

Master Thesis

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PREFACE

This is it! This project is the last step of a six-and-a-half year period of studying at the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering and finishing the master Design for Interaction. A period where I changed from a naive teenager, not knowing who to be and where to begin, to a curious master student who does not know when to stop doing what she loves most: making the world a bit of a better place with the use of design. It marks the end of an era.

Thank you for taking the time to read this thesis and learn more about a subject you can only sometimes, or not always, precisely talk about: informal work. More specifically, in combination with newcomers and the topic of integration. Complex issues close to my heart, which I was able to explore throughout this project. When I got the opportunity to explore this ‘taboo’ topic, I dove into everything I stumbled upon. Everything is connected; however, staying on track was not always easy. In retrospect, I look back on a fascinating project where I learned a lot from different experiences of people, policies, public organisations and OpenEmbassy.

A big thank you for the guidance and support to my chair and mentor, Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer and Annemiek van Boeijen. Mieke, for offering me the collaboration with OpenEmbassy and for your reflective, critical thoughts during our coaching sessions. Also, for introducing me to the topic of mental models, which inspired me a lot. I hope it will be a topic I will try to unravel more in my future projects. Annemiek, for keeping me on track by reminding me of the goals of the different steps I took. Emphasising the project’s red thread and motivating me to never stop asking questions. Furthermore, thank you for taking the time for some extra guidance when I needed this.

Additionally, a big thank you to all my colleagues at OpenEmbassy. You were, and still are, all an inspiration to me. I learned a lot from all your work and gained life lessons I will never forget. More specifically, I would like to thank Patrick van der Hijden and Ivana Barišić for guiding me throughout this process. Ivana, thank you for our inspiring conversations and your reflective mind. Patrick, thank you for your enthusiasm towards the project and the design.

And last but not least, I want to express my gratitude towards my family, friends, housemates and other graduating students. You were all a great (mental) support, and this project would not have become what it is now without you. Thank you, Sanel, for always being there at any time, no matter what. Thank you, mam, pap and Cleo, for helping me and supporting me throughout the process. Thank you, Emma and Eline,

for hearing about all my thoughts and bringing me cups of coffee and tea when I needed them most. And thank you, fellow (graduating) IDE friends Flore, Jaap, Sanne, Ruby, Lena, Noor, Rins and Romée, for our breaks together and for sharing insights (or struggles).

Enjoy the read!

Mila van Rijs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Finding work is essential in the formal integration and the new Civic Integration Act, for which the municipality is now responsible (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022a). A publication from CBS found that 41% of the asylum holders who came to the Netherlands in 2014 had a job after five and a half years. In addition, newcomers, more than non-newcomers, have a temporary contract or work part-time (2021b). Although there is a shortage in the labour market (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022a), newcomers do not always seem to profit there.

OpenEmbassy, the client for this thesis, researched the subject in Rotterdam and found several insights contributing to the problem. For instance, newcomers perceive informal work as more accessible than formal work (2021). Moreover, a significant driver is the minimal financial difference between a formal job and the social assistance benefit (OpenEmbassy, 2021).

The problem of the non-accessible labour market for newcomers can be described as complex (Snowden & Boone, 2007). This project explores the complexity of the labour and integration system while focussing on the individual needs of newcomers and municipal civil servants. The approach is a combination of the double diamond approach (Design Council, 2019), combined with elements of Vision in Design (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011), the use of an interaction vision (Pasma et al., 2011) and various mapping explorations.

The research consists of OpenEmbassy’s analysis, including insights from twelve interviewees. Furthermore, additional literature research, seven in-depth interviews and thirteen street interviews contributed to the insights. A deeper analysis resulted in journey maps and thirteen driving forces from clustering interview quotes, supported by the literature research and synthesised in three frames or design directions. Directly discussing informal work with someone from the municipality can cause trouble. The newcomer may get a fine or be seen as a fraudster, or the municipal officer is summoned because of not reporting it and not thus not following the legislation.

Thus, the design direction resulted in the following design statement:

The design intervention wants to make talking about the underlying reasons for informal work more accessible by creating a more symmetrical and trusted relationship between municipal officers and newcomers.

The design statement resulted in Werkkaart, a card set municipal officers can use with newcomers (figure 1). The intervention has as its primary goal to make the conversation more symmetrical and to create shared ownership, starting from the game’s main rule. Both players choose cards to shape the conversation, during meetings at the municipality. Werkkaart does not tackle informal work directly but purposely indirectly. The design consists of 45 cards, categorised into eight themes, an appointment booklet with an opportunity card, a manual and a gameboard. The cards’ content comes from different inputs, of which the framework of OpenEmbassy (2019) based on Strang et al. (2019) forms the base. Fifteen participants evaluated Werkkaart and noted, among other insights, that the physicality of the cards supports ownership in the conversation.

Figure 1: Werkkaart, using cards to shape ownership over a conversation.



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GLOSSARY

Asylum centre <i>COA, Centraal Orgaan opvang Asielzoekers</i> An organisation providing a place for asylum seekers, while waiting for their asylum procedure or housing.
Civic Integration Act <i>Wet inburgering</i> The law that specifies the integration of newcomers subject to the integration obligation.
Civil society organisations <i>Maatschappelijk middenveld</i> Non-governmental societal organisations.
Client manager <i>Klantmanager</i> The civil servant responsible for guiding newcomers in their integration or towards work.
Municipal officer <i>Gemeentelijk ambtenaar</i> A civil servant, working at a municipality.
Newcomer <i>Nieuwkomer</i> Someone who has recently started to live in the Netherlands. The term can apply to refugees, status holders, asylum seekers or someone joining their family.
Social assistance benefit <i>Bijstandsuitkering</i> A type of benefit from the government for when you cannot claim any other provision or benefit and do not have enough money to support yourself from.
Work consultant/coach <i>Werk consulent</i> A municipal officer that is assigned to someone who receives social assistance benefit.

1.1 TOPIC AND CONTEXT

Subsection 1.1 explains the relevance of the initial problem in 1.1.1, followed by the definition of informal work in 1.1.2. Thereafter, 1.1.3 describes the combination of the topic with the new Civic Integration Act and 1.1.4 presents OpenEmbassy. Subsection 1.1.1 ends with the context of this thesis: Rotterdam.

1.1.1 Relevance of initial problem proposed by OpenEmbassy

The most recent publication of the CBS *“Asiel en Integratie”* (Asylum and Integration) found that 41% of the asylum holders who came to the Netherlands in 2014 have a job after five and a half years. The years following 2014, the number of asylum holders who found a job in the first months rose, but stagnated due to COVID-19 (2021a; 2021b). In addition, newcomers, more than others, have a temporary contract or work part-time (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021b). Although, there is a shortage in the labour market (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022a) newcomers do not always seem to profit there.

OpenEmbassy, the client for this thesis, researched this issue in Rotterdam and found in an earlier project on the topic several insights and signals contributing to the problem. For example, the fact that the informal labour market feels more accessible than the official market. Newcomers can find a job informally via their community, not having a suitable diploma or not speaking Dutch on a certain level is not an issue. Furthermore, it is a quick way of having some form of financial stability. Another reason for the informal market choice is the fact that the municipalities do not find the right job for the newcomers. Also, the minimal financial difference between a formal and informal is a driver (OpenEmbassy, 2021).

Working in the informal labour market comes with many risks. For example, a newcomer has no rights and laws when working and can get in trouble when the municipality finds out. Moreover, the newcomer has no ‘confirmable’ experience that one can put on a CV to find a job in the formal market. However, a positive aspect of the informal market perceived by newcomers is the fact that it is more accessible to them (OpenEmbassy, 2021).

This project elaborates on learning from the informal market and making the formal market more accessible, with the use of a design intervention.

1.1.2 Definition of informal work

To understand what informal work means in the context of this thesis, it is necessary to describe what the meaning is of the words ‘informal’ and ‘work’. If you look up ‘informal’ in the dictionary, it gives you three different meanings, which all describe the word differently: *“1 without formality or ceremony; casual, 2 not according to the prescribed, official, or customary way or manner; irregular; unofficial and 3 suitable to or characteristic of casual and familiar, but educated, speech or writing”* (‘Definition of Informal’, n.d.).

In this thesis, the second definition is what is meant with the word informal. Moreover, ‘formal’ means the direct opposite, *“with formality of ceremony and being in accordance with the usual requirements.”* In addition, the word formal comes from the Latin word *formalis*, which comes from the word ‘forma’, a form, figure, or shape (‘Definition and etymology of formal’, n.d.).

