

Women of Color in Leadership Positions

*The Experiences of Seven Women Working in Private
Organizations in Norway*

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“For me, as I tend to say, I don’t fall between two chairs. I have many chairs to sit on. So why would I only choose to sit on one chair when I have multiple I can sit on, which in turn will give me a bigger breadth, a bigger toolbox and capacity?” Informant G

Abstract

This master's thesis examines what the current landscape of experiences women of color (WOC) in leadership positions have in Norwegian workplaces. Diversity and inclusion have become two important buzzwords in the labor market and workplace discourse the past few years. On the contrary, statistics show that there is little representation of POC in top executive positions (J.-P. Brekke et al., 2023). Despite all the efforts, why are there still minimal results? This curiosity has led to the following research question:

What experiences do women of color have with leadership positions in private organizations in Norway?

In addition, there is a sub research question – *“Do WOC in Norway experience a so-called “double glass ceiling”?”*

The findings indicate that there are several barriers that WOC may face in the Norwegian workplaces. Both their gender and their ethnic background might make career advancements to leadership positions more difficult as they are doubly oppressed due to existing in two societal out-groups. WOC are also believed having to fight a double struggle: both the expectations of the majority population and at home. This can point towards an experience of a double glass ceiling for WOC who wish to attain top executive positions.

The analysis is divided into two subchapters: formal experiences and informal experiences. Amongst formal experiences is the government suggestion of increasing gender equality across company boards in Norway with the requirement of 40 percent of each gender represented. Also, many organizations are working to increase their diversity through workshops and minority social groups. On an informal level, there are indications of experiences of injustice regarding their ethnic background in the Norwegian labor market. The informants highlight the issue of nepotism, unequal opportunity, lack of representation and the feeling of having to work harder. In addition to the pressures and discrimination from the majority population, there is also another barrier due to their multicultural background if their non-Norwegian ethnic culture is intertwined with traditional and patriarchal values.

To answer these research questions the research has been done through qualitative methods: semi-structured in-depth interview with seven women (n = 7). They were all found through snowball method and conducted after receiving permission from NSD (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata). The interviews were either held in person or digitally and were around 1-2 hours.

Two theories have been combined to study this research question: the Matrix of Oppressions by Collins (1990) and Social Identity Theory coined by Tajfel (1972). The Matrix of Oppressions is an intersectional theory, which recognizes various forms for oppression, such as racism, sexist, ageism, etc. – are interconnected and interdependent, and individuals can therefore experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously (Collins, 1990). Social Identity Theory, however, emphasize the importance of group identities, and their impact on how one regards oneself and others (Tajfel, 1972). The mixing of done two theories to create a customized theoretical framework is called theoretical eclecticism (Morrone & Tarr, 2005). The theories have been combined to combat each theory's weaknesses to provide a more solid analysis. These theories helped provide further insight into WOC experiences in Norwegian workplaces.

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Abbreviations

DE&I: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

MOC: Men of Color

MOP: Matrix of Oppressions

POC: Person(s) of Color

SIT: Social Identity Theory

UiO: University of Oslo

US: United States

WOC: Women of Color

1 Introduction

Demographics in Norway, and resultingly the Norwegian labor market, are changing. When Norwegian migration research first started in the 1960s, one could find the singular category “the World Otherwise” (Norwegian: Verden ellers), which consisted of Southern-Europe, Eastern-Europe, the entire continents of Africa and Asia, as well as the entirety of South- and Central America and the surrounding islands. Hence, the categorization of “Others” and “Us” had already begun (Korbøl, 2000). The first and largest group of immigrants from this new wave in the 1960s was the Pakistanis, and as a result of their arrival the “Pakistani Problem” term was coined (Korbøl, 2000, p. 179). Some of the immigrants returned to their home countries, however many stayed and started their families in Norway. As a result, the past 60 years of immigration to Norway have provided a diverse society with generations of “the World Otherwise” paying taxes to the Norwegian government, becoming “more Norwegian” and slowly climbing up the socio-economic ladder. As a result of the diversifying society, there are overarching goals set by the Norwegian government regarding the inclusion of Others.

One way to account for successful integration is examining diversity in the Norwegian labor market. A fresh report released by Institute of Social Research in Oslo shows that at the time of data collection, there was only a few people, namely three, in top management roles in the 50 largest Norwegian companies with an immigrant background (J.-P. Brekke et al., 2023). This report does not account for gender, which research has shown impacts the chances of attaining top management roles (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Haile et al., 2016; Hoyt, 2010; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018; Surawicz, 2016). It is therefore interesting to further study the intersection between women and color in terms of attaining leadership positions, as a supplement to the broad research done in the report from 2023 by J.-P. Brekke et al.

Research on ethnic discrimination in the labor market shows that there is a large variation between sectors, industry segment and type of position when it comes to the extent of discrimination (Midtbøen, 2021). There are, for instance, less discrimination in the public sector compared to private sector. According to Hauge et al., (2022), all employers in Norway are required by law to promote equality and hinder discrimination. The Norwegian state has implemented laws and regulations on a general basis for all, but the governmental branches

has been strategic in inclusive policies for decades (Hauge et al., 2022). For instance, having to include at least one with an immigrant background to the interview process (ibid). On the contrary, the policies for diversity and inclusion found in private sector depend on each organization, which is why one can find some organizations working actively with promoting diversity and inclusion, and others not so much. Furthermore, research done in Norway shows that the effect of ethnic background on employment probabilities is larger among men than women, and larger in the private sector than in the public sector, and that these findings indicate that minority women are treated less favorably than minority men in the private sector (Midtbøen, 2014). Therefore, a central key to achieving the goal of an inclusive and diverse workplace in Norway is to also influence the private sector to work actively towards it. First step is thus to examine how WOC experience career advancements in private companies.

However, why is diversity in leadership positions something worth aspiring? One argument, the societal and ethical justification of diversity, is related to justice and inclusion. For instance, taking advantage of the whole populations' skills and competencies (Umblijs et al., 2022). Furthermore, a democratic principle is that society's leaders should reflect the population and communities that they serve (Dovi, 2018; Urbinati & Warren, 2008). In addition to just being fair, there are utilitarian arguments promoting diversity in business, stating that diversity is profitable in different ways. One argument is that a diverse group will have a wider specter of resources, such as knowledge, insight and perspectives (Umblijs et al., 2022). Compared to a homogenous group, it is assumed that a diverse group will have multiple advantages when it comes to solving complex tasks, developing new ideas and create innovation (Ozgen et al., 2013). Another argument is that ethnic minorities bring with them specialized competence due to their different network and cultural experiences which might be a prerequisite to enter or have legitimacy in specific markets and clients which are characterized by diversity. This is known as an access and legitimacy perspective (Ely & Thomas, 2001). The last utilitarian argument revolves around the effect of diversity as a symbol. Companies which have a reputation for being diverse and appreciative of diversity will increase its status and market value and attract a more diverse clientele and employment seekers (Ellis & Keys, 2015; Redor, 2015). The positive effect of diversity as symbol can be appreciated by investors and lead to a higher share value, which in turn stimulates increased profitability.

The results shown by Midtbøen (2014), Hauge et al. (2022) and J.-P. Brekke et al. (2023) suggest that a need for the intersection of gender and ethnicity/race in the Norwegian to be examined further. This is done in this thesis using a theoretical framework consisting of both intersectionality with the Matrix of Oppressions and Social Identity Theory (hereafter SIT). By utilizing an intersectional lens, we can gain insight into the distinctive challenges that certain WOC encounter when navigating their professional paths. Additionally, this approach can reveal how corporate structures, policies, and practices can maintain and reproduce inequalities (Bloch et al., 2021). Also, the overwhelming majority of organizational research on intersectionality investigates US contexts (Rosette et al., 2018). While Norway does have a diverse population and plenty research has been done on the discrimination field, intersectionality has yet to gain solid societal traction. It would therefore be interesting to view this issue within the Norwegian context. SIT and in-group/out-group behavior is also an interesting theory when discussing discrimination, as it tackles the differential behavior and prejudice towards those who are considered in-group vs. out-group (Hogg, 2016; Holtug, 2017; Jenkins, 2000; Tajfel, 1982a). Thus, the experiences of the WOC with attaining leadership positions in Norway with the lens of intersectionality and SIT will suggest whether there may be certain barriers, a double glass ceiling, for attaining such positions.

1.1 Presentation of research questions

All the aspects previously mentioned culminate into this main research question:

What experiences do women of color have with leadership positions in private organizations in Norway?

A sub research question is also examined in this thesis:

Do WOC in Norway experience a so-called “double glass ceiling”?

I have chosen to focus on WOC in this thesis, rather than categorizing women by ethnicity or immigration status as commonly done previously (i.e. Afriyie, 2018; Cifci, 2020; Midtbøen, 2015; Nadim & Fjell, 2020; Riaz, 2009). This is both because there was a wish to make this research internationally applicable, and I figured this was the most applicable term in this case. Other wordings were considered: minority women, ethnic minorities from non-western

countries, visible minority, and multicultural women. These have all been commonly used in Norwegian research, however I find them a bit flawed. Minority women, *minoritetskvinner* in Norwegian, is most used and is often what I and others tend to identify ourselves as colloquially. However, the minority term is quite broad, and could mean a lot of other kinds of minorities: i.e., disabled women, gay women etc. Ethnic minorities from non-Western countries is a bit too long and does not either acknowledge the privileges some non-Western ethnicities get, for example by their skin still being white. Visible minorities was also proposed as a viable term to use, however that includes minority with the problem discussed above. It also includes everybody that does not look ethnic to Norway, yet it fails to recognize that some visible minorities from “desired” ethnicities are treated differently than “undesirable” ethnicities. Similarly, multicultural women was also not used in this thesis also due to its ambiguous nature and lack of distinction between cultures. In the end WOC was chosen due to its focus on appearances and race, as I wished to further study discrimination based on looks and stereotypes linked to being so visibly foreign, or *utlending* as one is called in Norwegian, to Norway. For instance, Polish women have their challenges as well; however, they can objectively blend better in among the majority population in Norway than a Sudanese woman. This assumption is supported by J.-P. Brekke et al. (2020) as they show in their report that it is believed amongst leaders that immigrants with background from Asia of Africa are more discriminated against than immigrants from Eastern Europe. This is why I chose WOC, as this thesis presumes white people, even when being of foreign ethnicities, experience less workplace discrimination than colored people. More on the term WOC in section 3.1.1.

Glass ceiling is a part of the sub research question, and this thesis will study possibilities for barriers in career advancements for WOC. Glass ceiling is a common theory used to describe career advancement barriers for women, and by adding another dimension – namely color – perhaps there can be a *double* barrier. By putting double in front of glass ceiling I could also slightly include intersectional theory in the research question, although intersectionality and matrix of oppressions are very clear that the effects of oppressing traits are not additive. Double in this case is merely used as a symbol for an ambiguous stronger effect of glass ceiling due to two “unattractive” traits and does not imply a quantifiable doubling of effect. Nonetheless, I found glass ceiling to be quite intriguing, and it is why the term glass ceiling was chosen. More on glass ceiling theory in section 3.1.2.

Furthermore, this thesis focuses on managerial leadership, more specifically leadership found in organizations in the private sector. Managers from middle to top level management has been included in the research pool, with varying work tasks and level of responsibilities. Gender and its effect on possibilities on advancing hierarchically in the professional life has frequently been researched about in the leadership field. Yet, there is a knowledge gap to fill on the effect race has on professional advancement, especially in the Norwegian context.

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to examine seven accounts of WOC in the Norwegian labor market, in how they have experiences career advancements up until today to see if this can explain why there are so few WOC in leadership positions. There has been quantitative studies such as J.-P. Brekke et al. (2023), however there are yet to exist an in-depth study of WOC in Norway. Nevertheless, this thesis will not be representative due to its small research pool and will serve to highlight the experiences for these specific WOC in the Norwegian workplace, supplementing the report by J.-P. Brekke et al. (2023). However, if there are overlapping experiences, it might indicate that there can be something worth further examination. This thesis serves only to showcase the seven accounts of WOC in the Norwegian labor market, hoping my small contribution can spark a further debate and will to examine this field more extensively.

1.2 The structure onwards

This thesis consists of many chapters necessary to answer the research question in a satisfactory manner. Following this chapter immediately is previous research, which will present previous works on the intersection between race/ethnicity and gender's effect on career advancements. Afterwards under chapter 3, relevant terminology and the theoretical framework consisting of an intersectional theory - Matrix of Oppressions and social identity theory will be discussed. Followed by this chapter is chapter 4 – methodology. In this chapter I will discuss and argue the research design and methodological choices made throughout this research project. Then in chapter 5, a short segment on what leadership in general is and leadership in the Norwegian context will mean will be presented. Thereafter comes the most exciting chapter – namely chapter 6 Analysis. In that segment I will present and discuss the findings considering relevant theory, to examine whether there may be real experiences of barriers – or glass ceilings – in the labor market. Subsequently comes chapter 7 discussion

where this thesis' contributions to the field will be discussed, racism in Norway, and measures for improving diversity. Lastly chapter 8, where a short conclusion fill sum up the most important findings.

2 Previous research

In bigger and more racially diverse countries, such as the United States, there have been published large amounts of research on the intersection between gender and race or ethnicity in conjunction with work. Due to their colonialist history, there are also more racial tension and thus following the line of interest research there are naturally more inclined to revolve racial issues. This can explain why many of the most pivotal racial works derive from for example the United States. From Kimberlé Crenshaw and bell hooks to Joan Acker, there has been many pivotal contributions to this field with American origins. The intersection between leadership and gender has long been discussed by white feminists, and WOC feminists, such as Collins and Crenshaw, further developed feminist theory to become intersectional theory in the 1980s. They found that the US white woman experience in the labor market or in the court of law was not the same experiences as the black woman experience and yearned for justice for women like them. Thus, the decisive factor for injustice was not gender, but race instead. This may not only applicable in the origin nation of intersectionality, but also to other white majority nations like Norway with an increasing population of non-white, colored people.

Furthermore, there are especially many works published on workplace discrimination based on race, highlighting the issue of POC “always” getting the shorter end of the stick and WOC underrepresented in leadership positions (Brown, 2017; DeSante, 2013; He et al., 2019; Kalev, 2009; McGuire, 2002; Ray, 2019). Researchers have also examined how personnel practices channel women and minorities into certain jobs (Kmec, 2005; Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021; Reskin & McBrier, 2000) or even forcing them out of the workplace (Cortina et al., 2013; Stone, 2007). Joan Acker has contributed immensely to the field with her theoretical framework of inequality regimes first mentioned in her famous article “Revisiting class: Thinking from gender, race, and organizations” from (Acker, 2000). There are also the highly cited “The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets” by Pager & Shepherd from 2008. In addition there are also many books taking on the intersection between race and gender in the workplace, providing a broad variety of angles and perspectives (Amott & Matthaei, 1996; Cohn, 2019)

Immigration and integration are highly debated topics in Norway and there is a common conception that to integrate the immigrants they need to enter the labor force. Indeed, there has been done a lot of research on immigrants in the labor market, especially in terms of discrimination (Birkelund et al., 2014; Kitterød et al., 2021; A. H. Midtbøen, 2015; A. H.

Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019). There has also been published a report regarding diversity and the attitudes found in the Norwegian labor market by the Institute of Social Research (J.-P. Brekke et al., 2020). Most recently a consulting firm, known as PA Consulting found there are only one person who is Norwegian with a multicultural background in management groups in Norway – a woman named Aysegül Cin (Castello, 2023). She is the only one amongst 459 individuals in these management groups, something that accounts for a mere 0,22 percent. A similar survey conducted by PA Consulting in 2019 revealed that the number was three individuals, which concurs with Brekke et al.'s findings (Castello, 2023; J.-P. Brekke et al., 2020). Interestingly, it seems there is a negative trend despite increasing attention towards diversity and minority groups.

