexions surround how the private sector and civil society are involved in the production of social goods and how they are working with beneficiaries. Support and matching is a unique program in its design, implementation and evaluation. Orders of worth of one of the main actors, the support and matching companies are however challenging some of its foundations. The lack of civic worth among these companies is reflecting on their evaluation of the Public Employment Service. None of them seem to justify the job-brokerage they are providing as a complement of the Public Employment Service but as a replacement. Therefore, the program would have heavily invested in new actors that are aiming in the long-run to replace

the Public Employment service with profit-oriented work. This shift of worth is feeding an internal discrepancy between the neoliberal logic behind marketization and the universalistic nature of the Swedish Welfare State. Private companies are then pushing a public program towards new orders of worth, raising the political question of marketization of job-brokerage as designed at the expense of the vulnerable immigrant population, which is its main target group.

### Practical contribution

In many OECD countries welfare services that have been traditionally provided by the public sector are increasingly being contracted out to private providers. This thesis findings allow to challenge the design of such marketization and their long-term effects on the vulnerable populations they aim to target. As no companies studied has presented a civic order of worth, the justification of such companies within the Welfare State is ambiguous, a situation that is often observed during marketization of welfare services. These companies follow the notion of standard liberal economic theory that seeking private interests will bring a positive public good: a prosperous economy would benefit individuals in the aggregate and a nation's economy as a whole. Employment as a welfare service is heavily linked to a right to work and each person recognized as a citizen in Sweden is entitled to this right. Subsidizing companies that do not develop justifications around this order of worth is therefore a threat towards both aspects, opening the door to a heavier opposition to the idea of Welfare State.

The particularity of the support and matching program lies in the novelty of employment as a welfare service that can be marketized but also how heavily are the impacts on part of the Swedish population: the immigrants. The Welfare State by its unique role of care-taker would therefore reduce the chance for migrants to become integrated into the regular labour market (Wiesbrock, 2011). There is an inherent tension in the privatization of the workforce integration and it is in the dealing with immigrants. The immigrant population faces stark economic and social inequality. The conditions for informed choice-making on equal terms are brought down by social cleavage. The civic order of worth is extremely important for vulnerable populations as they are disadvantaged in all the other orders of worth. This brings the important question of marketization when targeting a politically, economically and culturally disadvantaged population. Knowledge about these questions is of importance to policymakers who design the programs and make decisions on the program mix. Understanding the underlying dynamics between actors is essential to ensure that the design of such programs does not harm vulnerable populations. Other decision-makers, e.g., caseworkers and unemployed workers, may utilize this information in order to choose the program that increases the worker's employment prospect the most.

### Limitations of contributions

The analysis of the support and matching companies' justifications has been facing challenges that limit the contribution. This thesis is based on a low-scale study of only three support and matching companies which are concentrated in Stockholm. This is not a sufficient range to grasp the relationships between the different actors of the support and matching program. The three companies presented strong disparities among themselves, it is not possible to evaluate how representative each company is of the support and matching companies as a whole. The analysis of the support and matching companies' narratives has been facing challenges that limit the contribution. A more complete discussion of possible caveats of the research design has been presented in the Quality consideration section.

Perceptions of the other actors: job-seekers, employee-seeking companies and the Public Employment Service are missing in this analysis. The author was not debating of the whole complex issue of marketization of social services but providing a snapshot of the justifications in the specific program on job-brokerage.

As a non-fluent speaker of the local language, the author is aware of the non inclusion of possible local research. In term of scope, immigrant economic integration in general is predominantly studied using national data. Furthermore, studies focus to a larger degree on geographical areas, mainly larger cities, in which immigrants and refugees are overrepresented. It could therefore be argued that support and matching should not be studied at the national level nor the largest cities but at the regional level. While applying a micro and qualitative approach to a question that is often considered as macro, this thesis offers a new view on marketization. The justifications of such organizations would bring new understanding compared to support and matching companies. This contribution did not provide high external validity and reliability but is an open door for further research.

### Recommendations for further research

In order to provide an analysis with stronger external and internal validity, a larger scale study in the local language but also targeting different actors would be necessary. Job-seekers, employee-seeking companies and caseworkers all develop their own blames, justifications and orders of worth. Researching and analysing them would be an important addition to the understanding of the relationships inside the support and matching programs. A participant observation of the annual meeting the Public Employment Service is organizing with the different support and matching companies would add information on the relationships between actors of the support and matching program. The kind of service provided to beneficiaries would be an important area of research too study also. Both from companies and employees side, there is a need of more ongoing feedback from the beneficiaries. A participant observation comparing caseworkers and support and matching coaches would allow to evaluate how the different orders of worth are influencing the service provided to job-seekers. The inequalities within the foreign-born job-seeking population towards the employment service are also a potential lead. Some of the previous literature the differences between immigrants and refugees, nationalities, religions, ages, levels of qualification and gender. Studying the spread of these different groups among different support and matching companies will test on of the interviewee's accusation of some companies selecting their job-seekers. Studying the relationships between coaches and different groups of individuals would provide valuable information on possible discrimination. Also the four actors presented in this thesis might be the main ones but it is a simplification. There are in Sweden new organizations providing job brokerage but without being linked to the Public Employment Service, like *Mitt Liv*. Such organizations would be interesting to study in comparison to understand with more depth the job-brokerage outside of the public actors.

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