Another perspective comes from philosopher Hannah Ahrendt who makes a clear distinction between work and labour. She describes Labour as something cyclical and something we do everyday, such as household tasks, and work has an activity with a clear beginning and end. Moreover, with work there is something ‘left’ at the end, such as a tool and not something made for consumption, which can be seen as cyclical (d’Entreves, 2019).

In the dictionary ‘work’ is described as: *“an activity, such as a job, that a person uses physical or mental effort to do, usually for money”* (‘Meaning of Work in English’, n.d.).

To the present day, informal work means ‘nonofficial’ work, undeclared work or working black. Meaning, doing labour without paying tax and it is technically illegal by law. The Dutch taxing agency (Belastingdienst) can label this as fraud. For example, when you receive a social assistance benefit and do not give up your work as extra income

Figure 2: a print done by Philips Gale (1638), to the work of Maarten van Heemskerck. In the artwork, you can see the Fear of God (Timor Dominus), who blesses the marriage between Labour (Labor) and Diligence (Diligentia). Also, the personification of Hope (Spes) gives the dowry: a pack mule loaded with tools. On the donkey’s head, you can see a rooster. The donkey and rooster are symbols of labour and tirelessness (Galle, 1638).



*Numinis ipsa Metu Solertia pulchra Labori
Iungitur, ingenuas foecundatq; parturit artes;*

*Prouenit unde animi rerum Prudentia solers,
Et quaecunque sagax tentando repperit Vfus.*



(Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022b). One can also use the term informal work when the money comes from illegal activities, such as drugs or violence (Slot, 2010). However, in this thesis, this part will not be touched upon, and the term informal work will not refer to these kinds of criminal activities.

This definition is also in line with the one used by the European Commission, that refers to undeclared work as: *“any paid activities that are lawful as regards their nature but not declared to public authorities, taking into account differences in the regulatory system of Member States”* (Commission of the European Communities, 2007, p. 2).

Furthermore, next to the word informal, the words undeclared and black work can also be used. However, since OpenEmbassy uses the term informal, this thesis will also mainly use that word to define it.

1.1.3 Informal working newcomers and the new Civic Integration Act

This project will be specifically about how to guide newcomers working informally towards formal work. Newcomers in this thesis are defined as people who move to the Netherlands and need to integrate according to the law. In addition, this thesis focuses on newcomers coming from non-Western countries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022a).

OpenEmbassy found that newcomers perceive informal work as more accessible than formal work (2021). Moreover, finding work is a very essential part of the integration and also of the old and new Civic Integration Act (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022c).

Since the first of January of 2022, this new Civic Integration Act has been enacted in the Netherlands. The act aims to guide newcomers to participate in society by learning the language and finding a (paid) job. The most significant change in this act is that the primary responsibility lies no longer in the hands of the government but that every different municipality is responsible for the integration of newcomers in their municipality.

The municipalities are as a result also responsible for guiding the newcomer financially. When newcomers come here, they are divided into two groups: asylum status

Figure 3: A collage by Guillaume Chiron, who plays in this collage with the mid-century domestic life (Chiron, 2019).

holders and people who join their families. The first group has to do a more extensive integration than the second (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022c). More information into the different laws that play a role can be found in chapter four.

The idea is that, with the change of the Civic Integration Act, care and help for newcomers in the Netherlands becomes more personal and more specifically fit for their needs. However, OpenEmbassy states in their research that this also requires changes in the way of working (2021). Furthermore, in practice, some municipalities do not change much in their way of working or struggle to keep up with the responsibility. But it also opens up opportunities for the municipality to improve integration in their area.

As explained, the main goal of the Civic Integration Act is for newcomers to participate in society and thus find a (paid) job. Many newcomers find this part particularly difficult. For example, because they do not have the correct school documents or employers are not familiar with hiring someone who maybe needs additional guidance in the first weeks. Another reason can be that newcomers do not know where to start their search since many come here without a network to fall back on. Many newcomers find (undeclared) work throughout their communities and may have a different idea of legal work because of their cultural experiences. Financial reasons can also play a significant role here (OpenEmbassy, 2021).

The number of stakeholders makes the problem very complex, not just for the municipality of Rotterdam and OpenEmbassy, but mainly for newcomers. Also, looking into informal work can be difficult for the municipality since they also have a regulating role and cannot allow newcomers to work on the black market. If a municipal official finds out, the newcomer has to pay a big fine (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022e).

1.1.4 OpenEmbassy

OpenEmbassy (logo see figure 5) is the client for this project. It is a research agency that works on the topic of integration on different levels. They support newcomers individually, by answering questions that newcomers can ask via their help desk. Locally, they help connecting people and forming resilient communities. Furthermore, systemically, in the format of advising policy makers, municipalities and other organisations in the field of integration to work towards better integration of newcomers in the Netherlands.

Moreover, OpenEmbassy uses so-called ‘actieonderzoek’ (action research, figure 4) in their research. When they do a project around a specific project, they pick up real cases of people experiencing the problem or situation that is researched in the project. By solving the case and helping the person experiencing this, they learn and apply these learnings to insights and solutions (Wat Is Actieonderzoek? In Gesprek Met Frans Somers, 2022; OpenEmbassy, n.d.-b).



Figure 4: Visual Action Research (OpenEmbassy, n.d. b)

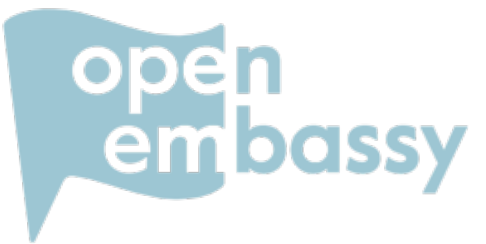


Figure 5: Logo OpenEmbassy (OpenEmbassy, n.d. a)

1.1.5 The Rotterdam context

As OpenEmbassy initially conducted its analysis for the municipality of Rotterdam, this project's scope is the city of Rotterdam (figure 6). In addition, each municipality regulates the Civic Integration Act and other laws and regulations slightly differently, as described in section 1.1.3, which affects the policy's implementation.

Figure 6: Photograph I made of 'de Rotterdam', viewed from a neighbourhood in Rotterdam South.



1.2 INITIAL ASSIGNMENT AND AIM

As described in the previous section, newcomers working informally can experience all kinds of problems and risks. The need is thus to guide informal working newcomers to a formal job or prevent informal work in the first place.

Therefore, the initial research question is:
How can OpenEmbassy increase the accessibility to the formal labour market for newcomers by learning from the informal labour market in Rotterdam?

The research question resulted in the following initial assignment:
I want to research how OpenEmbassy can increase accessibility to the formal labour market for newcomers in Rotterdam while learning from the informal market. I imagine the design will be an intervention within the system of labour and integration. This intervention will be designed with the help of various methods while keeping different cultures and the system in mind.

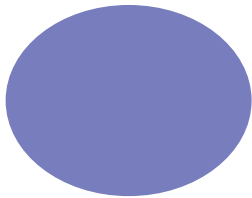
This thesis elaborates on the research and analysis of OpenEmbassy's project. The description below explains what OpenEmbassy performed as research and how this project continues on that analysis, see figure 7.

OpenEmbassy:
The research OpenEmbassy conducted consisted of interviews and basic literature research for the municipality of Rotterdam and was delivered in the format of a document with insights and a learning session.

This thesis:
This thesis uses the research described above and the expertise of OpenEmbassy gained on the topic. Furthermore, this thesis performs additional research to understand the subject from different viewpoints, opening up possibilities for a design intervention. Such as in the format of interviews with additional stakeholders to get a broader perspective. And more interviews with professionals from the Municipality and newcomers. Moreover, additional literature research is to support the insights gained from the interviews. It incorporates the insights in a design research way, which the approach section on the next discusses further—also making the research visual, such as in the forms of journeys, mapping and illustrations. In addition, this project ends with a design intervention and an evaluated prototype.

OpenEmbassy

- Interviews (15, 12 used in this thesis)
- Casus (1)
- Basic literature research
- Analysis
- Presentation Municipality



This project

- Additional interviews with more stakeholders (7)
- Literature research
- Design research analysis and mapping
- Designing an intervention
- Testing and evaluating the intervention

Figure 7: A comparison of this and OpenEmbassy's project.

1.3 APPROACH

The approach section describes the mixture of methods used for the approach of this project in 1.3.1. Furthermore, 1.3.2 explains how this project uses a human-centred approach with a more systemic perspective and 1.3.3 states the culture sensitive approach.

1.3.1 Design approach: a mixture

Figure 8 visualises the different steps of the project abstractly. As described in the circles, the design process is iterative, and the steps are performed iteratively and not linearly. The approach is a combination of the double diamond approach (Design Council, 2019), combined with elements of Vision in Design (ViP) (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011), the use of an interaction vision (Pasman et al., 2011) and various mapping explorations. Furthermore, the thesis starts with a broad exploration to understand the bigger picture, which supports reasoning why events occur in the system. The following subsection elaborates more on this approach.