Despite the increasing attention towards this interest field, there have not been many contributions to the field of WOC in leadership positions in Norway and prospects of career advancement for people that are not ethnically Norwegian. As of yet, there are three master theses with relatively similar themes as mine. The oldest one, published in 2009 and written by Tahseen Riaz and published by UiO, has a qualitative research design and it studies people with Pakistani or Indian background who have finished their degree in Norway and their possibilities for career advancements (Riaz, 2009). In 2018, Irene Kinunda Afriyie studied barriers that women in leadership positions from non-Western countries might face in the Norwegian labor market in both private and public sector (Afriyie, 2018). The latest addition is Suzan Cifci's thesis from 2020 which studied how highly educated women with a non-western minority background and their successful career development in relevant labor market (Cifci, 2020).

Hence there are yet to exist a thesis like mine, identifying barriers that WOC might face in the private labor market in Norway, along with the emphasis on the double glass ceiling and intersectional theory. Nonetheless, this specific subfield under labor research remains under-researched in Norway, possibly due to lack of interest. However, the tide might be turning as the Institute for Social Science published a fresh report this year examining the share of immigrants in high level leadership positions in Norway (J.-P. Brekke et al., 2023). It therefore seems to be an increasing amount of interest in the leadership field in conjunction with race and gender. Even though it seems to become more relevant, research on race and genders effect on career advancements and leadership positions remain heavily under researched in Norway which fuels my motivation for this thesis.

3 Theoretical framework

In order to answer a complex and multifaceted research question as in this thesis, an equally multifaceted theory should be utilized. Human lives cannot be explained by merely considering singular categories, such as race, gender, and class. People's lives are inherently multi-dimensional and complex and are affected by an unfathomable number of factors (Acker, 2012; Hankivsky, 2022; Rosette et al., 2018). Relationships and power dynamics between social locations and processes (e.g. sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ableism) are linked (Acker, 2012; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989). Consequently, intersectionality has become a trending analytic tool that feminist and anti-racist scholars deploy for theorizing identity, oppression and injustice (Nash, 2008). Because the research question calls for examining the relation between race and gender for career advancements, intersectionality is a sensible choice for a theoretical framework.

Social Identity theory, along with Matrix of Oppressions, will also be used in this thesis. The combination of these two will cover their respective shortcomings for a more comprehensive understanding of the research question. Mixing of theories for a customized theoretical framework is known as theoretical eclecticism (Morrone & Tarr, 2005). Theoretical eclecticism recognizes the limitations of a single theoretical perspective and aim to create a more nuanced and holistic understanding of complex issues by combining insights from various theoretical frameworks. In this chapter central terms will be introduced; theories of Social identity and Matrix of Oppressions will be discussed.

3.1 Central terms

In this section central terms for the thesis will be presented and examine how they are used in the current discourse currently.

3.1.1 Women of color

Women of color (hereafter WOC), derived from the non-gender exclusive term people of color (POC), encompasses women who consider themselves non-white. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d) a WOC is a woman whose skin pigmentation is other than and typically darker than what is typically defined as white. This includes multiple races, such as Black, Latina, Asian and indigenous peoples. However, race remains quite contended amongst scholars and laymen because it is unclear what is considered colored *enough* to be POC. The lingering influence of the one-drop rule is still prevalent today, meaning even one-

drop of Black blood makes a person “impure” and is thus considered Black - even though they can genetically be a majority of white (Khanna, 2010). Furthermore, mixed people, especially white-passing or light-skin people, or adoptees raised in a white family may look and be categorized as WOC, but they might also have different experiences than and level of privilege than other WOC. Nonetheless, because WOC encompasses many races, all with different experiences from each other, it is evident that WOC are not a monolith and must be treated as such. It has been challenging trying to define the term, due to its very subjective nature, and my definition of WOC may differ from another person’s definition. Although somewhat contentious due to its ambiguous nature, WOC in this thesis will include all women who identify as WOC and is categorized by the larger Norwegian society to not be white nor ethnically Norwegian. This definition includes immigrants and adoptees with other racial backgrounds than white as well as mixed women.

Yet it is important to acknowledge that the term WOC is a term deriving from the United States and is thus a western construct that will not have the same meaning in countries in Asia, Oceania or Africa. Per definition, all women in for example Vietnam are WOC and would resultingly not have the same effect or significance as in a white-majority country like Norway. Since my research design is set in Norway and I will be further examining the experiences of WOC in Norway the term WOC is befitting for the cause as I wish to examine the experiences of WOC as minorities in the workforce.

However, Sami people are indigenous people that also fall under the WOC umbrella, although they are not as visibly a minority such as for example Somali people in Norway. The Sami people are indigenous to Norway, and similarly to other indigenous peoples they have been subject to discrimination, forcibly assimilated with white Norwegians in a process known as “fornorskningspolitikk” (Skogvang, 2022). As a result, many Sami people may look Norwegian and have Norwegian-sounding names, although that does make them any less Sami, it might lessen the workplace challenges or discrimination other WOC might face when entering leadership positions. Although interesting and worth to mention, Sami WOC discrimination in the workplace could be an entirely different thesis and thus beyond my scope at this point in time. For the sake of narrowing my scope I will not be including Sami people in my research due to their ability to blend better in with the majority population, although this has come at an incredibly high cost.

3.1.2 (Double) Glass ceiling

Glass ceiling as a concept was first coined in 1986 by two Wall Street Journal reporters and it has been in the wind ever since (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). The metaphor describes invisible barriers in an outwardly nondiscriminatory organization that prevent women from entering top leadership positions (Hoyt, 2010). It is not to say that it is impossible for women to become leaders, but there are barriers, such as sexism, that they must overcome in order to do so. This kind of workplace discrimination include lower wages, fewer promotions and mentoring opportunities, and lack of organizational concern for family care issues (Pompper, 2011). Many organizations claim to be inclusive, yet many are plagued by gender bias on a surface level (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women are stereotyped as less committed (Hewlett & Luce, 2005), with limited interest in career advancement (Wood, 2004), or on the “mommy track” (Stone, 2007), thus making it more difficult for women to gain the leadership positions they might desire.

Gender is not the only variable affecting female career advancement, exemplified by my wish to further examine the race variable in this thesis. Scholars have further elaborated on the glass ceiling theory to include not only gender’s effect on career advancements and attaining key positions, but also the effect of race (Bloch et al., 2021; Pompper, 2011; Riza Arifeen & Gatrell, 2013; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015). Research shows that both variables affect WOC’s opportunities, and many highlight the thicker barriers posed by racism combined with sexism that WOC encounter (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Thus the glass ceiling theory has been further developed to also include WOC with terms such as concrete wall or sticky floor for the black experience (Bell & Nkomo, 2003) and bamboo ceilings characterizing the Asian experience (Woo, 2000).

The latest addition to the glass ceiling theory is the metaphorical labyrinth that has been used to describe the uneven path for upward progression for women in organizations (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This trajectory involves a diverse set of challenges, indirect attacks and journeys into unfamiliar territory, rather than following a straight line to the top as men often do, especially in female-dominated jobs, described with the terms “glass elevator” or “glass escalator” (Casini, 2016; Williams, 2013). With the metaphorical labyrinth explaining women’s career advancements, WOC can achieve leadership positions but only by cautiously navigating complex paths as they defy issues associated with childcare needs, racism, sexism, and discrimination on the basis of identity (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

However, there are undeniably other factors that also inhibit career advancements other than gender and race. The term double glass ceiling can also be utilized for commenting the intersection of sexuality and gender (Aksoy et al., 2019), disability and gender (Goldbart, 2021; Mute, 2010) or religion and gender (Michael, 2015). If a woman is gay, has autism or is of a stigmatized minority religion she is likely to have more disadvantages than a straight, neurotypical non-religious white woman. Thus these women are argued to experience a double disadvantage because they are twice as undesirable (Beach & Worswick, 1993; Le & Miller, 2010).

3.1.3 Identity, identification, categorization and racialization

Frequently discussed in sociology is the concept of identities. Depending on who is asked, the answers given will be completely different. Indeed, the discussion of identities is quite ubiquitous in the social sciences, spanning from political science, psychology, sociology and history (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Stryker & Burke (2000) recognize three common usages of the term identity. One is common usage of the term is related to the culture of a people (ibid). Another is referring to identity as a common identification with a social category, or through social movements who create a common culture among participants (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1982b). Lastly, and the one the authors prefer, are identity “in reference to parts to a self-composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated societies” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 284).

Furthermore, Trotter (2019) found similarities between Holtug’s social identity and personal identity (2017) and Brubaker & Cooper’s “relational and categorical modes of identification” (2000). According to Holtug (2017) the social identity is contingent upon a relationship to others, which shares resemblance to Brubaker & Cooper’s (2000) “key uses” of identity, referring to identity as a collective phenomenon. Whereas the personal identity stems from the individuals’ unique characteristics and traits (Holtug, 2017), Brubaker & Cooper’s (2000) understanding of categorical identification is to be understood as “something allegedly deep, basic, abiding, or foundational”.

However, what is the difference between identity and identification? According to Miscenko & Day (2016) identity refers to the meaning of a particular entity (i.e. person or organization) that is internalized as part of the self-concept. Identification, however, is a cognitive and/or

psychological attachment that an individual makes to a role, team, organization, or other entity. From this perspective, identity is more internally oriented whereas identification is more externally oriented. However, it is important to note that identities are not fixed and are subject to change. This position is shared by Stuart Hall (2015), where he specifies that identities are “not an essence, but a positioning”. Brubaker & Cooper (2000) finds that identification is a processual, active term derived from a verb which invites us to specify the agents who are identifying.

Categorization, on the other hand, revolves an external form for identification, where one is subjected to a category by an external force (Jenkins, 2000). In other words, the identification of others. Although categorization is often used by the state, it is not solely used by states: during different walks of life, people identify and categorize others, just as they identify and categorize themselves (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). As discussed by Charles Tilly, categorization does crucial “organizational work” in all kinds of social settings: from businesses, families, schools, social movements and all kinds of bureaucracies (ibid). Because it is imposed by an external agent, the individual may not choose which identity is relevant or necessary in the context, or contest the categorization or even be denied an identity (Trotter, 2019).

Racialization is an important term when discussing race and racism. Racialization refers to a process that ascribes a racial and ethnic identity with physical and cultural differences to individuals and groups (Barot & Bird, 2001; Orupabo et al., 2022). It is a way to sort individuals and groups based on their “assumed ethnicity” (Massao, 2022). The processes of racialization are of interest in this thesis as they have created hierarchies, subordination of others and unequal social and educational opportunities worldwide (Bajaj, 2022).

Racialization emphasizes how race as a category and perspective shape how people, situations and behaviors get classified and understood (Orupabo et al., 2022). Racialization is thus a categorization based upon racial stereotypes and assumptions. Researchers argue that it is necessary to discuss race and ethnicity in Scandinavia through the lens of racialization, because the term describe real experiences also in Scandinavia (Massao, 2022).

A foundational proposition in this thesis is the notion that individuals have, as previously mentioned, multiple intersecting and overlapping identities (Collins et al., 2021). This has led

to a strategic avoidance to the use of the singular form of “identity” forward. An individual has multiple identities in relation to their surroundings, i.e., sports club, school, job etc.

3.1.4 Multiculturalism

A commonly debated topic within anthropology is the notion of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is a social and political concept that acknowledges and embraces a society's cultural diversity (Song, 2020). It includes the concept that all civilizations are valued and should coexist amicably. Respect for cultural variations, equal rights for all persons, and the rejection of discrimination based on race, religion, or ethnicity are key concepts of multiculturalism (Meeussen et al., 2014; S. Song, 2020). Thus, multiculturalism recognizes and values differences between members from different cultural backgrounds (Meeussen et al., 2014).

The main goal of multiculturalism is to affirm group identities and promote acceptance of outgroup members (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). A multicultural ideology posits a group identity that distinguishes diverse subgroups within a single superordinate identity (Meeussen et al., 2014). According to SIT, people's social identities are formed by the social groups to which they belong, hence their self-esteem is dependent on the value of their in-group (Tajfel, 1982a). As a result, intergroup scenarios in which their in-group is undervalued or ignored pose a danger to their self-esteem as a member of a devalued group. Given that cultural groups define social identities, multiculturalism offers identity safety for minorities, to the extent that it values and protects their distinct cultural identities (Meeussen et al., 2014). Resultingly, studies demonstrate that minorities in organizations that embrace diversity feel more included and are more engaged in their job (Meeussen et al., 2014; Plaut et al., 2009).

One critique offered on this take on multiculturalism is offered by Bhikhu Parekh (2001). He understands multiculturalism as something beyond tolerance or celebration of diversity, as this perspective fails to account for complexities and power dynamics inherent in societies. Hence, Parekh proposes a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of multiculturalism that goes beyond superficial recognition of cultural differences. One key argument in Parekh's work is the idea that cultural diversity is an integral part of any society, and should be recognized as such (2001). He argues that cultural identities are not fixed or monolithic, but constantly evolving. Parekh asserts that a truly multicultural society is one where individuals are free to express their cultural identities while also participating in a

broader shared identity (Parekh, 2001). While acknowledging the importance of cultural diversity and true appreciation of it, Parekh also understands that this must be balanced with individual human rights and societal norms. This fine balance is critical for promoting social cohesion and evading the fragmentation of communities.

Multiculturalism in the context of sociological or organizational studies often discuss it along with colorblindness, as they represent two different approached to diversity in organizations (Meeussen et al., 2014; Plaut et al., 2009, 2018; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Stevens et al., 2008). In this thesis multiculturalism will refer to the way WOC in Norway has several cultural identities: both cultural identities linked to their nationality and belonging to Norway, identities linked to their ethnicity.

3.2 Social Identity Theory

At the core of SIT is Tajfel's classic definition on social identity: "individual knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292). Social groups, either big or small, formal or informal, provide their members with a shared identity that impacts who they are, what they believe and how they should behave (Hogg, 2016). Social identities also highlight how the in-group is distinct and different than out-groups in social contexts.

Thus, SIT examines intergroup relations and dynamics. Social identity influences the way we think of ourselves and how we are perceived by others. When individuals compare their own group with an out-group, they strive to ensure that their group is positively distinguished and perceived more favorably than the relevant out-groups – often perpetuating the thought that "We" are better than "Them" (Hogg, 2016). This is because they aim to differentiate their group from the others and maintain a positive image of their own group (Hogg, 2016). An interesting find made by Brewer & Campbell (1976) studies on East-African tribes is that intergroup comparisons are inherently in-group-favoring and ethnocentric. In other words, we tend to favor those who share the same ethnicity as ourselves – possibly due to shared history, culture, looks, interests and realities. Furthermore, intergroup behavior is often characterized by the power struggle over relative gains such as status or prestige of one's in-group (Hogg, 2016). Higher status groups fight to protect their superiority, while lower status groups struggle to shrug off their social stigma and promote their positivity (Hogg, 2016).

One prominent criticism of the in-group/out-group theory by Henri Tajfel, pointing out the dangers of in-group/out-group theories as it may be ground for discrimination and prejudice for out-groups. Tajfel (1982a) argued that while group identity can foster feelings of belonging and social cohesion amongst those in-group, it can also lead to negative attitudes and behaviors towards other groups, especially when group boundaries are perceived as threatened. The natural tendency for in-group bias can thus be used to rationalize or excuse racist or discriminatory attitudes and behavior towards out-groups, perpetuating systemic inequality and prejudice (Tajfel, 1982a). Another criticism is that in-group/out-group theory is oversimplified and fails to take into account the complex web of interacting and intersecting identities (Hall, 1997; Hooks, 2014a). For instance, individuals are very likely to belong to many groups, based on their ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status, and the intersection between these different identities can lead to unique experiences or marginalization and oppression that cannot be fully captured by the in-group/out-group theory alone. This is however why there are multiple theories such as intersectionality and in-group/out-group theory chosen for this thesis – because they are complimentary.

3.3 Matrix of Domination

Collins' Matrix of Oppressions (hereafter MOP) is an intersectional theoretical framework developed by Patricia Hill Collins, a renowned sociologist and scholar in the field of critical race theory. The MOP was first introduced by Collins in her book "Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment," which was published in 1990. The matrix aims to explain how multiple forms of oppression intersect and interact with one another to create a complex web of inequality in society. MOP is therefore an intersectional theory, which can be placed under the wider umbrella term critical social theory.