Double diamond x ViP x Interaction Vision x Design Rationale

The double diamond (Design Council, 2019) forms the basis for the design process. First, by zooming out, researching, and mapping informal working newcomers within the system, then funnelling into a direction and design intervention. As shown in the visual in figure 8, this translates into opening up and closing down again. In addition, the design approach consists of elements of the Vision in Design method (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011). This method supports clustering a wide variety of insights. The clustered insights consist of interviews and are supported by developments, trends, laws and human principles to identify the needs of newcomers in so-called driving forces. The driving forces are the clusters that drive and shape the (future) context. Next, frame these driving forces by communicating specific directions, looking for a place to intervene, and formulating the chosen direction.

Here, an interaction vision (Pasman et al., 2011) enables grasping the desired interaction of the design, which afterwards translates into a design rationale. This design rationale is formulated based on the structure proposed by Dorst (2011).

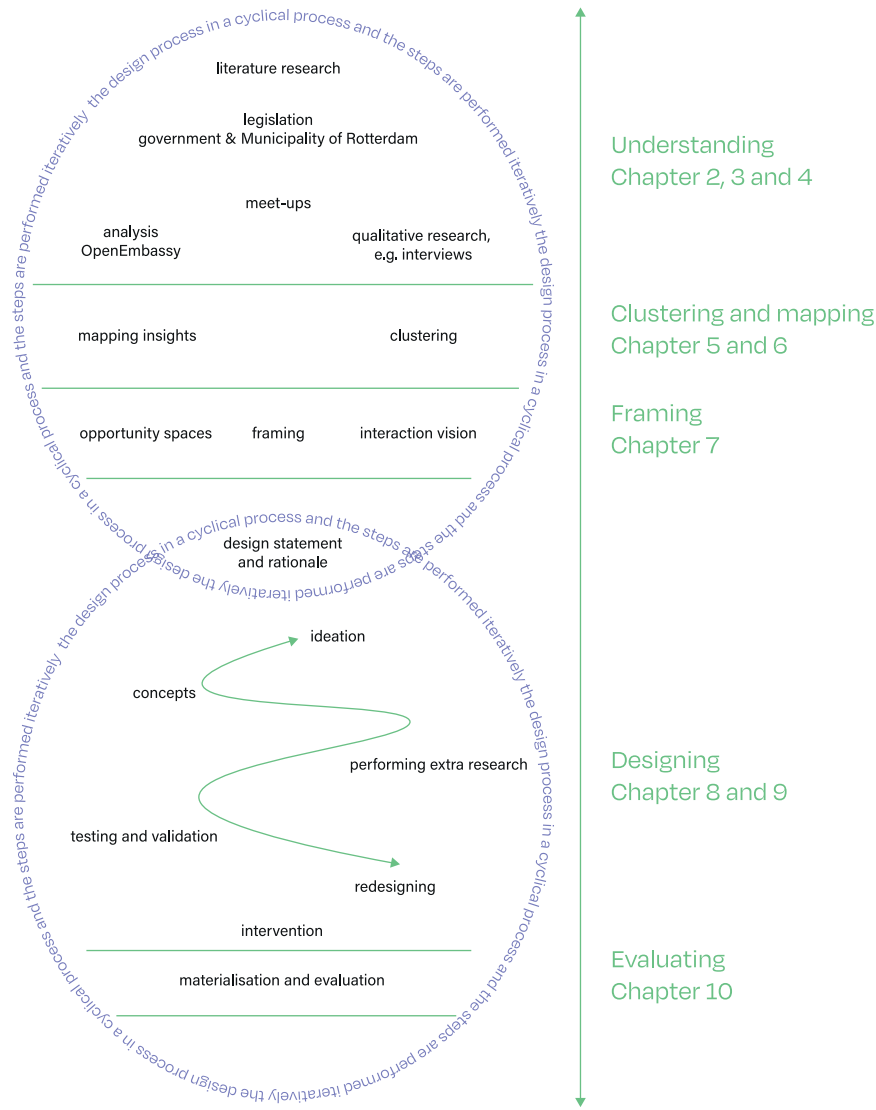


Figure 8: Design approach of this project

1.3.2 Human-centred design with a systemic perspective

The problem of newcomers working informally can be described as a complex one. It has large numbers of interacting characters; it is non-linear, can be unpredictable, is constantly changing and, therefore, dynamic (Snowden & Boone, 2007). It is a problem that can not be solved, and the design of this project can be seen as an intervention. In this project, the complexity of the labour and integration system is explored while focussing on the individual needs of the newcomers and municipal civil servants. The design practice and the systems change practice can enhance each other (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Malcolm, 2020): *“Human-centeredness contributes to the systemic exploration of existing relationships and tensions in the problem situation, as well as to the design of new interventions”* (p401).

The newcomer, also in relation to the municipal officer, is placed at the centre of the interaction in this project, which is called a human-centred design approach. This is done while zooming out (expansionism) and looking at other influences at stake in the complexity of the problem of informal work and newcomers. What are the occurring events, and how can this be transferred back to the rules, laws and eventually mental models of the actors in the system? Every actor and person in touch with the system of the problem of this thesis has a specific mental model shaped by a particular paradigm of society (Meadows, 1999). Mental models are ways to look at the world, often unconsciously. Consequently, mental models affect, for example, the system’s structure (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Malcolm, 2020). The mental models of the Dutch citizens and politicians affect how the countries’ laws are built up, for example, the Civic Integration Act. Those laws and other structures in society can thereafter cause specific patterns, such as the fact that 41% of the newcomers coming to the Netherlands in 2014 have a job after five and a half years, as described in the subsection 1.1.1 and the topic of newcomers working informally.

Mental models of people can differ much, for example, when having other values and beliefs. However, when a mental model can be influenced, this can have a big leverage point in the system, as Meadows (1999) described. Changing mental models is nearly impossible, but trying to unravel them can give a more profound overview of why certain events occur.

Therefore, this project starts with a zoomed-out standpoint to get a broader overview

of newcomers working informally. Which helps to get a deeper understanding of why events take place. Subsequently, deciding where and how to intervene using a design.

1.3.3 Culture-sensitivity

The topic informal work and newcomers is a sensitive topic and therefore requires a culture-sensitive, and inclusive approach throughout the whole project. It is important to learn and understand different perspectives and values of all the people and contexts involved. Being reflective about what my function as designer is and relationship is in every step and by being respectful. Recognizing that I am always looking at the world from my specific frame and therefore being open and aware of this continuously. The design and thesis should be aware of the cultures it will appear in (van Boeijen & Zijlstra, 2020).

2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach describes how the topic of newcomers and informal work is researched. Section 2.1.1 states the research questions and 2.1.2 explains the method, meaning in which ways this project approaches and tackles the questions.

2.1.1 Research questions

The research questions below split up into three themes: understanding informal work, understanding the Dutch integration system and understanding newcomers and informal work. The three themes consist of one or two main questions and three subquestions. The chapters of this thesis are primarily structured based on these three themes. This second chapter describes in 2.2 literature frameworks and theoretical policy approaches, or views, on integration and informal work, forming the foundation. Chapter three focuses on understanding informal work, focussing on the three sub questions. Followed by the fourth chapter describing the Dutch integration system, meaning the laws and rules at stake for informal work and integration. Also, how Rotterdam’s policy approaches and views are on informal work.

The fifth and sixth chapters integrate the research gained using different methods described in subsection 2.1.2 and thus focus on the third theme: understanding newcomers and informal work. The methods used for integrating the research are explained in the method and approach sections (5.1 and 6.1) of those chapters.

Understanding informal work

What is informal work and what are current policy approaches?

- Subquestion: What is the history of informal work?
- Subquestion: How is informal work in different parts of the world?

In line with the ViP methodology (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011), I conducted a study into trends and developments of newcomers and informal work, which led to the last subquestion of this theme.

- Subquestion: What are the current trends, developments and other influences in the context of newcomers and informal work?

Understanding the Dutch integration system

How does the Dutch integration system work?

- Subquestion: What are the laws and rules that play a role when a newcomer works (informally)?
- Subquestion: What are views on the system of integration?

Understanding newcomers and informal work

Why do newcomers work informally: what are the underlying themes?

What are the needs a newcomer has when looking for a formal job?

- Subquestion: What are the frictions and paradoxes newcomers encounter when working (informally)?
- Subquestion: What role do the municipality of Rotterdam and other organisations play in the process of guiding newcomers to work?

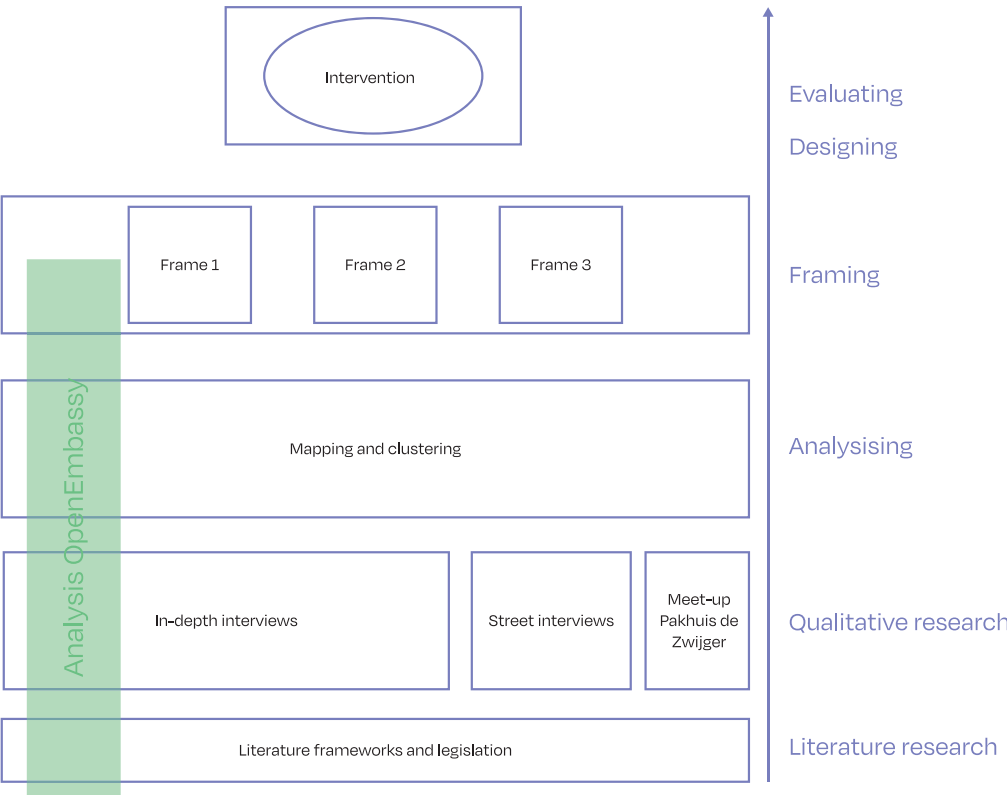


Figure 9: Research and project overview

2.1.2 Research methods

Several research methods structure the research phase: literature research, OpenEmbassy’s research, additional in-depth interviews, interviews on the street with Rotterdammers, and insights from a meet-up. Figure 9 shows how the different components affect the project

Literature research:

The thesis starts with exploring different literature-based frameworks on both the topic of informal work and integration. Furthermore, research into the different laws at stake for the topic, and the approach of the municipality of Rotterdam.

Research OpenEmbassy:

As explained in the approach section, this project builds further on the knowledge already gained by OpenEmbassy. This research is used throughout different phases in the project. OpenEmbassy conducted 15 interviews, and these were included in their analysis. For this project, I was able to use the insights and quotes from twelve of these interviews. For an overview of the interviewees from OpenEmbassy see figure 11. Furthermore, OpenEmbassy presented their analysis to the Municipality of Rotterdam and insights gathered here are also used in this project.

Additional in-depth interviews:

I conducted in-depth interviews with seven people to gain a better understanding of the newcomers and (informal) work (see the overview in figure 11). In addition, I could use the interviews already done by OpenEmbassy for the project about informal working newcomers in Rotterdam, as explained above. This also defined the choice of who was interesting to interview additionally. These interviews were done in both a physical and a digital format and were semi-structured, and some were recorded. The in-depth interview I did with an informal working newcomer was not recorded, and only physical notes were made here. Furthermore, with this interview, someone we both knew was there to help translate and explain in her native language why I wanted to ask her about her experiences.

All the interviewees were informed about the project, also in the format of an informed consent, which can be found in appendix B. At the beginning of the interview, I explained the project’s goal to them and which stakeholders were involved: OpenEmbassy and TU Delft, and indirectly the Municipality of Rotterdam. Furthermore, when the interview

was recorded, I explained that only I could access this data and that the recording and transcripts would be deleted after the project was done. Furthermore, in this thesis I have translated all the quotations from these interviews from Dutch to English.

The interviews were set up following the reasoning of (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017): asking for examples and specific situations and furthermore asking two times why these situations were taking place, to therefore get a deeper understanding of the underlying goals and themes of the people interviewed (see figure 10). Some examples of the set-up of the interviews can be found in appendix D. However, the interviews done by OpenEmbassy and the interviews with newcomers or people with insights from the community were not recorded.

Interviews on the street: Rotterdammers' opinions:
What do Rotterdammers think about informal work? A prototype in the format of a street intervention supported the conversations with Rotterdammers. Subsection 4.2.2 presents the insights gained here. The goal here was to get a better understanding of the opinions of Rotterdammers on informal work and therefore unravelling a bit of their mental models on the topic. Thirteen Rotterdammers participated in these pop-up interviews.

Meet-up at Pakhuis de Zwijger:
Pakhuis de Zwijger hosted a meet-up on the future of work. Currently, there is a development of shortage in the labour market. However, there are still many people who are not included in the labour market at all, or in the way they want to. Notes on the discussions and statements made by the experts in the panel are used to support insights presented in the next chapters. Appendix C describes more information on the meet-up.

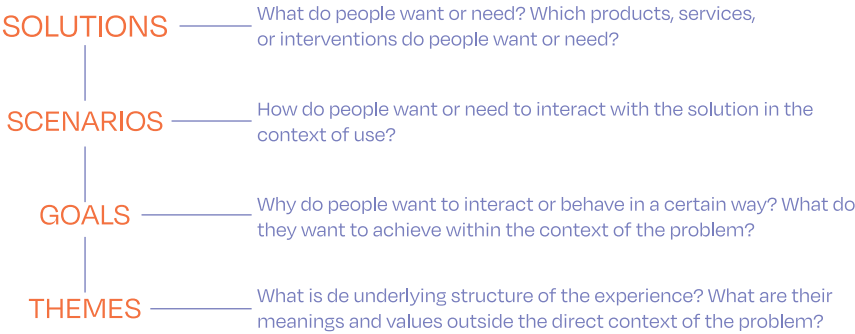


Figure 10: The Nadi-model: four layers of human Needs and Aspirations for a Design and Innovation process (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017).