Collins' MOP theory acknowledges that numerous types of oppression, including as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and homophobia, are interrelated and interdependent, and that individuals can experience several forms of oppression at the same time (Collins, 1990). Collins contends that these oppressive institutions are not just separate and cumulative, but also interconnected and mutually reinforcing. In other words, an individual may endure several types of oppression that interact and reinforce one other, resulting in distinct

oppressive experiences that cannot be fully comprehended through any single axis of oppression.

Collins (1990, p. 276) characterizes the MOP as having four major components: structural, hegemonic, disciplinary, and interpersonal levels. The structural level represents institutionalized and systematic forms of oppression entrenched in society's institutions and structures (Collins, 1990). This includes laws, rules, and regulations that perpetuate unequal access to resources and opportunities based on an individual's identity. By refashioning historic conceptions that reinforce the power structure as society advances through time, the hegemonic level legitimizes and justifies oppression (Collins, 1990). Through ideology and culture, the dominant group's beliefs will be normalized and cemented as the status quo. Furthermore, many members of subordinate groups, in this instance WOC, may reciprocate and support similar ideas and beliefs. The disciplinary level is defined by Collins (1990) as the ways in which social norms, values, and beliefs are constructed and enforced through cultural practices, media representations, and other forms of discourse. The disciplinary level promotes and reproduces hegemonic notions that aid in the rationalization and normalization of repressive acts (Collins, 1990). Individuals absorb and replicate cultural norms and values at the interpersonal level, sustaining authoritarian institutions and subjugating others (Collins, 1990). Individuals' oppression experiences are influenced by their intersecting identities, which can include factors such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability. People's access to power, privilege, and resources, as well as how society categorizes, are influenced by their identities.

One of the most important contributions of the MOP is that it undermines the concept of a single, monolithic oppressive system. Traditional approaches to social justice usually concentrate on a single axis of oppression, such as race or gender, and ignore the linkages between these many forms of oppression (Nash, 2008). The MOP provides a more comprehensive and intricate framework for examining societal power and oppression processes. Another important aspect of the MOP is that it recognizes the agency of oppressed people (Collins, 2019). Individuals in the matrix are not considered as passive victims of oppression, but rather as active agents who negotiate and reject oppression in a variety of ways. This recognition of agency is crucial because it allows individuals to criticize and oppose oppressive structures, leading to a more inclusive and equal society.

Yet, there have been various criticism to the MOP. The Marxist view argues that the MOP fails to consider how the economic structures and class relations contribute to oppression. The root of many forms for oppressions is capitalism – including racism, homophobia, sexism, and thus any framework who does not address the economic structures are therefore incomplete (Davis, 1983; Hooks, 2000b, 2014b). Another critique offered is through the postcolonial lens: the MOP are too focused on Western, Eurocentric understandings of oppression. According to postcolonial theorists, Collins' MOP fails to take into account the unique experiences of people living in colonized, or formerly colonized, countries, and fails to address the ongoing effects of capitalism and colonialism (Hooks, 1992, 2006; Mohanty, 1984, 2003; Mohanty & Torres, 1991; Spivak, 2003). Another criticism the Matrix of Oppression has faced is the apparent lack of nuance, in addition to having a limited scope as it only tackled identity-based oppressions and the inability to capture individual experiences (Hooks, 2000a; Mills, 2019; Sandoval, 2013). It is therefore necessary to nuance the experiences and acknowledge that the experiences presented in this thesis are merely their own and not representative for the whole population of WOC in Norway.

Collins' MOP continues to be a significant theoretical framework for analyzing society's complicated processes of power and oppression. The matrix presents a more sophisticated and comprehensive approach to social justice that is relevant to this thesis by acknowledging the interwoven and mutually reinforcing nature of diverse types of oppression. It inspires change at the personal, local, and international levels by providing information that feeds into the understanding of interconnecting oppressive systems, and it is intrinsically transformational.

3.5 Usage of the theories

This thesis utilizes theoretical eclecticism, and thus combines multiple theories to see whether they can contribute to examining why there are so few WOC in leadership positions. Through the MOP and SIT one could study the potential barriers for such career advancement for WOC. Either one of them alone could not sufficiently explain the intricate ways of oppression, and by combining them one could account of each of their weaknesses. SIT, for instance, is dichotomic, rigid and static and does not allow agency to its subjects. MOP is more fluid, acknowledging that several factors can lead to a stronger or weaker effect of oppression. The subjects, within MOP theory, is also viewed to have agency and ability to resist oppression, which is a more constructive and uplifting way to study oppression. With

these theories in hand, I will examine if there are barriers for career advancements in the Norwegian labor market for WOC and discuss the possibilities for a double glass ceiling.

Since both Intersectionality and the Matrix of Oppressions stem from American experiences of oppression, they might also therefore be most applicable to the American context. For that reason, there are also a need to supplement the previous theories with something a bit more universal and applicable to the Norwegian context such as SIT and in-group/out-group behaviors. For instance, while the refugee crisis was at its peak, the media was criticized for the overwhelming use of “us” and “them”, distancing “us” Norwegians from “them immigrant Others” - the poor refugees (Lunde, 2017). Yet one Norwegian scholar stated in *Aftenposten* that fighting the divide is pointless, as human kind has always categorized people into categories, and will continue to do so (Østerud, 2017). Another example of the media emphasizing the divide between in-groups and out-groups is with book reviews of the famous novels “Alle utlendinger har lukka gardiner” by Maria Narro Skaranger and “Tante Ulrikkes vei” by Zeshan Shakar, both novels about foreigners (Norwegian: utlendinger, often used about non-white Norwegians) and the multicultural experience in Norway written in a colloquial style with plenty of slang. As discussed by Anda (2019), the media has frequently emphasized that these books provide an insight into a “foreign reality”, alienating those who experience that reality and contributes to mechanisms that provide a further divide between “us” and “the Others”. This is relevant for this thesis as this “us” and “the Others” mentality permeates the immigrant-discourse in Norway and can further explain the findings presented in chapter 6.

This chapter has provided an overview over the terms theories that will be used to answer the research question. The terms women of color, glass ceilings and identity, identification, categorization and racialization has been presented. Additionally, the Matrix of Oppressions and Social Identity Theory has been highlighted, and they will both be used as an analytical tool for understanding WOC in leadership positions and if they can contribute to further understanding as to why there are so few.

4 Methodology

This section will present the chosen research methods and methodological choices made throughout data collection for this thesis. First the basics of qualitative research will be presented, then interviews and the recruitment process will be discussed. The data collection process will be discussed and explained, as well as the analysis of said data. Lastly, some ethical issues and other methodological limitations will be discussed.

4.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, is based upon the disciplines within social sciences, such as psychology, sociology and anthropology (Thagaard, 2018).

Qualitative research is a type of research that aims at gathering and analyzing non-numerical data which seeks to give deeper understanding of social phenomenon (Fossey et al., 2002). It often requires a hands-on approach through fieldwork, where the researcher meets the studied objects or immerses themselves in the culture or society of interest (Patton, 2005). This allows for further understanding of motivations or feelings of the subjects. There are mainly five methods of qualitative research, according to Thagaard (2018): observation, interviews, text- and visual expression analysis, video- and audio analysis and internet. The most relevant for this thesis is interviews. Interviewing subjects provides insight to the subjects' experiences, views, and self-perception. The purpose of a qualitative research interview is to attain knowledge that is both conceptual and theoretical and is based on the significance that life experiences hold for the informants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Thus interviews provide a useful way for researchers to learn about the world of others (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

4.3 Gathering the empirical data

The interviews were held in the daytime, often within office hours and mostly during the weekdays. If we met in person, we often met at a café convenient for both parties. The café ambience created a comfortable and relaxed interview situation pertinent for honest answers. During the interviews notes were written on a printed interview guide, consisting of particularly interesting answers that may have needed a follow-up question. Thereafter followed by transcribing the interviews.

4.3.1 Informants and recruitment

This thesis consists of data collected during interviews with seven WOC ($n = 7$). Their ethnic backgrounds are intentionally diverse, with the informants having backgrounds from China, Iran, Sri Lanka, Latin-America, Vietnam and Eritrea. Furthermore, to examine if there are discrepancies in lived experiences in the working life between women with immigrant parents or Norwegian parents despite both having different looks than a white Norwegian, an adoptee has been included in the research pool. Research conducted in Norway shows that adoptees experience just as much racism and discrimination as immigrants despite having access to many types of resources as white Norwegians (Leirvik et al., 2021), which points to the need for including adoptees in my pool. In addition, the research pool consists of WOC of varying age groups, with every decade from 20s to even 50s included. There are thus varying amounts of experience amongst the informants. This is because of the informants being of various positions of leaderships. A couple are still or have been top executives, others are positioned in middle management. Amongst the pool are project managers, group managers and directors, thus managers with varying responsibilities and amounts of responsibility. There is also included a WOC who is yet to have a leader role at work but aspires to in the future. They all have experience working in a private organization, either currently working or previously. The organizations span from the business sector with consulting firms and transportation industry to ideal non-profit organizations, interest groups and cultural life. Some also have experience working in the public sector and has also been encouraged to share their experiences from there.

In order to use the wording WOC it was important to capture various ethnic women's experiences, and not just choose the easiest or the most convenient informants. Because of my own Vietnamese background and network, it was easier to find Vietnamese women with leadership experience. To not lead the data collection askew and diminish personal bias, I consciously dismissed eligible candidates to ensure diversity in my research pool. I ended up including one Vietnamese woman in my research pool.

Included in my pool is both immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Immigrants being defined as those foreign-born but have moved to Norway, and descendants of immigrants defined as being Norwegian-born with foreign-born parent(s). There are however little research that may suggest that the extent of discrimination is any less for descendants than for immigrants (Midtbøen, 2021). Quite the opposite, those who have succeeded in attaining

high-status jobs, which is the case for many descendants of immigrants today, report more discrimination than others (Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019). This seemingly paradox can be due to investment in higher education increases expectations of equal treatment, and that incorporation into majority-dominating elite professions give a larger exposure to discrimination (Midtbøen, 2021).

However, it is important to note that my research pool consists of women with different ethnicities and therefore different life experiences. So even though they may all fall under the WOC category, they may still not have the same experiences due to different stereotypes, different levels of privilege etc. It is for instance exemplified through the model minority stereotype that East-Asians are associated with positive characteristics, such as being intelligent and hardworking, which may gain favor in the labor market (Tak Kuan Lou, 2014). This might not be the case for other ethnicities. WOC, both generally and in this thesis, are not a monolith. They have different ethnicities and are thus perceived in diverse ways by others which may be grounds for privilege or oppression. The informants will not have their specific ethnicities linked to their statements as a way to keep them as anonymous as possible.

They were all found from public announcements on personal LinkedIn and Facebook, leads from friends and acquaintances or through the snowball method. The snowball method is based upon that after an informant with the desired characteristics is found, that individual is asked if they know of any other people that might be relevant for the research question (Thagaard, 2018). A problem that might arise from using this method is that the informants might belong to the same network or social circles (Thagaard, 2018). To avoid this issue, one could contact different individuals from different social circles for suggestions. This is the case for this thesis. Another problem that might arise from the snowball method is the problem of informed consent (ibid). It could be problematic if the researcher were to receive a name and contact information about a potential informant without consent. However, one way to avoid this problem is to ask the recommender to ask for consent before sharing contact information, and only then should the researcher reach out to the suggested individual. This may also limit anonymity because the person who recommended and asked for consent knows about the next informant's participation in the study. The way I have solved this is either by not confirming their participation at all and by making the findings untraceable. A weakness of this method is that the snowball might roll slowly, stop rolling or roll in a non-productive direction. In this case, the snowball method has been somewhere between rolling slowly and

stopping entirely, which has further complicated and prolonged the recruitment process. Various snowballs were attempted to roll to ensure diversity amongst the informants, however many of them proved to be fruitless.

4.3.2 Interviews

This thesis' empirical foundation is based upon interviews held with WOC with experiences with leadership positions. Interviews is the chosen method here due to its capacity to delve deeper into lived experiences and the possibility to ask follow-up questions. As I seek to study experiences and possible barriers WOC might face in the labor market, interviewing as a method is therefore suitable for this thesis' purpose. For this thesis I have held seven one-on-one in-depth interviews (n = 7), spanning from one to two hours. In order to best retain the data and enable transcription, sound recordings through UiO's secure mobile app Diktafon has been used. Instead of storing the audio recordings locally on my private phone, Diktafon sends the recordings to the secure platform Nettskjema.

Moreover, the interviews have preferably been held in person, however some of the informants preferred a digital interview. Holding interviews in person has numerous benefits as there are much information to gather other than just spoken words . The biggest one is surely that the interviewer can read body language (Thagaard, 2018). Fidgeting with their fingers might mean that they are nervous, placing their body facing away from the interviewer might indicate that they are uncomfortable and if they consistently look at the exit one might think they want to leave. This might all tell the interviewer things that are not expressed explicitly through verbal communication (Thagaard, 2018). Although it is questionable whether to actually use these observations as findings or point them out to the informant, they could at least provide insight for further inquiry (Thagaard, 2018). Another obvious advantage to holding interviews in person is of course the lack of technical difficulties. Internet signals are quite often unpredictable when in video call situations, and the flow of the interview can be disrupted if the internet cuts off. Most of the interviews held digitally had a stable connection, however there was one where some data was lost. Mostly I would ask the informant to repeat herself, however this may have disrupted the flow a bit. Moreover, some words were lost due to poor connection, and this is reflected in the transcript. Though this did not affect the interpretation of the overall essence of what she was saying, it is important to note that this happened and was challenging at times.

Also, there are many ways of holding an interview. On one end there are non-structured interviews, where the interviewer and informant have an informal conversation about a given subject (Thagaard, 2018). Since there is no structure, the interviewer and informant may ask questions and follow-up questions as they naturally arise in the interview process. On the other end of the pole is a structured interview, with all the main questions carefully procured beforehand along with the desired sequence (Thagaard, 2018). In the middle of both extremities are the much more commonly used interview method within qualitative research, namely the semi-structured interview (Thagaard, 2018). Typically, the topics for the semi-structured interviews are set beforehand - however, the questions' sequence is not pre-determined and remains adjustable. Hence, the interviewer has leeway to ask the natural follow-up questions that may arise. In this case, semi-structured interviews have been held to ensure the necessary flexibility to ask interesting follow-up question encourage informants to share more in-depth about their feelings and experiences in case they have short answers. This method was thus chosen to maximize the possibilities of extracting the most information out of each individual interview.

4.3.3 Interview guide

To efficiently hold semi-structured interviews, an interview guide was devised. This interview guide served as the skeleton of the interviews, and the questions were meant to use as starting points for further conversation and follow-up questions. All the questions are open yet concrete enough which encourage the informants to share their thoughts. The interview guide was roughly based upon the 5D principles of appreciative inquiry: definition, discovery, dream, design and destiny (Watkins et al., 2011). As David Cooperrider writes in *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* (2005): "Appreciative Inquiry involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate and heighten positive potential". It is inherently transformative in its character, and it wishes to transform through discussing achievements, assets, unexplored potentials and opportunities – which is why it is befitting for this thesis. A question from the interview guide is for instance "what kind of advantages do WOC have as leaders?", which is a positively charged question to examine WOCs assets and strengths, but also structural benefits (Attachment 3). It might be easy to fall into a trap of self-pitying when examining injustice, so in order to combat this I have specifically decided to highlight the many strengths these women might have.

4.4 Processing the empirical data

All the informants were prior to the interviews given a consent form containing details of the project and what their participation mean for both me and them. They all consented to participate and for me to record the interview through Diktafon, an application provided by UiO. The recordings allowed precise and accurate transcriptions of the interviews.