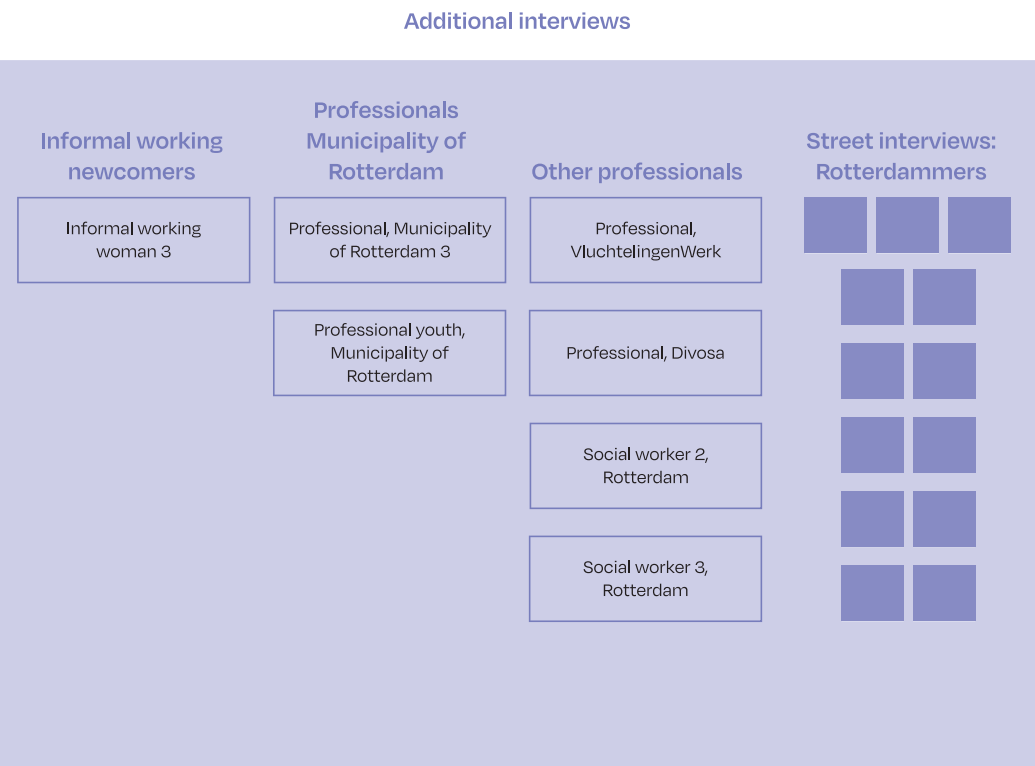
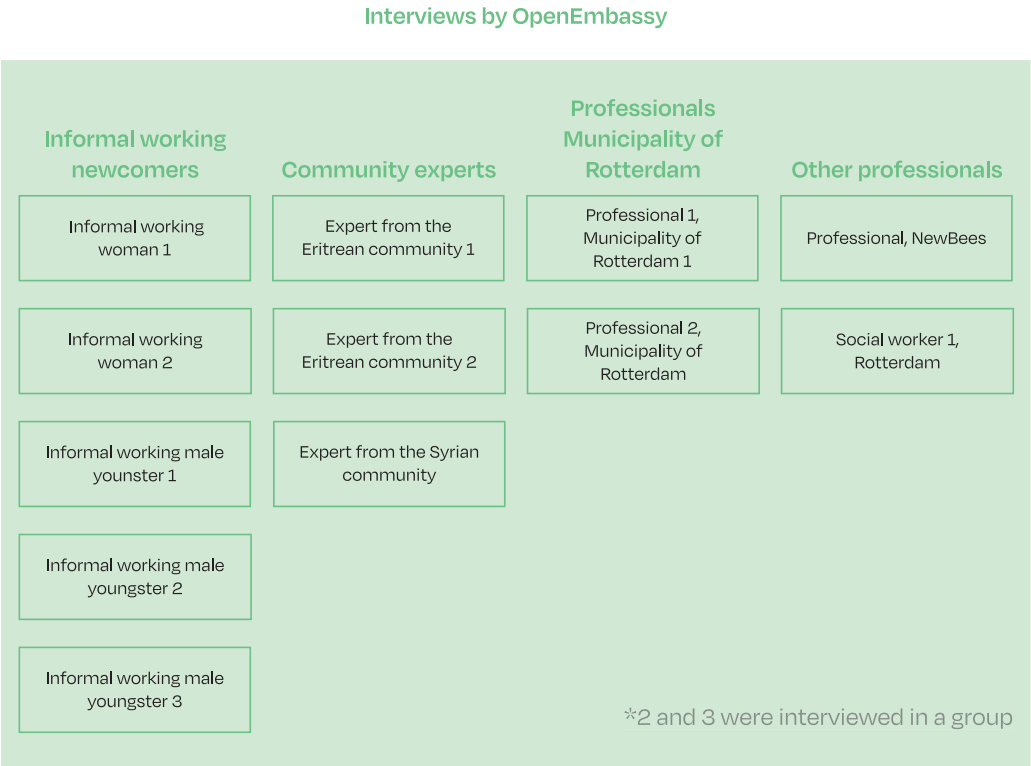


Figure 11: An overview of the interviews. OpenEmbassy's interviews on the left and additional interviews for this project on the right.

2.2 FRAMEWORKS ON INTEGRATION AND INFORMAL WORK

Section 2.2 explains three frameworks on integration and informal work. Two research questions are of influence in this section. The first one is what are views on the system of integration, and the second one is what is informal work and what are current policy approaches?

2.2.1 Fourteen indicators of integration

Strang et al's indicators of integration

Strang et al. (2019) defines their vision of integration as: *"communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities"* (p11). The framework for indicators of integration supports this vision in identifying the actual procedures and adjustments that enhance the integration of newcomers and communities. The framework is structured with four headings and fourteen domains under them. Markers and means consist of domains that are markers, by being an indicator of positive results of integration and means, by being means because progress in these areas is expected to aid the process of integration on a larger scale. As one can see, work is scaled under markers and means; therefore, one can state that working is an essential point of integration for newcomers. However, Strang et al. furthermore describe that the markers and means can be seen as the 'public' face of integration. The social connection heading affirms that relationships play a significant role as well. Social bonds (shared feeling of identity), social bridges (relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds) and social links (ties to institutions, including local and national government services) are the domains here. Moreover, the framework describes five facilitators (language and communication, culture, digital skills, safety and stability) and one key foundation: rights and responsibilities (Strang et al.,2019).

OpenEmbassy's indicators of integration

OpenEmbassy made a framework (2019), see figure 13, based on Strang et al. (2019) and views this framework as a lens, whereas they themselves, as an organisation or others working with integration can see the framework as a lens to look through (Frissen & de Vries, 2021).

Furthermore, Frissen (2019) explains in an article in SocialeVraagstukken that integration helps people get started, but more is needed to guarantee things like a job and contact with Dutch people. The legislation only offers this through professionals, but

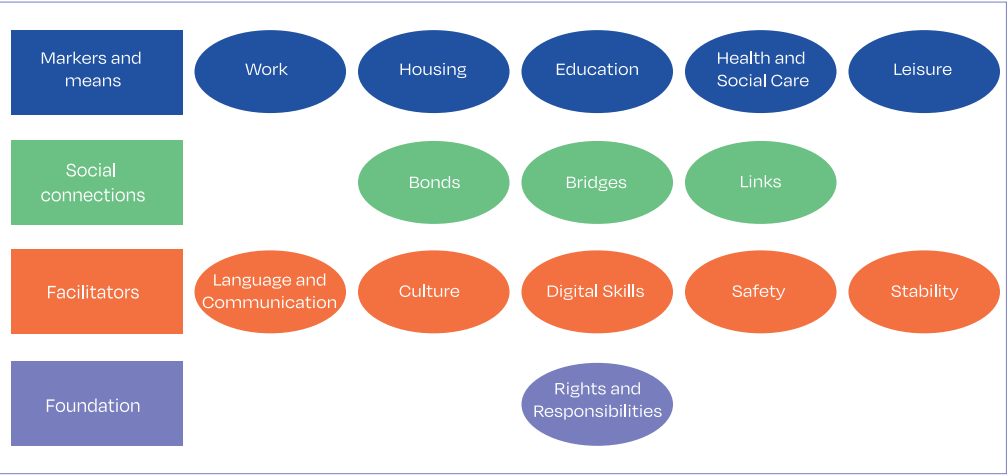


Figure 12: Indicators of integration framework by UK Home Office (Strang et al., 2019).

"If municipalities are only concerned with their system reality, we will create yet another example in the social domain where citizens have to adapt to the world and language of civil servants."

Reneé Frissen, 2019 in SocialeVraagstukken

this already has an automatic power relationship behind it and is, therefore, not equal. According to Frissen (2019), integration should be a reciprocal process, as described by Sprang et al. (2019). Furthermore, she explains that in the new law, the municipalities are responsible for guiding as well as enforcing the integration and participation law. This even more, confirms the unequal relationship between newcomers and municipalities; moreover, it neglects other civil society organisations (maatschappelijk middenveld). Even so, the municipalities can choose which integration 'products' they purchase, and most of these programs are focussed on quantitatively measuring the result. With products, one can think of language schools, participation statement process and other types of workshops and guidance.

The municipality is seen as the 'client', not the newcomers. The framework of integration is formed based on the experiences of newcomers, whereas this should be the starting point of the Dutch integration policies as well. However, it should not be a goal on its own but a fundamental change of perspective (Strang et al., 2019; Frissen, 2019).

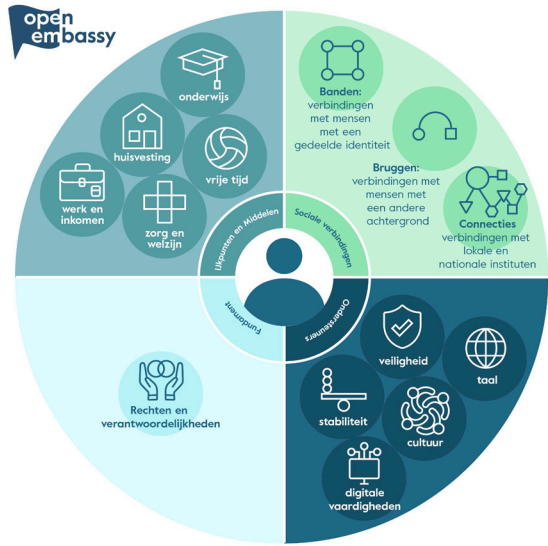


Figure 13: Framework Indicatoren van Integratie, based on Strang et al. (2019) (OpenEmbassy, 2019)

2.2.2 Williams' conceptual Framework of policy approaches towards undeclared work

Williams, a professor of Public Policy at the University of Sheffield, has developed a framework on how to approach informal, or undeclared as he calls it, work at the policy level. Interestingly, he reframed the problem of informal work as a wicked problem, which connects with how this project frames informal work, according to Snowden and Boone (2007). Williams states that it is complex instead of complicated and that all drivers are interconnected. It is a problem in constant flux, and one action can therefore have unwanted and unforeseen effects on the system (2014).

The paper reviews four approaches towards informal work: doing nothing, deregulating the formal economy, eradicating the informal economy and moving the informal work into the formal economy. Williams presents the latter as the most reasonable option. He states that doing nothing will leave the problem as it is now, deregulating will take it a step back, and eradicating it will lead to more government repression towards people being active in wanting to work and is a step back on societal inclusion.

The framework, visualised in figure 14, is set up as a typology, distinguishing between 'direct controls' and 'indirect controls'. Direct controls split up into 'sticks' and 'carrots'. Sticks are measures like more detection and increasing penalties. Carrots can be seen as more positive incentives, making it more attractive to do formal work. Indirect controls aim to reduce the gap between the norms, values and rules of the government and society. According to Williams, this can be done by changing the laws and rules of formal institutions or society's values, norms and beliefs (2014).

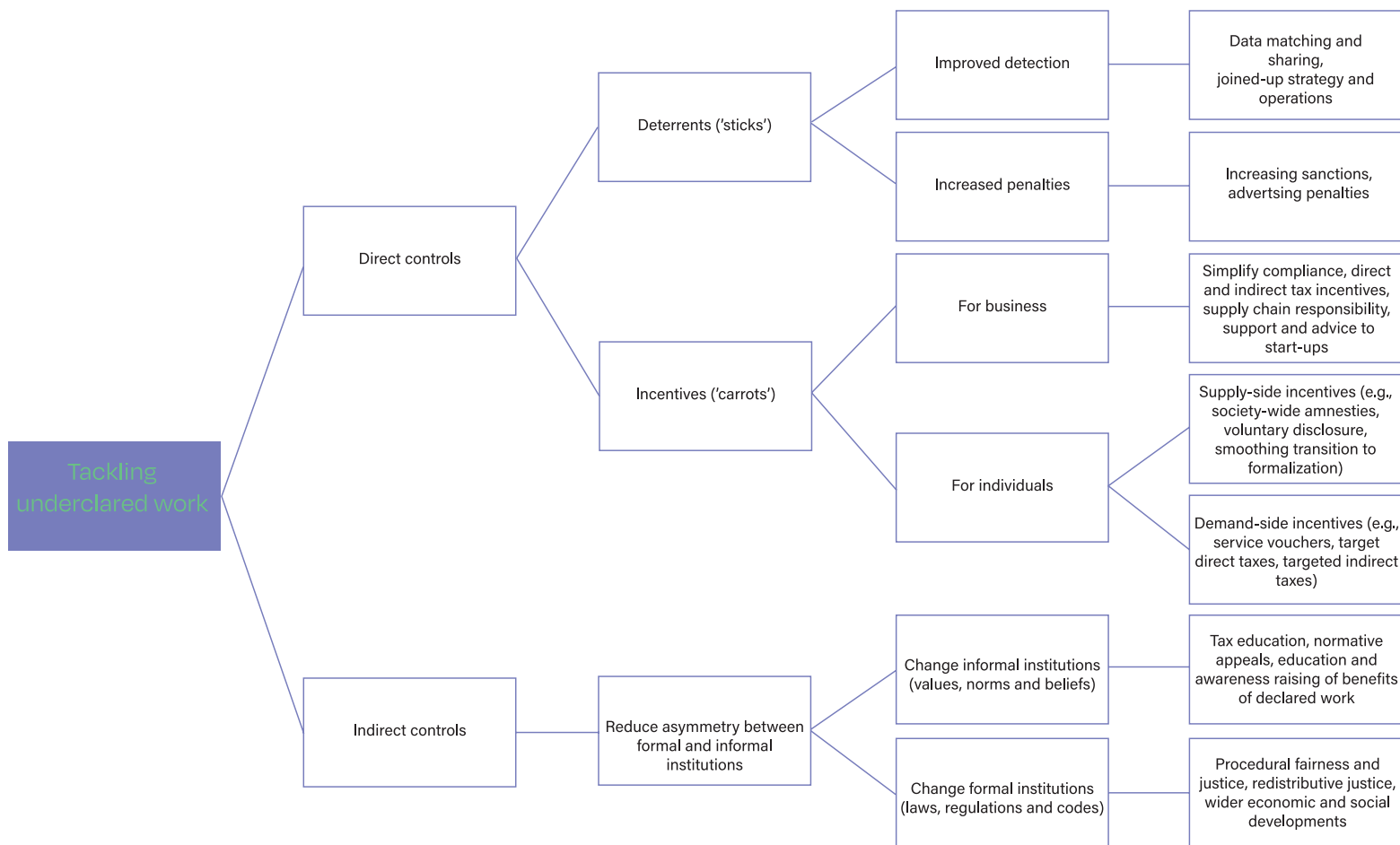


Figure 14: A typology of policy measures for tackling undeclared work (Williams, 2014)

2.3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Integration is about more than just the 'basics,' including work and a checklist one must meet. It is about making connections at various levels with different people and having the resources to do so (Strang et al., 2019). Furthermore, there is a gap between policy and what the newcomer needs, according to Frissen (2019). The laws and system often do not meet the needs of newcomers, whereas this is the perspective from which we need to start to form the policies.

In addition, according to Williams's typology, it is best to move from informal to formal work (2007). The approach can be made in two ways, directly and indirectly. Indirect has to do with reducing the difference between the system's values, norms and beliefs and of the individuals, in this case, the newcomers and employers. Trying indirect measures requires a clumsy approach at different societal levels, from believing in the legal system and feeling heard to experiencing that you get back what you pay taxes for, for instance.

Superimposing the frameworks, they propose a way of starting and understanding both sides and needs. The newcomer's needs are usually not the starting point in the Dutch integration policy. This can result in a gap in understanding each other, and making this difference more minor could be a way of indirectly approaching informal work.

Moreover, one could say using Meadows (1999), and Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Malcolm's (2020) term of mental models connects to what Williams (2014) calls values, norms and beliefs. Hence, narrowing the gap between the mental model of which the structure of the country's system was made up and society can positively tackle undeclared work. In addition, as Frissen (2019) and Strang et al. (2019) describe, one could state that integration laws are established from the 'wrong' mental model of integration, namely, not starting from the newcomer standpoint.

In conclusion, this chapter proposed three literature viewpoints on the integration system and the theoretical background of possible policy approaches towards informal work. The next chapter elaborates on understanding informal work.

3.1 WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF WHAT WE CALL (INFORMAL) WORK?

To find out more about how and why the separation started between formal and informal work, one can look back at the history of work. Stated in the subquestion as: What is the history of informal work in the Netherlands? Figure 16 visualises a timeline with a brief overview of key elements in the history of work and tax. Before monetisation, reciprocity formed the basis of the first forms of work: I want something and do something in return. Reciprocity is still the basis of how work is usually organised; you get paid for what you deliver, only in the present day in the format of money. Around 1800, when the industrial revolution started, the first labour unions started to exist. This was when hourly rates and contracts were becoming more the status quo (Lucassen, 2021).

Furthermore, introduced the Dutch government income tax in 1914 (Belasting & Douane Museum, n.d.). Thus, one could state that the separation between informal and formal work in the Netherlands started around that time too, in combination with the introduction of work contracts. Figure 15 shows a cartoon of tax and the government.