4.4.1 Transcription

Immediately after finishing each interview, the process of transcribing the interviews started. In addition, after each interview I noted down the impressions that were made during the interviews, and this helped me prior to transcribing to remember what exactly was of interest during the interview. This made me remember the relevant data that came up during the interviews, and I could note in the transcripts that this was something to remember during the coding process which came later. Each recording was entered into Autotekst, an artificial intelligence (AI) program which transcribes recordings. This immensely lessened the workload, and I only had to revise the document into manageable wordings. This was done while having the original audio file running in the background to ensure that the AI had transcribed correctly.

4.4.2 Coding

The work of analyzing the data begins already with coding. In this case Nvivo software has been used as a tool for organizing the sometimes-chaotic process. Prior to coding in Nvivo, I wrote notes both during and after each interview. The notes I wrote during the interview were helpful for holding and remembering parts of the conversation, whereas the notes I wrote post-interview included a short summary and noteworthy thoughts and remarks that may have arisen during the interview. These post-interview notes have been especially helpful during the coding process, and I have frequently sought them to remind myself of what was remarkable.

In the process of indexing appropriate ways, the interview transcripts were read several times. I also looked for similarities between the informants' experiences and ideas, and many statements overlapped. Especially the importance of representation and networking were heavily emphasized in many of the interviews. Thereafter began the work of creating categories in which the quotes fit under. Some categories were broader than others, but there were initially 15 categories, including "men/women differences", "culture", "diversity", and

“discrimination”. Thereafter began the tedious work of re-reading the codes and sorting the 15 categories into a handful manageable main categories. However, after reading through the data once more and letting it sink in, I realized there were more appropriate ways of coding, thus began a new rearrangement. As a result, I ended up with three main categories: experiences, future measures and theory and in the end 351 codes in total. There are numerous subcategories under experiences, which will be introduced at a later instance in chapter 6. In addition to these, I made another category for impactful statements felt both during and after the interview so they could be easily found later. When gathering the findings, I searched for similarities or overlapping statements within each subcategory, knowing to emphasize the overlapping points.

4.4.3 Translation of the codes

One thing that was especially time consuming and challenging in this case was that the interviews were held in Norwegian, thus also transcribed in Norwegian. It would be unnatural to hold the interviews in English as they are all native to Norwegian. However, this entire thesis is written in English, as an attempt to appeal to the global research community. It has proven to be difficult translating from Norwegian to English, as while English may have a larger vocabulary than Norwegian, some words simply cannot be translated without losing some of its meaning. Furthermore, WOC is not a term commonly used in the Norwegian context, as Norwegians, colloquially and academically, tend to categorize people based on ethnicity, religion or immigrant status (i.e., Iraqi, Muslim and refugee) so the informants have often consistently used the term minority women instead. The data material and interview guide has therefore been translated and contextualized to the best of my capabilities, although I am not a certified translator. Due to the language discrepancies, there might be nuances lost, though I have tried my best to fully convey the sentiments and experiences expressed in the interviews.

4.5 Methodological limitations

Although there are many advantages to interviewing as a method, there are also a few limitations. For one, to get high quality answers there must be a sense of trust between the interviewer and informant, especially when opening up about taboo or sensitive issues (Thagaard, 2018). In fact, though the interviewer had no prior personal acquaintance to the informants, there were measures set in place to ensure the informants’ anonymity and safety,

such as safe storage through UiO and consent- and informational forms sent to them before accepting the interview request. This may have incited more trust in the interviewer and that their participation would be safe.

Secondly, planning, holding and analyzing interviews are extremely time consuming. It has taken a long time finding the necessary informants and finding a time slot that works for both parties. Moreover, it is also time consuming to travel to and from the designated interview place, in addition to holding each interview which was around one to two hours. Yet the process analyzing the collected data is by far the most time consuming. It had to be transcribed, then coded and then the final findings have to be extracted. It is a process that has taken many months – a majority of the time designated for this project. Thankfully, this year UiO launched a new artificial intelligence transcription program called Autotekst, which has indefinitely shortened the process.

Third, personal bias might be an issue with interviews (Thagaard, 2018). On one hand, the informants' answers might be affected by their reaction to the interviewer's race, class, age, gender etc. On the other hand, the interviewer might have personal bias when their preferences or beliefs affect how the questions are formulated or the intonation in which the way the questions are asked. One way to overcome personal bias is to have someone else check on the interview guide, data and findings – in this case this task is assigned my supervisor. However, I have not held many research interviews before, and despite my efforts to ask open-ended questions I fear I might have been leading the conversation too much a few times.

Most importantly, most qualitative research consists of a small sample and cover the material in depth, yet it is not representative of the population. It is quite common to find qualitative research with fewer than 10 respondents, sometimes even only a single person is studied (Lichtman, 2010). It is, as previously mentioned, a very time-consuming method, and having many in a sample is not necessarily to the purpose. At a certain point interviewing individuals with the same characteristics will overlap, and the things they say will become redundant. Thus, the necessity in having a bigger sample, like in quantitative research, is highly contested in qualitative research. Nevertheless, a small sample size such as mine will not be considered representative, because it is too narrow of a group to have applicability over a

larger population. Hence my research here is only considered to be a compilation of the informant's experiences, and not about how everyone else in the population experiences career advancement. My research can, however, generate future hypotheses as I explore my set of data searching for correlations and patterns. My findings may indicate a tendency if the informants' experiences overlap despite their diverse backgrounds, which can indicate that further research into the field might be worthwhile.

This chapter has introduced the chosen methodology for this thesis: qualitative methods with interviews as a base. There have been held seven interviews with seven different women of varying ethnicities, ages and positioning in society and their respective organizations. They were all found through the snowball method, which has been proven to be a long process. How the coding process found place has also been presented and different methodological limitations have been discussed. The necessary groundwork for answering this research question has therefore taken place. It is yet again important to note that the research design in this thesis does not provide representative results – at best they can only indicate similar experiences or tendencies.

5 Leadership – a role and a function

Historically, leadership has carried the notion of masculinity and, as a result, been reserved explicitly for men. Due to that fact, the belief that men are better leaders are still prevalent to this day (Bernstein et al., 2009). Despite this, the percentage of female leaders are increasing steadily in Norway, with 37 percent of all leaders in Norway being women, an increase from 32 percent in 2008 (Gram, 2021). Yet, amongst top executive positions in the private sector there are only 26 percent women (Lekve, 2023). This might indicate that there is much left of increasing gender inequality in Norway. Currently, amongst Norway's top 50 companies there are only one WOC who has a seat in a leader group, and she is also the only POC among 459 individuals in these leader groups (Castello, 2023). This accounts for a share of 0,22 percent. This section will introduce leadership as a concept, define it and present the Norwegian (or Scandinavian) management model.

5.1 Leadership definition

Leadership is not an easy term to define - in fact, many have tried, yet the term remains as ambiguous as ever. A remark made by Bennis (1959, p. 259) still remains relevant and accurate today:

“Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So, we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it . . . and still the concept is not sufficiently defined.”

Leadership has thus been defined in numerous ways, with differences in definitions often echoing the professional or personal alignments of the researchers who are defining (Yukl, 2013). In Stogdill's classic contribution to the leadership field from 1974, *Handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research*, he found that “there are as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”. Most commonly, leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviors, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships, and function (Yukl, 2013). The common denominator is nonetheless the assumption that leadership involves a process in which intentional influence is exerted over a group of people with the aims of reach a common goal in a group or organization (ibid).

5.2 Leadership the Norwegian way

When discussing Norwegian characteristics of leadership it is important to view it jointly with the terms “organization” and “management” (in Norwegian: styring). Decades ago there was made an attempt at viewing all of these terms as connected and the acronym LOS (in Norwegian: ledelse, organisasjon og styring) within various research- and development programs (Stokkeland et al., 2017). The acronym did not survive, however its legacy and the insight offered still remains relevant to this day. A quick summary of LOS’ interrelationship: *leadership* is enacted to take full advantage of the potential in, and give *organizations* direction and effect, and make sure it is *managed* after the direction set and intentions adopted (Stokkeland et al., 2017).

Given that the countries in Scandinavia are so culturally similar with regards to religion, language and history, there may come as no surprise that there is also a common way of management and organizing known as the Scandinavian Model, although its mere existence is contested (Grenness, 2003). The Scandinavian model is a model based upon trust between employers and employees. Another main characteristic is to strive for consensus (T. T. Eriksen et al., 2006; Grenness, 2003). The desire to achieve consensus, to make decisions through democratic processes and cooperation has been pointed out as something typical of Scandinavian organizational behavior (T. T. Eriksen et al., 2006). However, the strive for consensus could also be due to the conflict-averse cultural norm (Grenness, 2003). According to Bo Hedberg, CEO of the Stockholm-based Swedish Federation of Savings Banks, Scandinavian business is not burdened with the confrontational style of management and communications that embodies relations between American managers and employees (Zemke, 1988). Also, Scandinavian management is famous for being participative – managers are interpersonally involved and emphasize on motivating and rewarding their employees to make them feel that they are contributing to the creation of new realities, also known as value-based management (Grenness, 2003).

The Scandinavian form for management, which is indeed prevalent in Norway, is the notion that leadership is exercised with other people, as a form for committed interplay (Busch & Vanebo, 2000). This is a central aspect within Erik Johnsen’s leadership theory from 1984, as he defines leadership to be a goal-formulating, problem-solving and language-making interaction. He identifies the problem with leadership to create a committed interplay

revolving goals and means and the connection between goals and means. This committed interplay is dependent on equality, justice and accountability (Grenness, 2012).

There tends to be no distinction between leadership and management in Norwegian as in English-speaking countries, in Norway we only use the term to leadership to refer to both. It is common to view leadership as the interpersonal or relational side of the role. Management, however, is associated with the systemic parts of the role – somewhat close to the Norwegian “styring” and administration (Stokkeland et al., 2017). However, many leadership positions consist of both parts, thus eliminating the need of the distinction, according to Stokkeland et al. (2017). This chapter has introduced leadership and how it is enforced in Norway and can provide basic knowledge to further analyze the experiences WOC have with leadership positions in Norway.

6 Analysis

This part will present the findings from the seven interviews and discuss them in light of Collins' MOP and SIT as a theoretical framework to examine whether there can be signs of a double glass ceiling, for WOC in Norway with career advancements to leadership positions. Chapter 6 is divided into two parts: part one formal experiences consist of specific government policies or organizational measures at their workplaces to increase diversity in leadership positions, part two takes on the informal experiences, how they experience their roles as leaders, feelings of inclusion, equal opportunity and WOCs assets. It is important to note that there are positive experiences, and though MOP is highly problem-oriented, this theoretical framework will also be used to highlight these through MOP's categories. SIT and the Scandinavian management model will also be used as analytical tools to further understand the experiences revealed.

6.1 Formal level

Formal level can in this case account to experiences to what Collins describe as the structural level of MOP. The structural level represents the institutionalized and systemic forms of oppression that are embedded in society's institutions and structures (Collins, 1990). These include laws, policies, and regulations that perpetuate unequal access to resources and opportunities based on an individual's identity. Although Norway has not had Jim Crowe laws as in the US there have been a time where ethnic and religious groups were banned from entering the kingdom. Such systemic discrimination has therefore also been lawfully regulated within the Norwegian system. Since then, there have been implemented strategic policies to decrease discrimination, with the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act of 2018.

6.1.1 Governmental measures

The government published a press release in 2022, stating an intention of introducing a requirement of both genders being represented with a minimum of 40 percent in the boards of Norwegian corporations (Regjeringen, 2022). This is an important step towards gender equality and companies extracting all available competence in society. One informant views this as a positive development as it serves as an incentive to increase their diversity, as a failure to do so may incriminate the company. This is a positive example of Collins' structural level as this implies an advancement in decreasing oppressional barriers for career advancements for women in the workplace.

“Now that the companies on the stock exchange have to transform to Norwegian corporations, that is to say 11000-17000 or another number in the thousands, of corporations suddenly have to include women in their boards, who have never had that before. It [the number of women in board] will definitely skyrocket, because if not you suddenly break the law and that may be effective.” Informant E

According to the SIT perspective, this could be a way of interweaving in-group with out-groups, ultimately expanding the in-group so more people could enjoy the privileges of being in-group. By forcing the corporations to have more gender-equal boards, this could be a way for women, historically out-group because of their small percentage in leadership positions, to join the in-group. This might also be easier to achieve in Norway compared to other countries like the US due to different management styles (Zemke, 1988). Scandinavian management is characterized by high participation, its non-confrontational tendency and emphasis on consensus (Grenness, 2003). It is therefore easy to imagine that if many employees are more engaged in for example diversity, the managers would be more inclined put it on the agenda due to the democratic and non-confrontational nature of their management style (Grenness, 2003).

This requirement of 40 percent representation of each gender in boards might increase the female quota; however, this does not reflect an intention of increasing ethnic or racial diversity in the boards and does not directly influence the numbers of WOC in Norwegian boards. A law that do however influence opportunities for WOC is the Equality and Anti-discrimination Act of 2018, where the law explicitly states the illegality to discriminate based on ethnicity, which includes national origin and heritage, skin color or language (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, 2018, paragr. 6). The Act applies to all parts of society, including employment. One informant describes how when she started working, there was no act on discrimination, and because of its existence now it may have increased the scope of action for WOC.

“There was no Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. There were just article 55 in Working Environment Act. There were no policies or laws against discrimination. That was that time. Now we have all of this in place. So I think that the scope of action should be much bigger.” Informant C

This shows that there have been policy changes at MOPs structural level benefitting POC in Norway by criminalizing discriminatory behavior. This can help break down barriers for participation and promotion as this can spark change amongst companies with discriminatory tendencies. Because a breach of the law will not only lead to legally derived sanctions such as fines or even legal trials, but also if the media highlight this injustice, they will lose face and profit when facing the public. This is the opposite effect of which Ellis & Keys (2015) and Redor (2015) describes in their works as the use of diversity as a symbol working positively for increased profit and legitimacy. As companies seek profit for its survival, the rational choice here would be to change discriminatory ways. In that way the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act of 2018 might lessen discrimination in the working life.

These findings indicate that there are seemingly no legal structural barriers to career advancements for WOC. Although paradoxically, the mere existence of Equality and Anti-discriminatory may point towards a necessity to have such laws due to, in fact, inequality and discrimination. Also noticing that compared to when immigration and diversification of the population first started in the 1960s it has taken a long time before creation and implementation of such legal framework. Furthermore, this law handles attitudes and cultural norms, which are notoriously difficult to change. Nonetheless a legal framework is in place in Norway to protect POC in the labor market.

There are, however, other structural barriers that the government has yet to provide a solution for: social- and economic inequality. A fresh report commission by the Ministry of Health and Care Services published in 2023 reveals that there are increasing rates of poverty and rising income inequality which are currently unaddressed within the tax and benefit system (Goldblatt et al., 2023). This report finds that Immigrants from European countries experience fewer social and economic problems than immigrants from Asia and Africa, while refugees generally experience more difficulties than labor and family migrants (Goldblatt et al., 2023). Interestingly, immigrants born outside the EU are at a higher risk of being unemployed than native-born Norwegians and those from inside the EU-27 area (Goldblatt et al., 2023). Furthermore, according to NAV (the Norwegian Labor and Welfare service) immigrants are amongst the group who are overrepresented in the working poor category (NAV, 2016). The MOP could be used to highlight the racism uncovered through these statistics as POC are more likely to be in poverty and without work than others. Yet, other oppressing factors may include age, educational level, country of birth or Norwegian language skills. There is

therefore in intricate web of oppressing factors that can be used to understand these statistics. Nonetheless, these statistics show a tendency of specific non-European ethnicities belonging to a labor and welfare out-group in Norway, which can influence their trajectory in life and explain why there are fewer POC and WOC in powerful positions.

6.1.2 Organizational measures

On an organizational level there seems to be many companies who have a diversity strategy, possibly due to the legal framework previously discussed. The informants were asked about if their current or previous workplace has measures for increasing diversity. These measures can be divided in upper-level strategies such as recruitment strategies or competence-building, and lower-level strategy in relation to interpersonal conditions.