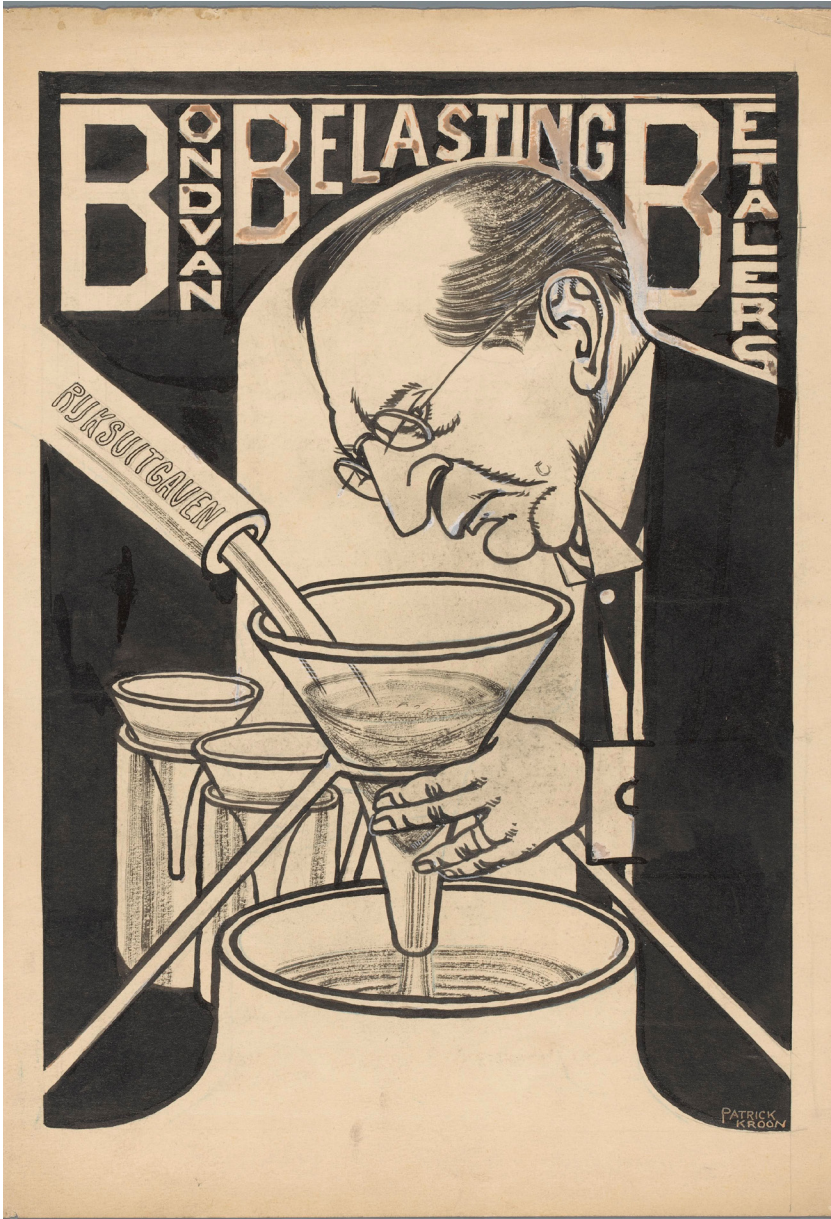


Figure 15: A man watches how the government expenditure is poured into large pots with a hose and funnel. Design for a political cartoon. (Kroon, ca. 1920)

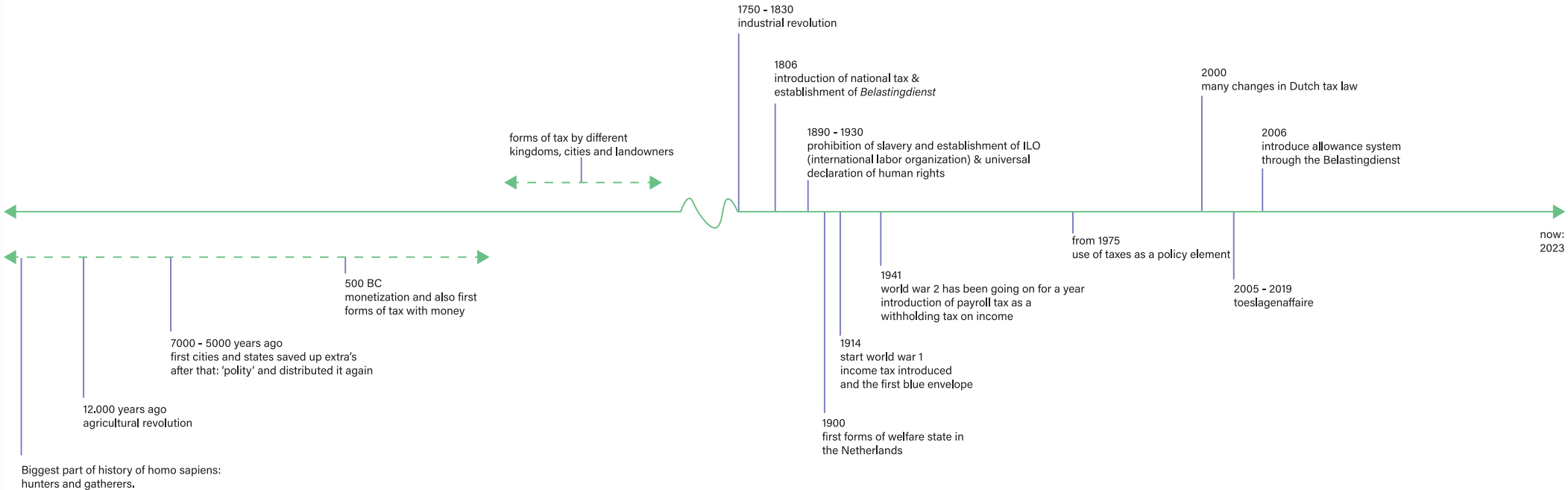


Figure 16: : Timeline with key elements in the history of (informal) work (Lucassen, 2021; Belasting & Douane Museum, n.d.)

3.2 INFORMAL WORK IN THE PRESENT DAY IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD

Subsection 3.2 elaborates on the second subquestion: *How is informal work defined in different parts of the world?* When one talks about informal work, the term informal economy also comes into the picture. This term is also quite ambiguous; Slot touches upon this and states that it exists by definition when there is a formal economy (2010). The term informal economy is relatively young and started to exist when researchers first started writing about economies in less developed countries. For example, based on the theory of Sir William Arthur Lewis. He predicted that in developing countries, where industrialisation started later, people are going from rural areas to cities and with this comes a rise of ‘informal work’ in those cities to ensure they have enough income (Slot, 2010).

Two other authors, Centeno and Portes (2006), came up with a model to describe the size of the informal sector based on how the government functions (figure 17). According to their theory, countries with many rules and much control over those rules have a small informal sector. However, countries, where the government is almost not present to people and with little control have an extensive informal sector. Here one can think of countries that have a war or conflict. Well-fare state countries, such as the Netherlands, are in between the two. In well-fare states, there are more bureaucratic rules than in liberal countries, like the US, but there is also control over those rules (Centeno & Portes, 2006).

Many newcomers flee from countries where the state is absent or not to be trusted (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022b). Following the theory of Centeno and Portes (2006), one can state here that the informal sector is bigger than in the Netherlands for example. The quote by an expert from the Syrian community also supports the theory of Centeno and Portes (2006):

“Many people in Syria distrust the government and do not see the government as an institution that wants to support you as a citizen. So if you get a benefit here in the Netherlands from the municipality, many people think they are entitled to it. They then see undeclared work as something they do on the side to have some more money per month. Many people do not feel that they are doing something ‘bad’ or ‘punishable.’”
Expert from Syrian Community

Types of states by regulatory capacity and regulatory intent

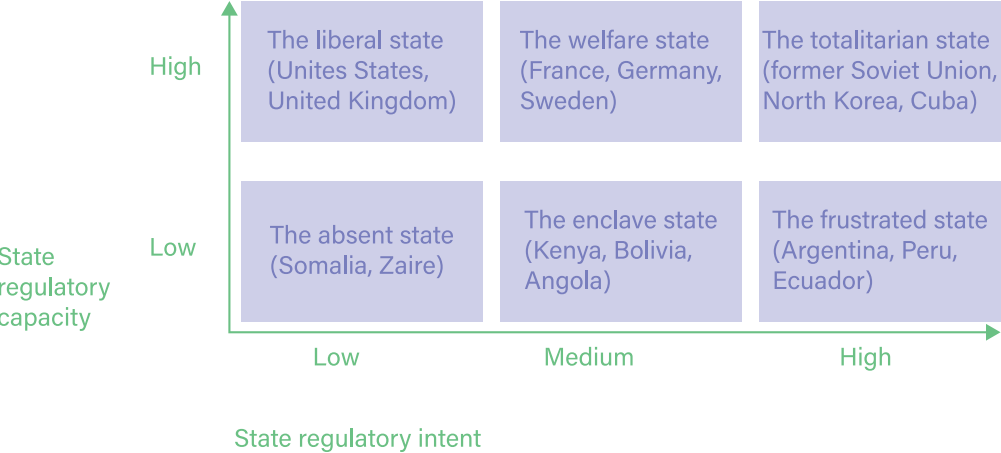


Figure 17: States typed to relative regulatory capacity and size of existing government (Centeno & Portes, 2006)

In the Netherlands, informal work is something that is officially seen as not allowed. Therefore, the ‘Dutch’ mental model is: you follow the law and pay taxes. However, suppose the government that makes these laws cannot be trusted; therefore, paying taxes over work also feels less meaningful. In that case, this can consequently affect the definition of informal work, as described in the quote on the left.