One upper-level strategy mentioned in one of the interviews is competence-promoting conferences. One organization has over the last two years had conferences around racism and diversity. This way the company is encouraging understanding between in-groups and out-groups, with the majority population learning more about diversity and racism which may help decreasing barriers between groups and create more allies to the diversity cause. Other organizations were also invited to this conference, thus collectively increasing knowledge on this field while reducing barriers for out-groups. Another company also has introduced a presentation of strategy revolving diversity and inclusion, where inclusion is emphasized as a key to keep the incoming diversity. Hence stating that organizational culture must change to become more inclusive to become more diverse. As one informant bluntly puts it: “White people listen to white people”. This can justify an urgency to increase competence amongst the white-majority population to increase diversity. Thus, increasing knowledge on racism and discriminatory practices can impact MOPs hegemonic level by changing the beliefs of the dominant in-group, which in turn can promote diversity.

Another upper-level strategy mentioned in an interview to promote diversity is linked to recruitment. One informant shared about her experience working at a recruitment company who had a goal-oriented strategy regarding gender- and ethnic diversity, as well as sexual orientation. She told they have had a lot of workshops around diversity and unconscious bias. For instance, over 10 years ago Midtbøen & Rogstad found that there is a 25 percent lesser

chance of being invited to a job interview if the job seeker has a name that sounds foreign to Norway (Midtbøen & Rogstad, 2012). A couple of years ago new research was published reviewing if the tendency had changed over the past decade: the conclusion being that it remains the same (Midtbøen & Quillian, 2021). They argue this has to do with preconceived notions and stereotypes of what ethnic minorities can or cannot do. These seem to reproduce over generations, and is affecting both Norwegians with an ethnic minority background born in a foreign country and Norwegian-born (Midtbøen & Quillian, 2021). This is also the case amongst my findings as one informant shares that she has indeed experienced discrimination due to her foreign-sounding name.

“This was in 2008, where I noticed that just because my name was [foreign name], there was a big barrier to entering labor market. So, I had to find one or another way to getting into the labor market – I think I applied to over 450 positions. Nobody even bothered to answer me. I had to pick up the phone and pitch myself, and then I often got reactions like “wow do you speak Norwegian?” Yes, yes, I do.” Informant F

The companies she had applied to were possibly rejecting her because she had a foreign background. They may have assumed that she would not be a Norwegian speaker and thus eliminated her from the list of prospective employees. SIT discusses how perception of one's own group also impact the perception of other groups and one is more likely to have a disadvantageous outlook on out-groups, which can explain the assumption of her not knowing the language (Hogg, 2016). Here the informant is a part of the out-group because presumed to not be or speak Norwegian because of her name, further “othering” her from the Norwegian in-group. Furthermore, this is an example of racialization, as the hiring manager just assumed her lack of language skills due to the stereotypes they perceived from just reading her name. However, when asking the other women if they had been subject to discrimination based on names, they said no. One mentioned that it is difficult to distinguish if a failed work opportunity is due to her immigrant background or not, as one often does not know whom one is competing with, and that discrimination can always be hidden behind the excuse “we found a better candidate”. Hence it is not easy to distinguish which form for oppression or marginalization one is exposed to, as they are often intersecting, and the oppressor do not always make the oppression obvious either.

On a lower organizational level, the informants share that their workplace promote diversity by creating communities or groups for people of minority backgrounds to socialize. There are also possibilities on taking on diversity promoting tasks beside their regular job. In one of the companies mentioned, the diversity measures were initiated by the employees themselves, and not the upper management. Having a diversity or minority group can be a way of strengthening camaraderie within their own group, creating a safe space where they can be themselves and not having to impress the in-group (Hogg, 2016). One informant shares that she is minimally engaged in discussions revolving her own ethnic background, unless it is with others who also have a minority background and they have a lot in common. This can be because she wishes to blend in with the in-group and her out-group identity making her vulnerable. However, within the POC she is a part of an in-group. This also shows a strategic way of highlighting parts of her identities to fit in the most. Also, white people's failure to validate minority experiences may explain why minorities prefer to socialize with other minorities (Stokke, 2019).

In addition to creating a safe space for WOC, these diversity groups can also be an attractive measure for onlooking potential employees, as this may signal to them that the organization cares about inclusion and therefore also increasing the organization's value. However, it is to note that not all workplaces discussed during data collection have diversity measures in place, in fact – one prominent international Norwegian company did not have any. This shows that there are still companies who are yet to set this issue on their agenda. Nonetheless, engagement in the diversity cause on an organizational level is important as it breaks down barriers for diversity by building bridges between in-groups and out-groups and facilitate further understanding.

The existence of these types of organizational measures represent a strategic multicultural approach to diversity. A multicultural approach to diversity highlights the benefits of a diverse workforce and explicitly recognizes differences amongst employees as a strength (Stevens et al., 2008). Organizations engage in a variety of strategies to promote diversity, exemplified through those mentioned above (diversity promoting conferences and minority groups). Organizations promoting the multicultural ideology are especially attractive to minorities because out-group identities due to race or ethnicity are acknowledged explicitly expressed as something desirable (Stevens et al., 2008). However, while multiculturalism should ideally generate a long-term organizational atmosphere of inclusiveness and

acceptance, multicultural diversity projects frequently fade, fall short of their aims, or fail entirely because the white majority frequently respond with disobedience and opposition (Stevens et al., 2008). Despite their overt efforts to create inclusion in the workplace, multicultural programs can generate distrust and animosity among some groups, particularly the white majority, who represent crucial stakeholders in diversity problems (ibid). One informant shares about her experience at her former workplace, in which during her time they established a group for minorities to socialize. When this came to life, a White person remarked “Why should we have a group for minorities? What, are they just gonna sit there and complain?”. This remark, although made jokingly, shows distrust and adds onto the harmful racialized identities of immigrants being lazy and receivers of benefits. This might indicate a lack of understanding of harmful stereotypes and the need of a sense of belonging POC have in a white majority society.

6.2 Informal level

This section will examine experiences WOC have with Norwegian workplaces in the private sector and with career advancement under the surface level. The previous section has discussed governmental policies and laws, as well as organizational strategies. This section will study how it *feels* to be a WOC in the Norwegian labor market, the interpersonal relations with colleagues, promotion and if these experiences can serve as barriers or glass ceilings in hopes of finding an indication of why there are so few WOC in leadership positions. Consequently, this subchapter will mostly discuss MOPs interpersonal level.

6.2.1 (in)Equal Opportunity

Experiences in the working life amongst the informants have been varying. The younger informants in their 20s and 30s are significantly more positive about their experiences with career advancements, mainly saying that they do feel they have equal treatment and opportunities as white Norwegians and sense no discrimination towards their gender or background. Some are even claiming to be receiving benefits due to their WOC background.

“I believe it is easier than ever before [entering top leadership positions as a WOC]. Now you can just use the minority card for whatever its worth. (...) It is almost more difficult for a white man. Now even if it seems he should’ve become a partner, he is just another white man. Is there a woman out there we should rather choose?”

Informant A

This might indicate that there is an experience of WOC benefitting from ticking off multiple “boxes of oppression”. This is inherently opposite of what MOP claims as this experience shows that the more oppressive identities one has, the more privilege do they have. Informant B proceeds to say that the challenges she has faced in the working life can neither be contributed to her gender or her ethnicity, and that her overall experience with career advancements have been positive. These informants also say that it has been fun experience to climb the corporate ladder, one has even pointed out that she has felt like it has been easy. This could be explained by the MOP not being applicable in a Norwegian context, or that companies often times want to signal outwardly that they are a morally just company, both for increased attractiveness amongst the potential job applicants, but also increase their profit (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Another explanation to this optimism can be that these informants are relatively fresh to employment and climbing the hierarchical ladder, as they are in their late twenties or early thirties. They might have not been employed long enough to be considered for a top executive position yet and thus not had to face many, if any, glass ceilings. However, two other informants state they do not believe they have equal opportunities as white Norwegians.

“I wouldn’t say I have equal opportunity. It might seem like I have equal opportunity. But after experiencing working in different organizations and knowing how things work behind closed doors, I know that I do not have equal opportunity.” Informant F

Three informants highlight the imbalance in access to knowledge, as POC face more difficulties navigating the corporate labyrinth: knowing the right way to go, the right people and the right tools due to the lack of access of such knowledge. One could argue through the MOP lens that unequal opportunity is due to the intersecting social hierarchies such as race and gender operates. This suggests that unequal opportunity and exclusion is not simply due to one factor, but rather the combined effects of multiple forms of oppression and privilege. One could for example be if that WOC come from a higher social class with their parent being a CEO somewhere, might find it easier to find a job due to having the right network and knowledge, compared to a WOC without such background. This notion is shared by the informants below.

“That for a Norwegian woman whose dad is a CEO somewhere, leads to them having grown up having different conversations and experiences around them from a younger age which influences the choices they make, and you must take certain choices to end

up in leadership positions. This makes them more exposed to what the job is about. And if you as a student are not aware over the fact it is advantageous to take on summer internships to build your CV, then resultingly two students with the same degree comes out of university with two entirely different experiences.” Informant E

“Your known possibilities very much come from home, and then there are maybe more white, ethnic Norwegians who, proportionally, have parents who have higher positions.” Informant A

When asked about whether they experience the dimension of being colored or the dimension of being a woman the most challenging, they mostly say their color, especially in combination with their young(er) age. This shows that there is not only is racism or sexism affecting their experiences as a WOC in leadership position, but also reverse ageism: discrimination based on young age (Raymer et al., 2017). This find indicates that there are not one simple alienating factor making them an out-group such as immigrant background or race, but they are also in an out-group because of their young age. Often the informants find themselves as not only WOC in the room but also the youngest. This is indicative of several out-groups, similarly to MOP, intersecting and interacting with each other, creating unique experiences for each individual.

“I think the multicultural bit affects [working life] a lot more than my gender. Because in the IT-industry there has been a lot of discussion about gender equality. And in Norway in general there has been many discussions on gender equality. But that is not the case with having multicultural backgrounds. And the notion about gender equality is very established in the company, it is a well-known truth across the company that men and women should have equal opportunities. But when there are only five people with foreign backgrounds in the whole company, then one can understand the lack of focus on it.” Informant D

“I don’t think my gender has ever been a barrier. If I have experienced one, it would be more related to ethnicity, ethnic background.” Informant C

“I think that has been the most challenging in organizational sphere. To be young, but also have an immigrant background.” Informant F

6.2.2 “WOC are hard(er) workers”

A reoccurring theme during the interview is that they feel they have to work harder than white Norwegians in order to succeed. This can be attributed to their lack of network or security net compared to white Norwegians. Another informant say it is due to the immigrant aspect that makes them have to work harder, as their parents fled their countries and sought a better future for them and their offspring. Working hard is the least they could do to repay the favor. That informant is also claiming that WOC, or generally immigrants in Norway simply feels that they constantly have to prove themselves so show the majority population that they are one of the “good immigrants”.

“I think that we’re actually quite hungry [for life]. Our parents have had a great focus on us succeeding. The reason they left their home countries was to give us better lives. So, you feel responsible too, that now that they have taken that chance I better make a good thing out of my life. And I also think it has something to do with feeling like an equal. That we pay just as much in taxes. Now we can buy the apartments we’d like too, just like white Norwegians. That we can buy those cars. I think it’s a need we have. Because we haven’t been privileged enough to receive anything in inheritance. Nothing comes for free, so we must build everything ourselves. From scratch.”

Informant F

“I’ve always felt that I have to work harder than my Norwegian classmates or colleagues, to get where I want. I have always grown up with the notion that the only option I have is to work hard myself to be able to compete with those around me.”

Informant D

“Yeah, many of us who have a minority background are yes-people, who have a high work capacity and we are also very preoccupied in working to be acknowledged and be on the same level as our white colleagues. And since we have a different starting points, then that turns into us having to work much harder.” Informant G

«This is another aspect that as one with immigrant background, I feel like we’re getting judged, not only for our field, that you are good at your work, but you also have to prove that you’re like... not a terrorist”. Informant F

Yet, it is not uncommon to feel this way. SIT highlights that lower-status groups, or out-groups, struggle to shrug off social stigma, such as the “terrorist” label, and constantly wishes to promote their positivity (Hogg, 2016). This feeling of being a different and disadvantaged “Other” can also provide an explanation to the need of having to work harder. One informant emphasizes the need to feel equal to white Norwegians, that WOC also pay taxes, can buy homes in nice neighborhoods and buy fancy cars. It seems through these statements that WOC, or generally people with an immigrant background might feel an extra dimension of having to assert and prove themselves to the majority population, possibly to counter racialized assumptions. This corresponds to SIT and in-group/out-group behavior as this attitude promotes their capability and positive work attitude.

6.2.3 “Birds of a feather flock together”

Another reoccurring theme found during the data collection is nepotism. Many take issue with the chummy ways of getting appointed new positions and jobs. Norway is still, as experienced by some of the women, very much troubled by the old boys’ club mentality, gatekeeping the higher leadership positions to the men. Another informant emphasized the importance of being similar to the ones hiring, as being more similar makes you better understood and liked. Thus, if one does not mirror the qualities of the ones hiring, it might be more difficult for you to get hired. This might indicate immense improvements to be made in the recruitment processes companies over.

“It really is “birds of a feather flock together”. They [recruiters] don’t necessarily see the value in somebody who doesn’t look like them, talk like them.” Informant A

“And in Norway there are a lot of chummy ways recruitment. I have worked in the recruitment industry and recruited some top executives myself. And in [name of organization], there’s the old boys’ club who hire their friends, and positions their friends different places”. Informant F

The MOP framework’s disciplinary level would here highlight how power, privilege and race intersects to both pave the way for nepotism and reinforces said effect. This intersection shapes organizational outcomes and experiences. Nepotism can have a significant impact on organizational dynamics and reinforce existing power structures by providing advantages to

those already privileged. For instance, a child of a CEO attaining a high-level position at their parent's workplace, regardless of their qualifications, skills or experience. Familial ties or friendly relations seeping into recruitment is therefore nepotism. This may be a barrier for WOC attaining high-level leadership positions because of them being less likely, relative to a white Norwegian, to have such connections. Nepotism can in this case result in an impression of a glass ceilings for WOC.

Informant F also mentions the old boys' club as a hindrance for upward movement in careers. The traditional old boys' club consists mainly of white, masculine, wealthy and powerful middle-aged men (Gamba & Kleiner, 2001). Old boys' club gives men an advantage in promotions because building alliances, networking and interacting with powerful men are more accessible for men than for women. Conferences and other networking events have been organized around typically male interests, such as golf (Gamba & Kleiner, 2001). This mechanism can create a self-perpetuating cycle: male managers promote a disproportionate share of male employees who continue to promote other men (Seo et al., 2017). Old boys' club can thus propose challenges to organizational culture for the upward trajectory for out-groups.

“There are challenges due to the old boys' club prevalent at the company, which affects the culture. In addition, the majority population dominates the culture, and the culture is not trained in handling the diversity they have. Which can lead to us [WOC] facing a lot of comments and attitudes, and that one might not feel like one fits in.”

Informant D

Not only do WOC have to fight sexism in the workplace, but also racialized stigma related to their immigrant background. Informant D shares she does not believe her workplace is trained in handling their diversity, which can lead to them facing adverse comments and attitudes about being an Other. The disciplinary level of MOP also refers to how norms, values and beliefs are enforced through media representation. Although Norwegians have become more positive towards immigration's effect on the labor market and the welfare state, around 43 percent in 2021 still thought that immigration is a threat against the welfare state and jobs (J.-P. Brekke & Fladmoe, 2022). The same report also shows that the people are far more likely to judge Pakistani and Somali immigrants than Swedish or Polish immigrants. On the other hand, Somali-Norwegians also feel that the media portrayal of their ethnic group is problem-focused, lacking of nuance and characterized by racial stereotypes (Heinesen, 2022). This is

indicative of an apparent skewed portrayal in the media which can impact the rest of the population. Unjust portrayal in the media can negatively affect unconscious bias in terms of recruitment and promotions for WOC.

“Research done over many, many years show that one is likely to hire people that look like themselves, have somewhat similar competence, have many of the same interests, all that jazz. When you don’t look like most people sitting at the top today, or have similar experiences or competence, or meet people who don’t understand your competence or all the tools you can use, because they themselves don’t possess them, then it’s not that easy. It says itself that your road [to success] is a bit longer.”

Informant G

Here the informant argues that recruiters often hire those who are similar to them, in a way – belonging to the same in-group – “us”. SIT highlights that intergroup relations are characterized by in-group favoring and ethnocentric (Brewer & Campbell, 1976). Leaders and recruiters tend to favor those who look similar to us, share culture and interests, a Norwegian report highlights (Rogstad & Sterri, 2014). This can corroborate the experience above that informant G is highlighting. Furthermore, the informants also talk about networking being an essential part of getting granted entry to the Norwegian work scene and their evident lack of a useful one. This is believed to make it more difficult for WOC and other immigrants to enter the scene due to the lack of a sufficient network and make this specific group an Other and possibly fall behind.

“Because we have to remember that Norwegians – a white, ethnic Norwegian your age, in your lectures and in your class, have grown up learning the playing rules from her home with her parents. And then she enters labor market, and she is still playing by the same rules. But you and I haven’t grown up with those types of playing rules. My parents knew the playing rules from [country of origin], and there the playing rules had been really nice and usable unlike how they are here in Norway. So, I haven’t been able to use my parents, as Norwegians often do, as sparring partners for work or those types of things.” Informant F

“It requires more [of me], I have to go more out of my way to hold the conversations and small talk about the cabin, skiing and the weekend. It might’ve not been what I naturally would talk about first. It is much more comfortable for a white Norwegian

man to be in those types of conversations than me. Automatically you have to do more to fit in and make it work.” Informant E

“And then when you finally enter leadership positions, it is still very much social. You have to perform pretty well at a social level. So, I do ski, but I don’t think it’s fun, right. If you don’t think it’s fun, then you can easily end up outside the core and that culture. People are very similar here, in many ways, and have similar interests. They would all be like «how was your weekend?». If you ask ten people, nine of them have the same stories. It’s a lot of conformity. And I feel that one is pushed to conform.”

Informant F

Receiving a promotion at work is also very socially conditioned, which many of the informants say is more challenging for the than for other white Norwegians – essentially describing an in-group/out-group feeling. To be promoted, one has to be well-liked, and naturally, this is linked to having similar interests and ability to make conversation and other social codes that may not have been taught at home. It may not come as natural for WOC to talk about going to the cabin, going skiing for the weekend or other archetypical Norwegian things, which can often lead to both feeling excluded inadvertently and sometimes directly. Members of an out-group often feel pressured to assimilate into the dominant culture (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). This is also found in my research, as the women also describe the feeling of being forced to assimilate to the in-group in order to succeed. Out-groups are also known to hide aspects of their identity which do not conform with the majority population, or change aspects of their behavior to accommodate other groups (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). This can minimize the division between the two groups. In this case, one informant expresses that she feels she has to hide parts of her ethnic identity to fit in and be liked. Also, there is little incentive for the majority population adjust their behavior, so the burden of assimilating lies on the marginalized out-group. Thus, WOC have to put more effort into fitting in relatively to white Norwegians because there are a lot of in-group characteristics that the WOC have to conform to for increasing their chances to be promoted.

6.2.4 The Multicultural Dimension

Although the informants are ethnically diverse and come from different cultures, many have mentioned different expectations for men and women introduced early on from their parents.

This includes expectations of what is considered a successful life for the genders, with expectations towards a successful life for women often being tied to making their own family.

“And then it certainly doesn’t help that you come from a family culture where the boys are much more promoted in the family life than the girls.” Informant F

“And I feel like there are higher expectations for men in multicultural families. That it is more of the stereotypical patriarchal... Yes, in [country of origin] there are higher expectations for men to become leaders compared to women. In much bigger extent than in Norway, for example. I can imagine that children get raised to think like that: that girls should focus more on making a family, whereas boys can climb the work ladder and make a lot of money.” Informant D

“I think that in a minority culture there are still expectations that a woman should care for the family and bear children, then to be a leader or another type of role model in a company. I believe that can be a source [for fewer WOC than MOC in leadership positions], that you are raised that way that your place is not to succeed in the working life, but to succeed with a family and children.” Informant B

These lasting patriarchal structures can be explained through the lens of the hegemonic level in MOP. The hegemonic level legitimizes and justifies said oppression, where old ideas that uphold the power structure gets refashioned as society changes over time (Collins, 1990). Norway is undoubtedly a country which supports mothers’ careers, yet the traditional values from the country of origin impacts how daughters are raised, some as less than sons. The majority of immigrants in Norway come from countries where traditional gender roles are much stronger than in Norway (Nadim & Fjell, 2020). A common thread amongst the interviews is the expectations for the woman to be a successful homemaker, rather than successful career woman. For example, in the traditional Chinese value, the success of women is judged in the terms of their capability to assisting their husbands and nurturing their children (Sun & Zhuang, 2023). These expectations set from home can impact the WOC participation in the labor force and provide an explanation as to why there are fewer WOC in leadership positions – also in Norway. Sometimes a demanding higher position at a company may not be compatible with having a to raise a family, and when the two conflict many women choose their families due to social pressures (Sun & Zhuang, 2023).

To add onto this, one informant highlights that it is not the Norwegian context that makes career advancement difficult for many WOC, but it is rather their cultures and family heritage that stands in the way.

“It is not the Norwegian context who makes the barrier, but women with immigrant backgrounds have to fight a double struggle.” Informant C

The social pressures of choosing a different path may pose as a barrier for career advancement for WOC. A survey shows that the immigrants and their descendants are less likely to believe that a working mom could be as close to her children as a mom who is a homemaker (Nadim & Fjell, 2020). Also, research indicates that starting a family affects labor participation at a much higher rate for immigrant women than for the population otherwise (Umblis, 2020). I. Brekke & Rogstad (2011) show that women with immigrant parents are significantly lower labor participation than majority women, yet the rate varies amongst ethnic backgrounds. They find that immigrants with Indian or Vietnamese heritage are much closer to the rate of labor participation of majority women, and that women from Turkey and Pakistan have especially low labor participation. They also find that having children has a negative effect on labor participation for female descendants of immigrants. There are therefore several studies which show that cultural norms from their home countries provide important clarifications when it comes to labor participation (I. Brekke & Rogstad, 2011; Nadim & Fjell, 2020; Umblis, 2020).

One informant talks about her experience being an East-Asian woman, and that many that share her ethnicity do not dare to speak up about discrimination they may face. She further elaborates: *“I think we as East-Asians are really good at undermining our traumas and the type of discrimination that we face”*. An explanation could be due to being humble and turning the other cheek being culturally contingent. Another explanation to this is racial battle fatigue, which addresses the psychological and physiological strain on marginalized groups and the amount of energy lost dedicated to coping with racial microaggressions and racism (Smith et al., 2007). It is a common coping mechanism to not speak up and confront explicit or subtle discrimination due to having prior experiences of being dismissed or not believed when doing so (Eriksen, 2021).

Another informant, also with East-Asian background, admits that she is strategically not participating in debates regarding diversity and equality at her job. She wishes to not come in

conflict or stick her neck out at work, because she is already different and wishes to blend in better by focusing on what makes her similar to her coworkers. Recent research done in Norway indicate that a racism-denying society where racism towards East-Asians is invisible both for those who are subject to it, but also to those who does not experience racism (Hessaa-Szwinto, 2023). Her analysis shows that it is common to take on the blame or simply ignore a racist experience, but also common to not be believed when sharing with others. Furthermore, another research shows that WOC are more likely to confide in other WOC when experiencing subtle forms of racism: this is because they are more likely to be believed and less likely having to explain themselves as they have to convince the majority group of why this specific thing was hurtful (Orupabo et al., 2022). They could also face negative sanctions in the workplace, being stamped as easily offended and the “difficult” colleague (Orupabo et al., 2022). Both testaments show how these women find East-Asian women diminish their experiences with discrimination to fit better in with the in-group.

However, it is important to note that there is not a singular minority culture or a singular way of being a multicultural family. Immigrants and WOC in Norway are a heterogenous group. There are therefore also informants who have also said that they have been encouraged to work and attain high positions by their parents. Some come from higher social classes where it is expected of the woman to work, and some cultures emphasize the importance of both genders contributing financially to the household. Labor participation and higher-level positions for WOC is therefore a multifaceted issue and cannot be simply explained by culture or sexism alone – consistent with intersectional theory and MOP.

6.2.5 Lack of Representation

A consequence of all the previous subchapters discussed is the lack of representation. Several point out this as a structural issue in achieving a greater diversity.

“Especially for my generation and us who pave the way, I feel like we don’t have others to look for an example. There are no role models either. My immigrant female leaders who are my role models live in other countries. I can’t find any in Norway, that has walked the path prior to me. So, I think that there is a lack of role models which I hope can and will change.” Informant F

«If you talk about role models, if the case is that I have ambition to become a manager then there are very few examples in my organization which indicate that someone like me, who's a woman, is younger, has a multicultural background and grew up in Eastern part of Oslo have become a manager. In fact, there might not be any.»

Informant E

There may be a myriad of reasons as to why there is a lack of representation of WOC in leadership positions. SIT may emphasize that the fact that there are so few WOC in leadership positions may be reinforcing itself as a negative spiral: there are statistically few WOC in leadership positions, and since there are few WOC whom have “made it” and entered the in-group, there are less WOC to invite WOC in with them. SIT finds that one is more inclined to favor and help those who belong to the same group as themselves, and if the entire board of executives consists of white Norwegians, it is more inclined continue to promote that group (Brewer & Campbell, 1976). One could argue with the MOP lens that this form for discrimination is represents the interpersonal level, as the makings of in-groups and out-groups unconsciously subordinate others and naturalize forms of oppression. There is no surprise there are a lack of representation of WOC in leadership positions if the road to attain these positions are a road less traveled.

“For some it might be conditioned by that too, “I didn't know that it was possible, I didn't know that I could make it, I didn't think I'd fit in, I didn't think I could do the job”. Many maybe don't look at themselves as leaders and think that it might not be for them.” Informant E

This informant describes that some WOC might not even think that such position is possible for them. The disciplinary level in MOP describes how social norms are constructed and enforced through cultural practices, media representation or other forms of discourse. For instance, the directorate of integration and diversity (IMDi) released a report in 2010, revealing that Somalians in Norway got more attention with a negative view in the media than others, which overshadows the normal and everyday actualities (*Medieskapt islamfrykt og usynlig hverdagsliv*, 2010). In that case, a Somali girl might not know that it is possible to attain leadership positions because those who look like her in her near vicinity does not have a leadership position, and even the lack of positive representation of Somalians in Norway may influence how she believes what the possibilities are for the trajectory of her life.

6.2.6 WOCs self-perception

When being asked of what assets WOC can bring to the table, all seven informants were largely unanimous. All their answers revolve around WOC being very flexible due to their access and sensitivity to other cultures and people, have a profound understanding of otherness and that WOC are especially creative and can easily find new solutions. This is due to them maybe not having access to the same path that others have gone down before, forcing them to think extra creatively and strategically to succeed.

“I feel like when you become a more flexible person when you have a multicultural background. Because one sort has used one’s entire upbringing on adapting to different types of peoples and culture. Because as a leader one needs to cater to different types of people, and one has to relate to different people to create relations and connections. And I feel like WOC are almost automatically better at that. Because one has been forced to relate to people who are so different than oneself.” Informant D

«I think for people like me [WOC] are very fast learners in how to navigate the community. We find strategies on how to break through. We pick up patterns and how things are around us. I think we just become more observant, maybe. If we meet someone who won’t listen, we’ll find some others. We find other alternatives. I think we become better at navigating. I find strategies, other ways, other entries, other people.” Informant G

It appears because of them having to navigate a complex web of discrimination and othering they have become better at finding solutions. They have diverse knowledge on people and culture, and this can also be helpful in creating connections. Belonging to an out-group can facilitate more learning on in-group behavior as a way to assimilate and attempt to fit in with the in-group (Hogg, 2016). However, these assets may not be fully utilized if their management does not know how to. When in-groups encourages assimilation and fail to acknowledge the differences and celebrating them and instead one could possibly lose those desirable assets that may stimulate growth. Hence a structural loss and a poor return of investment for the companies when they do not understand the assets WOC possess.

“At the end of the day, companies are seeking a return of investment for what they invest in. Then one has to understand how to extract that asset. But when everybody is assimilated you don’t get that value. And it’s not only regarding people with multicultural backgrounds, but also, unfortunately, a lot of women who enter leader groups become like men. And then I think we have lost the entire point with them being a woman and entering a leader group.” Informant F

In this chapter we have explored both formal and informal experiences the seven informants have shared about their career trajectory and workplaces as well as thought on their own ethnic cultures. Intersectional theory such as the MOP and SIT has provided an analytical lens for these individual experiences and has aided in discussing intergroup power dynamics. Although there are some experiences that are unique, there are also many who overlap – which can indicate a double glass ceiling, both related to gender and color, to leadership positions for WOC in the current Norwegian labor market.

7 Discussion

This chapter will provide an overview over how this thesis is positioned in the ongoing debate and how it can contribute to the field. Furthermore, the experiences in Norway compared to the rest of the world will be introduced, and the unique features of Norwegian racism debate will be introduced and discussed. Lastly, equality v. equity will be explored, and the concept of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I or DEI) and measures to improve workplace diversity will be proposed. This chapter will show that diversity work in Norway is challenging due to its aversion to discussing racism and its inherent colorblindness, which ultimately can be a barrier for WOC to enter leadership positions.

7.1 Contribution to the field

This thesis can contribute to the ongoing discourse in a multitude of ways. One, there is as of yet a global lack of qualitative studies regarding WOCs experiences with leadership positions with an intersectional lens, especially in Norway. There has been research on minority groups in the labor market, especially in the public sector, however they tend to revolve around those who are discriminating by examining employers' attitudes (Orupabo et al., 2022). There is much less attention devoted to examining how minorities handle, overcome and challenge the situations where they get marginalized (Orupabo et al., 2022). Which is why I sought to research this topic, to contribute to the discourse and possibly fill a knowledge gap.

Another that have yet to receive much attention within the intersectional lens is the impact of the WOCs own ethnic cultures. As previously examined in this thesis, immigrants in Norway often come from more conservative cultures with traditional gender roles (Nadim & Fjell, 2020). Some women are therefore possibly not expected to seek a grand career, but to start a family and raise children. The pressures and expectations grown at home can be a factor in why there are so few WOC in leadership positions. There are internal processes that may fuel a WOC towards taking on leadership positions, however the vast majority of research focuses on external factors such as discrimination from the employer-side. In this thesis I have therefore also tried to highlight the expectations and conservative structures that WOC might face at home.

Furthermore, although there is a lot of attention centered around diversity lately and many organizations prioritize it, there is still a lack of research on the field of WOC in leadership

positions in Norway. The research that currently exists is primarily quantitative data to view the share of POC in executive positions in Norway (J.-P. Brekke et al., 2023; Castello, 2023). Yet, there is still a lack of qualitative research on this topic. This research could therefore contribute to the management field in Norwegian research as well.

Moreover, this thesis can lead to further nuances to the field by presenting a Norwegian case in an oversaturated Americanized field of intersectionality. American research dominates the discourse regarding racial impact on working life, and this thesis hopes to serve as a case for working life for racialized out-groups in Europe as well. This could at best fill a knowledge gap found in the discourse around WOC in European, white-majority workplaces.

7.2 Experiences of WOC in Norway

This research has uncovered multiple experiences on both external and internal level for WOC in Norway regarding leadership positions which may point towards a double glass ceiling. The external level represents the relations to society and the White majority, and how they may impose barriers for career advancements. For instance, although there are indeed a legal framework in place to attend to equal rights in employment and that many organizations have seemingly tried to increase their diversity at a formal level, there are still underlying issues which can be found in the informal level beneath the company surfaces. Especially the younger informants share they believe they have equal opportunity; however, this is not how the older informants feel. One informant who have entered a top executive role explicitly said that she knows “people like her” do not have the same opportunities as others, maybe on a surface level, however, this is not actually the case. This difference between generations can be due to them having spent a longer time in the working life, and maybe experienced labor market prior to the legal framework being enacted. The younger informants have not been working that long and have yet to be expected to achieve top executive positions, which may explain their optimistic outlook. Nonetheless, this brings nuance to the discussion as the literature has yet to discuss the intersection between, race, sex, and age.

My findings also show experiences of chummy recruitment and indications of discriminatory practice at an external level which may contribute as a barrier for career advancements. A study done in Norway shows that the Norwegian elites agree that informal recruitment may be the reason for the lack of ethnic diversity in top positions in society (Teigen et al., 2023).

Moreover, three-fourths of the elite find discrimination to be an important cause to for the lack of ethnic diversity. Teigen et al.'s research in conjunction with mine shows an accordance amongst the top elites and those disadvantaged due to discrimination and chummy recruitment methods. One may think that due to high levels of social mobility in Norway and children of immigrants often get higher education and attain prestigious jobs, the discrimination they face in the working life would decrease compared to their parents. Yet, despite having levels of social mobility between generations of immigrants in Norway, the same level of discrimination still persists (Midtbøen, 2014; Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019). Cultural distance and being Muslim are two factors which may increase discrimination, especially in Europe (Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021). Although this thesis has not accounted for religion; this may be a part of the racialized identities imposed upon them, nonetheless. For instance, a woman with origins from Africa being presumed to also be a Muslim and therefore discriminated based upon that assumption. However, the dimension of religion is not weighted in this thesis, though it would be interesting to further examine at a later time.

As shown in the analysis, POC, and consequently also WOC, face the issue of racial battle fatigue – which may be a barrier to career advancements at an external level. Both domestic and international research has shown that it is tiring to be on high alert and having to face or confront every single microaggression (Hessaa-Szwinto, 2023; Smith et al., 2007). This can explain my informants aversion to confronting and discussing discrimination with the in-group or majority population. Indeed, proving themselves to the in-group constantly and highlighting the positive sides while fighting off stigma is not an easy task.

An ongoing theme during the data collection process is the feeling of being different, alien and an Other, which may also contribute to the glass ceiling effect on an external level. The informants in this thesis reveal a need to assimilate to succeed socially for a promotion. The informants, for instance, share they believe they have a lot to offer and many unique assets. However, there are also normative pressures instigated by in-groups on out-groups, pressing for conformity which can lead to inefficient use of their assets. The majority population usually have no incentives to adjust their behavior as it is seen as the standard, and therefore the responsibility and pressure to conform lies on marginalized groups (Hogg, 2016).

Several informants also reveal that they cannot fully be themselves at the workplace, and that they have to hide parts of their identity. These findings are also concurring with previous research done on workplace satisfaction amongst POC in white majority workplaces, which

tackle concerns such as whether they will belong and be accepted by others (Walton & Cohen, 2007), whether they can be themselves (Shelton, 2003; Shelton & Richeson, 2006), and whether they will have a fair chance at advancement (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Also, Norwegian research indicates while children of immigrants from Asia and Africa often identify themselves as more Norwegian than others immigrants, however they do not experience their identity being acknowledged by others (Friberg, 2021). This shows that even when immigrants identify as Norwegian, the majority population still does not categorize them as such. Being racialized and categorized as an Other, even when identifying as a Norwegian, can be challenging in the workplace, and lead to less opportunities and thus lead to a glass ceiling effect.

Lastly, another glass ceiling is found on an internal level – stemming from the cultural expectations and pressures found at home. My findings reveal that there are believed to be barriers related to their ethnic cultures, where traditional values and patriarchal structures often are found. Expectations to focus on starting a family and succeeding with family life are more prevalent than succeeding career wise in immigrant families in Norway as they often come from countries with traditional gender roles (Nadim & Fjell, 2020). This can both be a barrier because some WOC are conditioned to not seek higher positions at work due to internalized patriarchal value or forcing them out of the workforce to stay at home to raise children. One informant therefore argues that WOC in Norway fight a double struggle, both outwards towards the White majority society, and inwards towards their own ethnic culture.

Resultingly there are indications of a double glass ceiling due to both internal and external levels of glass ceilings. Externally society are imposing barriers and a glass ceiling by being non-inclusive, the prevalence of racial battle fatigue and discriminatory recruitment processes due to nepotism. Internally, WOC may face challenges related to traditional gender roles and other expectations related to their respective ethnic cultures. Nonetheless, it might seem like WOC are twice as disadvantages in the working life due to belonging to two societal out-groups.

7.3 Race and racism the Norwegian way

Nonetheless, although these aforementioned experiences are likely enhancing the effect of glass ceilings, they are not unique to Norway. The experience of having to work twice as hard

is a shared experience by many minority groups, in Norway and other countries alike (DeSante, 2013; Isik et al., 2021; McGee et al., 2019; Sofoluke & Sofoluke, 2021). Nepotism is also a widespread phenomenon (Burhan et al., 2020; Frascchetti, 2017). Feeling like an Other and being subject to othering is also found in other countries, such as Denmark (Jensen, 2011), the US (J. Song, 2020) and UK (Scharff, 2011). This might therefore indicate there are many common experiences for POC in white majority countries all over the globe and those serve as barriers globally.

However, compared to the US where intersectional theory stems from racism is a lot more discussed in the US than in Norway, which has led to a more subtle racism. While the US has had a long history of slavery which has affected the up-front ways of handling racism, Scandinavia tend to represent their historic positions as outside of the colonial project, nurturing a self-image that is both humane and equal which has led to less room to discuss racism (Hervik, 2019). Researchers in the Nordics agree that the discrimination of visible minorities have become subtler over the last 20 years (Hervik, 2019). The general population has learned what is politically incorrect to say or not, regardless of what they actually feel. It may not be blatant racism anymore, calling of names or openly dismissing POC so often anymore, it has rather shifted to a more subtle form making the POC *feel* different and unwelcome (Orupabo et al., 2022). This concurs with the findings of this thesis and can cause women to opt out, thus stumping the career trajectory for ambitious WOC.

Furthermore, what is unique in the Norwegian context compared to the American is the categorizing others based on religion, ethnicity, or immigration status rather than race. There is a slight reluctance to refer to POC after their races, and the terms one tend to use about others and oneself is minority or immigration based. Minority woman or immigrant woman are much more common terms to use rather than women of color, or Black woman. This is pointed out by researchers as a result of Norway's presumed innocence in colonialism and thus reluctance in categorizing based on race, yet still prescribing to colonial ideas of the Others, such as the division between "us" and the "savages" through religion, ethnicity immigration status as categories (Hervik, 2019). Myrdahl (2010, p. 6) argues:

“According to the dominant Norwegian narrative, there is no such thing as “race” in Norway. Nonetheless there are “Norwegians” and there are Others, and the demarcation between the two returns again and again to perceptions of phenotype, culture, geography, and religion.”

The Nordics seem to share a racial exceptionalism that denies colonialist engagement – and as a result feels that racism is something that primarily exists far away, in the past or on the extreme right wing (Hervik, 2019). This could serve as an explanation to why the discourse around racism or discrimination in Norway is often not centered around races, rather immigrant status or minority background – namely Others. This assumption can explain why the majority population remains “colorblind”. The majority’s insistence on being colorblind can hinder important acknowledgement of racism (Eriksen, 2021). At the same time, white peoples’ privileges also gives opportunity to use strategies to be spared from the discomfort of having to “see” race and color (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Critical whiteness studies argues that although white people have a race and is racialized, it often goes unnoticed (Frankenberg, 1993). White people often do not have to take a stance and confront their privileges as their Whiteness is set as an unmarked norm (K. G. Eriksen, 2021; Frankenberg, 1993). Whiteness studies also reveals a system of privileges that views the challenges of racism revolves “the Others” who “have” a race, and a positionality that white people understand the world from. This lived experience of racism is thus more obvious for those who have “felt it on their body” than those who have not – making it easier to remain colorblind.

Although the colorblind perspective is based on the ideals of democracy and equality, evidence suggests that minorities interpret this approach as neither colorblind nor color neutral, but rather as exclusionary (Stevens et al., 2008). While on one hand WOC are visible enough as a minority out-group to face exclusionary behaviors, the Norwegian majority population fails to acknowledge this due to their “invisible” race. That may for instance help understand why racism towards East-Asians are often dismissed by the majority population (Hessaa-Szwinto, 2023). There is therefore a prevalent feeling of being visible enough to be discriminated against, however too invisible for it to be believed and penalized. Colorblindness in Norway can therefore promote the effects of a glass ceiling for WOC attaining leadership positions as it may stifle conversations regarding racism because it can invalidate experiences of it.

7.4 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Gullestad (2006) critically analyzes the Norwegian ideology of “imagined sameness” and the conformist idea that differences are fundamentally bad and that equality presumes sameness – an idea that supports the colorblindness that is prevalent in the Norwegian society. However,

is it actually equality or equity we as a society should aspire for? Equality and equity are not synonymous. While equality emphasizes treating everyone the same, equity consider systems that disadvantage certain people and seek to overcome them (Garrett, 2023). In Garrett's (2023) experience, companies who are striving for workplace equality by treating everyone the same without discrimination and have not factored in the different demographics or circumstances found amongst employees. While equality is primarily concerned with sameness in treatment, equity considers how effectively each individual's needs are addressed (Frønes et al., 2020). That being so, equity has therefore more of an individual approach, while equality has a collective approach.

In other words, equality is giving everyone a shoe – while equity is giving everyone a shoe that fits (Gill et al., 2018). Achieving equity, which means creating fairness, is manifested concretely in political efforts to distribute resources equally and promote the equality of marginalized groups by reducing barriers for employment. The Norwegian government has set in place the legal framework and organizations have implemented diversity measures. However, this does not reflect the organizations' ability to keep or care for their diversity. For example, it is not enough to formally grant equal rights in employment to marginalized groups, but something has to be actively done to ensure that such groups can use their and realize this equality. They need to have equal access to education, knowledge, and informal networking. The intricacy of equality becomes even more considerable when one takes into account that to achieve equality, measures that presume an unfair allocation of resources or unequal treatment and are thus unjust should be implemented, for example, through resources packaged specifically for disadvantaged groups, and these are given preferential treatment (Frønes et al., 2020). However, this can be quite controversial. Nonetheless, it seems more worthwhile to pursue equity rather than equality in diversity.

Closely linked to diversity and equity is inclusion. In fact, there are even a prevalent acronym to the terms discussed: in this chapter DE&I (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) (Campbell, 2022). There cannot only be measures ensuring the influx of POC, there must be measures in place to keep the diversity as well. Hence a need for measures that promote inclusion and feelings of community. For instance, does it really matter if WOC of other POC get a seat at the table – if they remain without a voice due to fear of repercussions? To be able to extract all the benefits of having a diverse workforce there needs to be a level of intergroup openness and psychological safety. Amy Edmondson introduced the concept in her book *The Fearless*

Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth published in 2018, and in it she explores the importance of psychological safety in fostering effective teamwork and innovation in organizations. Edmondson argues that with psychological safety, individuals are more likely to speak up, share ideas, take risks and learn from failures (Edmondson, 2019). However, shifting organizational culture and creating inclusive societies takes time and requires work beyond merely “non-exclusion” (Gill et al., 2018). Inclusion is therefore necessary for attracting and holding onto diversity, and it requires strategic work within organizations on multiple levels.

Other research besides this thesis has shown that Norwegian workplaces has several improvement points in regard to inclusion. Likewise to this research, (Maximova-Mentzoni & Egeland, 2019) research on national diversity in Norwegian academia revealed a tendency for exclusionary treatment towards foreign-born staff. This issue is demonstrated through exclusion mechanisms such as local language mastery, the invisibility of foreign-born competencies and extra emotional work for representatives of nationality diversity that may have negative implications for the individual (Maximova-Mentzoni & Egeland, 2019). The informants from this research also revealed they feel ignored, overlooked, and excluded. Similar findings have been previously presented in this thesis, such as the feeling of having to work harder and feeling as an Other. Resultingly, although these findings are not found within the same scope as in this thesis, it can reveal similar attitudes found in both this research and Maximova-Mentzoni & Egeland's (2019). This may indicate that there are still much to improve regarding inclusion of a ethnically and culturally diverse group, which in turn can promote diversity.

However, to meet the needs of an ethnically and culturally diverse group, organizations must engage in the process of becoming culturally competent (Gill et al., 2018). As previously mentioned: “white people listen to white people”, and as a result there is a need to increase knowledge amongst white majority to become better allies for a racial out-group. That being so, there are many suitable measures. First is creating a high level of psychological safety within the organization through safe spaces for employees have dialogues and share experiences (Gill et al., 2018). Creating such safe spaces can enable out-group individuals to be vulnerable and share culture and experiences that may spark understanding and compassion in others. Some confessed that, due to their insufficient awareness of diversity and varied groups, they had made inaccurate judgments about some of their coworkers,

resulting in unfavorable stereotypes (Gill et al., 2018). Another measure could be workshops or training in unconscious bias and clarifying why diversity is something desirable (Campbell, 2022; Gill et al., 2018). We all hold biases, but becoming more conscious of them could have lasting effects on for instance recruitment. In addition, for DE&I to succeed within an organization it should also be anchored in the organizations values. To reduce glass ceilings and increase the number of WOC in leadership positions the cultural competence in organizations should increase to promote a more diverse, equitable and inclusive labor market.

Nonetheless, in order to implement all of these measures, solid and goal-oriented leadership must be in place. Leadership has as its purpose to take full advantage of the potential in organizations by setting the direction for the organization and making sure it is properly managed after deciding direction and that intentions are adopted (Stokkeland et al., 2017). One informant mentions leadership being an important component in changing company culture, and that they should “practice what they preach”. The Scandinavian Model is based upon trust between employers and employee, and the leader groups must therefore serve as good examples to incite further trust in diversity work. Scandinavian management is especially participative compared to other forms of management and emphasize the importance of involving and rewarding their employees to make them feel they are contributing to creating a more inclusive workplace, which is a good foundation for changing company cultures (Grenness, 2003). Diversity must therefore first be a priority for the executives, perhaps by including POC into the leader group and showing the rest of the organization how beneficial diversity can be. It is then believed that the rest of the company will follow. Engaged leadership in diversity work is therefore seen as essential for diversity measures to succeed and gain legitimacy in organizations.

In this chapter we have examined what this thesis can contribute with to the ongoing discourse, how the Norwegian experience differs from other countries such as the US due to its deep-rooted colorblindness and that it can stifle conversations regarding racial injustice. Increasing cultural competence with DE&I measures are then presented as possibly mechanisms that can diminish glass ceilings and increase the number of WOC in leadership positions.

8 Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to examine why there are so few WOC in leadership positions in private organizations in Norway, through studying the possibilities for barriers and double glass ceilings. The findings indicate that there are several barriers that WOC may face Norwegian workplaces. Both their gender and their ethnic background might make career advancements to leadership positions more difficult as they are doubly challenged due to existing in two societal out-groups. WOC are also believed having to fight a double battle: combating both the expectations of the majority population and at home. This can point towards an experience of a double glass ceiling for WOC who wish to attain top executive positions.

My research, albeit not representative for the whole population of WOC in Norway, can thus indicate that are barriers exemplified through Collins' Matrix of Oppressions for WOCs advancement to leadership positions in Norway. Some women might therefore experience a double glass ceiling. One barrier is external, with all the challenges facing a society with a majority population who do not look like the WOC, and another barrier internal with their respective ethnic culture. Nevertheless, all of these converging identities an individual has creates unique intersectional experiences, and this can also account for the different testimonies given by each informant.

On a formal level, we have observed that there is legal framework in place to criminalize discrimination in the labor market, and seemingly most organizations are making an effort to diversity their workforce. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act was enacted in 2018 and has since then criminalized discriminatory practices. The Act has the objective of improving the positions of minorities and shall help dismantle barriers in the labor market. Furthermore, organizations are promoting diversity by creating minority social groups and holding competence-building conferences. All of these measures on a formal level work to break down barriers for labor participation and career advancements for POC.

Moreover, there are undoubtedly many factors that may pose as barriers on an informal level. Factors that may pose as a barrier for WOCs career advancement in Norway is the prevalence of nepotism, lack of representation, othering and consequently feeling like they have to work harder. These are all interlinked and mutually reinforcing. An interesting find in this thesis is the multicultural dimension. My findings can point towards this dimension acting as a barrier for career advancement for some WOC in Norway. There is also a feeling of unequal

opportunity due to lack of knowledge and network amongst the informants. While it may not impact them directly due to them having “made it” or having highly educated parents and thus an unusable network, the informants share that they believe this is a huge obstacle for many up-and-coming WOC in the labor market. The younger informants believe they have equal opportunity as white Norwegians; however, this optimism may be to their currently short track record working in the labor market. Three of the older informants who have had top executive positions firmly state that there is an inequality in opportunities for WOC.

However, as previously discussed, is it equality or equity we as a society should strive for? While the goal of equality is sameness of treatment, equity’s goal is creating fairness by taking into account the individuals circumstances and predispositions. To further promote diversity, it is not enough to merely focus of sameness of treatment, as this paradoxically can lead to more inequality. Equity means recognizing that we all have different starting points and must therefore adjust for imbalances. Which means in this case means acknowledging all the informal barriers that may hinder more WOC to advance to leadership positions and setting up strategies on how to overcome such barriers.

My findings suggest several improvement points within company policy for furthering diversity in Norwegian boards and workplaces. The key to succeeding with this is a properly informed and goal-oriented leadership which acknowledge the added value of having a diverse workforce. The Scandinavian model is based upon trust, and for diversity work to gain legitimacy the leader group needs to display congruence between rhetoric and behavior. Thereafter, a way to increase diversity and WOC in leadership positions is professionalizing recruitment and recruiting strategically. Recruiting must become fairer and more formalized so that it lessen the chances of nepotism and chummy recruitment methods. There must be a diverse group of people evaluating the candidates and include technical assessments in the interviewing process to ensure that the right capable candidate receives the position. The recruiters should also be aware of the possibilities of unconscious bias, which is why it is preferable to have people of both genders, different ages - and possibly with a minority background too - to evaluate. However, there must also be measures in place to ensure that the diversity achieved through recruiting remains. As Gill et al. (2018) argues, organizations need to put more effort into building bridges between minority and majority groups by creating safe spaces for conversation and further understanding. The company culture must become more culturally competent and knowledgeable to minimize barriers between their

minority- and majority employees. This could create a more inclusive environment where the diversity that is recruited wish to stay.

Lastly it is important to yet again note that this research has not been representative for the entirety of WOC in Norway, at best it can only serve to allude to tendencies. Yet, this thesis can however point where the path of future research should head. My findings are qualitative, so to move onwards with this research a bigger quantitative research project is befitting. Consequently, my recommendation is threefold: future research should further examine the impact of ethnic cultures, class and immigration status on upward career trajectory for WOC. The first recommendation derives from the findings highlighting the impact of their respective ethnic cultures, as the informants' reflections revealed that in their traditional, patriarchal cultures women are not expected to succeed outside the home. Could this dimension help explain why there are few WOC who choose this career path? It would be interesting to examine this further.

The second recommendation stem from finding that the informants who were expected and encouraged at home to succeed outside the home were from a higher class than other informants, being raised by working mothers who have excelled in the labor market themselves. It seems that class might also be a decisive factor in WOC entering leadership positions. It could therefore be interesting to further examine the intersection of race, gender, class and ethnic cultures in a bigger research project in the future.

Finally, the last recommendation stems from the assumption that it how long the immigrants have been in the country has an impact on career trajectories. Ethnic groups which arrived earlier may have integrated better into the Norwegian society and therefore have gotten a step further on social mobility than other immigrant groups that arrived relatively recently. Immigrants who have arrived relatively recently may have come as a result from war, ex. Syria and may also as a result carry more "emotional baggage" than those who have arrived due to labor immigration. Future research could on that account examine how the duration of living in Norway may impact WOCs career trajectories.

This thesis can thus conclude with that there are indications of a double glass ceiling for WOC in Norway in private organizations, and that further work regarding minimizing the feeling of being an Other through DE&I measures is needed. Concludingly, this encourages more comprehensive research on this topic in the future.

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Attachment 1: Invitation to Research Project

Informasjonsskriv om prosjektet «WOC in leadership positions»

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet?

Litt om prosjektet

Prosjektet er i forbindelse med emnet «OLA4090 – Masteroppgave» i den toårige masteren «Organisasjon, ledelse og arbeid» ved Universitetet i Oslo. Dette prosjektet har i hensikt å belyse arbeidshverdagen og muligheter til samt opplevelser av opprykk til ledelse hos fargede kvinner i Norge. Problemstillingen som er utarbeidet for dette prosjektet lyder som følgende: “What experiences do WOC have with entering leadership positions in private organizations in Norway, and to which degree do they experience a so-called “double glass ceiling”?”. Hele prosjektet vil løpe fra januar til juni 2023, og masteroppgaven kommer til å være rundt 60 sider og skal skrives på engelsk.

Jeg skal gjennomføre en kvalitativ studie basert på opplevelser med ledelse og karriereklating blant private organisasjoner og drøfte dette i lys av interseksjonell teori og eventuell annen relevant teori. Studien vil bli gjennomført av Vivian Phan og vil til slutt resultere i en masteroppgave publisert hos UiO. Informanter kan selvsagt få den ferdigstilte masteroppgaven tilsendt dersom det er ønskelig.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Jeg ønsker dybdeintervjuer med deg som informant. Dybdeintervjuet vil vare i cirka 45 minutter og inneholder spørsmål om erfaringer og opplevelser rundt opprykk til ledelse. Det vil bli brukt lydopptak for å sikre mest mulig korrekt gjengivelse av data. Det kan både bli gjennomført fysiske eller digitale intervjuer, avhengig av hva som passer deg best.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi grunn. All innsamlet data og dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Opplysningene blir behandlet konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Alle informanter vil være anonymisert, og det er kun jeg, Vivian Phan, som vet hvem som blir intervjuet. Data innsamlet vil bli brukt som empirisk grunnlag til en analyse. Ved prosjektets slutt vil Universitetet i Oslo publisere masteroppgaven på UiOs egne nettsider.

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes i juni 2023. Etter prosjektslutt vil datamateriale og dine personopplysninger, eksempelvis lydopptak, notater og kontaktinformasjon slettes.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du tar del i datamaterialet har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger jeg behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

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

Vivian Phan, tlfnr: 47372552 epost: vivianph@uio.no

Dersom du har spørsmål vedrørende UiOs behandling av deres personopplysninger og om hvordan de kan få oppfylt sine rettigheter etter personvernregelverket, ta kontakt med:

Roger Markgraf-Bye, personvernombud@uio.no

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

Personverntjenester på e-post (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Attachment 2: Consent form

Samtykkeskjema

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet “minoritetskvinner i ledelsesposisjoner” i forbindelse med en masteroppgave ved programmet «Organisasjon, ledelse og arbeid» ved Universitetet i Oslo. Prosjektet har følgende problemstilling: «What experiences do minority women have when entering leadership positions in private organizations in Norway, and to which degree do they experience a so-called “double glass ceiling”?». Prosjektet vil gå over en tidsperiode fra januar til juni 2023 og utføres av Vivian Phan, en student ved ovenfornevnte masterprogrammet. Data innsamlet vil bli lagret på en sikker måte via UiOs egne servere og vil bidra til en analyse som vil resultere i en forhåpentligvis samfunnsnyttig masteroppgave.

Med dette samtykker jeg til å delta i intervju.

Jeg samtykker også til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet og vil være med på å danne grunnlag for analyse.

Det er frivillig å delta i studien og mulig å trekke seg uten å oppgi årsak. Dersom man ønsker å trekke seg vil all informasjon bli slettet. Du som deltar, vil være anonym.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Attachment 3: Interview Guide

Bakgrunnsopplysninger og veien frem til i dag:

- Hva er din stilling den dag i dag? (What is your job position today?)
- Hva er din utdanningsbakgrunn? (What is your educational background?)
- Hva gjorde du før du begynte å jobbe som xxxx? (What did you do prior to working as XXX)
- Kan du fortelle litt om hvordan du har fått den stillingen du har i dag? (Can you tell me a little about how you have acquired the job position you are currently in?)
- Har du hatt andre ledelsesstillinger før? (Have you had other leadership positions before?)
- Hvordan skiller dette arbeidet seg fra arbeid du har gjort tidligere? (How does this work differ from other work you have done previously?)
- Hva er motivasjonen din for å bli/være leder? (What is your motivation to be/become a leader?)
- Er det noe mangfoldstiltak eller mangfoldsinitiativer på jobben som bistår WOC som vil bli ledere? (Are there any diversity measures taken at work to help WOC who wants to enter leadership positions?)
- Har du en egen familie? (Do you have your own family?)

Opplevelser

- Hva slags erfaringer har du med å være kvinne i ledelsesposisjon? (What kind of experiences do you have with being a woman in a leadership position?)
 - Hvordan har du opplevd hittil karriereklattring? (How have you experienced career advancements thus far?)

- Kjenner du til andre WOC i ledelsesposisjoner? Isåfall hvor og i hvilken sektor? (Do you know of other WOC in leadership positions? Where do they work?)
- Hvordan tror du mulighetene er for en WOC for å innta toppledelsen? (How do you think the possibilities are for WOC to enter top leadership positions?)
- I hvilken grad opplever du at du blir behandlet likt, eller har like muligheter som etniske norske? (To what degree do you experience that you get treated equally, or have the same opportunities, as white Norwegians?)
- Et glasstak defineres av forskere som en usynlig barriere – et tak – som hindrer kvinner i karriereopprykk, har du noen opplevelser med dette? (A glass ceiling is defined by researchers as an invisible barrier that hinders women from career advancements, do you have any experiences with this?)
- Opplever du at det er vanskeligere å være kvinne eller å være farget i din bransje? (In your experience, is it more difficult to be a woman or of color in your field?)

Refleksjoner

- Hvorfor tror du andre WOC har lyst eller ikke lyst til å innta ledelsesposisjoner? Både indre og ytre faktorer. (Why do you think other WOC might either wish to or avoid entering leadership positions?)
- Hvordan kan ditt selskap bidra til at flere WOC opplever den suksessen de ønsker i karrieren? (How can your company contribute to more WOC experiencing the success they wish for in their careers?)
- Hva slags fordeler bringer med av å ha en WOC som leder? (What kind of advantages does having a WOC as a leader bring?)

- Tror du det er færre WOC enn MOC (men of color) som ønsker å bli ledere?
Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? (Do you think it is fewer WOC than MOC that wishes to become leaders?)
- Ettersom andelen andre- og tredjegenarasjon med innvandrere i Norge i voksen alder økes, hvordan kan det norske arbeidslivet utruste seg og sine WOC bedre for årene som kommer slik at både selskapene og WOC opplever ønsket suksess? (Since the share of second- and third generation immigrants of adult age is increasing, how can the Norwegian work sector equip themselves and their WOC better for the years to come so that both companies and WOC experience desired success?)

Attachment 4: NSD Approval

Meldeskjema

Referansenummer
328031

Hvilke personopplysninger skal du behandle?

- Navn (også ved signatur/samtykke)
- Lydopptak av personer
- Bakgrunnsopplysninger som vil kunne identifisere en person
- Rasemessig eller etnisk opprinnelse

Beskriv hvilke bakgrunnsopplysninger du skal behandle
Nåværende og tidligere arbeidssteder, samt etnisk bakgrunn.

Prosjektinformasjon

Prosjektittel

WOC in leadership positions in Norway

Prosjektbeskrivelse

Masteroppgave i forbindelse med masteprogrammet "Organisasjon, ledelse og arbeid" på UiO. Problemstillingen er foreløpig "What experiences do women of color (WOC) have with entering leadership positions in the private sector in Norway, and to which degree do they experience a so-called "double glass ceiling"?". Oppgaven vil dermed skrives på engelsk. I denne sammenheng vil jeg bruke kvalitative metoder og avholde semistrukturerte dybdeintervjuer med 6-10 minoritetskvinner.

Begrunn hvorfor det er nødvendig å behandle personopplysningene

Personopplysningene jeg ønsker å samle inn, derav etnisitet, arbeidsstatus og stilling er essensielle for å kunne besvare problemstillingen.

Ekstern finansiering

Ikke utfyllt

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Vivian Phan, vivianph@uio.no, tlf: 47372552

Behandlingsansvar

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Oslo/Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet/Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Cathrine Egeland, cathrine.egeland@oslomet.no, tlf: 99255938

Skal behandlingsansvaret deles med andre institusjoner (felles behandlingsansvarlige)?

Nei

Utvalg 1

Beskriv utvalget

Utvalget kommer til å bestå av minoritetskvinner, mer spesifikt synlige minoriteter, dvs. personer man ved første øyekast ser ikke har sin opprinnelse i Norge.

Beskriv hvordan rekruttering eller trekking av utvalget skjer

Rekrutteringen skal skje ved snøballmetoden, jeg kontakter både sentrale personer og forskere innenfor mangfoldsledelse samt det nettverket jeg har og håper at det kan føre til noen informanter. Videre håper jeg at de informantene som jeg får inn kan lede meg til flere informanter.

Alder

25-60

Inngår noen av disse gruppene i utvalget?

- Sårbare grupper

Personopplysninger for utvalg 1

- Navn (også ved signatur/samtykke)
- Lydopptak av personer
- Bakgrunnsopplysninger som vil kunne identifisere en person
- Rasemessig eller etnisk opprinnelse

Hvordan samler du inn data fra utvalg 1?

Personlig intervju.

Vedlegg [intervjuguide.docx](#)

Grunnlag for å behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Grunnlag for å bearbeide særlige kategorier av personopplysninger

Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Redegjør for valgte av behandlingsgrunnlag

Informasjon for utvalg 1

Informerer du utvalget om behandlingen av personopplysningene?

Ja

Hvordan?

Skriftlig informasjon (papir eller elektronisk)

Informasjonsskriv

Vedlegg: [Informasjonsskriv og samtykkeskjema.pdf](#)

Tredjepersoner

Skal du behandle personopplysninger om tredjepersoner?

Nei

Dokumentasjon:

Hvordan dokumenteres samtykkene?

- Manuelt (papir)
- Elektronisk (e-post, e-skjema, digital signatur)

Hvordan trekkes samtykket tilbake?

Ved å sende SMS eller mail til meg.

Hvordan kan de registrerte få innsyn, rettet eller slettet personopplysninger om seg selv?

Ved å sende SMS eller e-post og forespørre det.

Totalt antall registrerte i prosjektet

1-99

Tillatelser

Skal du innhente følgende godkjenninger eller tillatelser for prosjektet?

Ikke utfyllt

Behandling

Hvor behandler personopplysningene?

- Ekstern tjeneste eller nettverk (databehandler)

Hvem behandler/har tilgang til personopplysningene?

- Student
- Prosjektansvarlig
- Databehandler

Hvilken databehandler har tilgang til personopplysningene?

Educloud Research

Tilgjengeliggjøres personopplysningene utenfor EU/EØS til en tredjestat eller internasjonal institusjon?

Nei

Sikkerhet

Oppbevares personopplysningene atskilt fra øvrige data (koblingsnøkkel)?

Ja

Hvilke tekniske og fysiske tiltak sikrer personopplysningene?

- Personopplysningene anonymiseres fortløpende
- Adgangsbegrensning
- Opplysningene krypteres under lagring
- Opplysningene krypteres under forsendelse
- Endringslogg

Varighet

Prosjektperiode

02.01.2023-30.06.2023

Hva skjer med dataene etter prosjektslutt?

Data anonymiseres (sletter/omskriver personopplysningene)

Hvilke anonymiseringstiltak vil bli foretatt?

- Koblingsnøkkelen slettes
- Personidentifiserbare opplysninger fjernes, omskrives eller grovkategoriseres
- Lyd- eller bildeopptak slettes

Vil de registrerte kunne identifiseres (direkte eller indirekte) i oppgave/avhandling/øvrig publikasjoner fra prosjektet?

Nei