3.3 DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS CONCERNING WORK AND NEWCOMERS

Section 3.3 explains the last sub question of the theme, what are the current trends, developments and other influences in the context of newcomers and informal work?

3.3.1 Developments

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, 41% of the status holders (between the age of 18 and 65) that received their status in 2014, had a formal job after five years. This number is stagnating, one of the reasons being COVID-19. Furthermore, newcomer status holders often have a part-time job (70%) and a temporary contract (81%) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021b). This both enhances the insecurity for newcomers and their job. Moreover, the number of status holders receiving some sort of benefit is getting smaller, however, benefits are still the main source of income. This seems contradictory, but is actually because of the fact that many jobs that newcomers do are part-time and are not enough as a source of income on their own (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021b).

“Well, I think the biggest obstacle is the zero hours contracts and mainly the seasonal contracts. For example, someone is hired at a job in June. Coincidentally, there is a lot of work at that time, so someone is sitting there for three months. Well, every week it is fully planned because then it is suddenly October or September and then there is suddenly less work. If someone is offered fewer hours and has to appeal to social assistance again. Yes, but, if you appeal to social assistance, you may have to wait eight weeks before you receive it on your account. You can request an advance, yes, but the question is whether you are entitled to it. So those are again a lot of hassle.”
Professional 3, Municipality of Rotterdam

3.3.2 Trends

The flexible workforce

There is a trend in people working in an alternative way, meaning not having a fixed contract with set hours and a set workplace. The platform economy, which means working in a format of supply and demand via the format of an online or offline platform, such as delivery services or other on-call workers, is a format of arranging work that is becoming more popular and is expected to grow in the coming years (Randstad, 2019). As described in the developments section above, are many newcomers part of this

transition. This results in many different contracts being out there, which can also be confusing to newcomers. How do you know what you sign? Furthermore, it also leads to more insecurity of income.

“Temporary employment agencies, flex contracts, yes those temporary contracts. Three-month contracts are given and then you do lose your benefits. But the fear of being out on the street after a few months is very strong.”
Professional youth, Municipality of Rotterdam

The digital workforce

A more digital workplace is not a recent phenomenon. It is already a trend for a more extended period (Randstad, 2019). However, compared to some countries where newcomers are from, the Netherlands has more digital jobs in some industries. For example, in the situation described by a following professional from VluchtelingenWerk in the quote below:

“If you had one in those two years of working you were used to tinkering with cars a bit. Yes, throughout the Netherlands it’s all computer-controlled things and you read it out with the computer and you don’t even have to be very technical, but you have to be good with computers.”
Professional, VluchtelingenWerk

In addition, some executive professionals at the municipality, for instance, also expect someone to be digitally competent. Such as that, all newcomers have the skill to apply for a job online (see figure 18). However, this is not always the case. For example, a newcomer needs to gain these skills or access to a laptop or other digital resources. Some women, in particular, whom OpenEmbassy spoke to, are less digitally literate. The lack of digital skills hinders employment within the formal labour market (OpenEmbassy, 2022).

“He told her to apply (online). The work consultant gave her sites where M. could register, while she knows that M can only open her e-mails. M. does not know how to register and search online. She’s told by three different work consultants she’s seen over time that she doesn’t know how the internet works. M has a mobile phone, but she does not have a laptop at home.”

Expert Eritrean Community 1

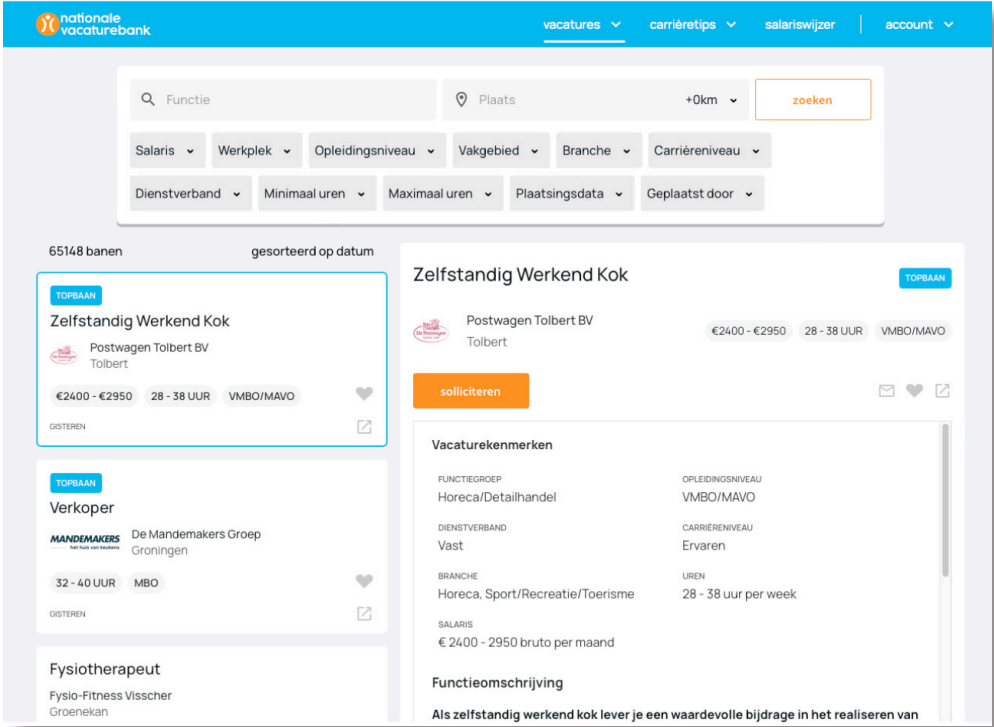


Figure 18: Website vacaturebank, example of a way to apply for a job online (Nationale Vacaturebank, 2023).

3.4 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Informal work is a relatively new phenomenon if we look back on the history of work itself. Work has existed since humans exist (Lucassen, 2021). One can state that the distinction between formal and informal work started in the Netherlands when the first contracts were drafted, and the government introduced the income tax. Furthermore, according to Slot (2010), informal work exists by definition when there is formal work. In the Netherlands, there is an ‘average’ informal sector following the framework of Centeno and Portes (2006). Hence, the informal sector is more prominent in countries where many newcomers are from, specifically those with a conflict or war.

The work trends and developments showed that newcomers often have an insecure work format, meaning a temporary or alternative contract (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021b), making them more vulnerable to unemployment. Similarly, the digital workplace is not equally accessible to everyone. Not only does this make the work itself different from what some newcomers are used to, but it also makes the step to work, applying for a job digitally, more inaccessible.

Chapter three dove deeper into the topic of (informal) work and newcomers, following the three sub questions stated in the introduction of this chapter. The next chapter continues to understand informal work and newcomers by focussing on the Dutch integration and social assistance benefits system.

4.1 LAWS AND RULES

This subsection describes the two primary laws a newcomer encounters when searching for work, the integration and participation laws.

Furthermore, newcomers, when allowed to work and do not have a job, the WIA (*Wet werk en inkomen naar arbeidsvermogen*) usually does not apply. Because they do not have an old employer in the Netherlands, many are subjected to the ‘participation law’ (UWV, n.d.; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022f). For this reason, this thesis does not cover other forms of benefits other than the participation law. One can think of benefits for when being long-term ill, needing special assistance or not being able to work for other reasons.

4.1.1 Civic Integration Act 2022

As described in the introduction chapter, the Civic Integration Act has changed (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022c). Figure 19 visualises the differences between the new and the old law and the main steps that the law is part of. The old law is included since newcomers that work informally primarily still are or were subjected to the old Civic Integration Act, since the new law is so recent.

A central aspect of the new integration for the asylum status holders’ group, which is interesting to mention, is the personal plan integration and participation (PIP), which helps to plan a specific newcomer’s route. How are they going to learn Dutch, and at what expected level? How are they going to achieve that? How are they planning to find a job? Someone from the municipality is responsible for having an extensive intake to make the plan with the newcomer and guide them to achieve it. While under the old law, the newcomers were mainly on their own, for example, in finding a language school, with the central government (Rijksoverheid) being responsible in the end (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022c). The intention of the new law is that there is more space for ‘tailor-made’ (maatwerk) guidance, and with the introduction of the PIP also a plan with more perspective.

Newcomers who are still completing their formal integration, but subjected to the old law were called the in-between-group, by a professional from VluchtelingenWerk.

“The in-between-group (de ondertussengroep) [...] that are subjected to the old law, so started earlier”

Professional, VluchtelingenWerk Nederland

4.1.2 The Municipality of Rotterdam and integration

“A number of things are prescribed. A number of things just have to be organised locally and you have to make your own policy for that as well.”

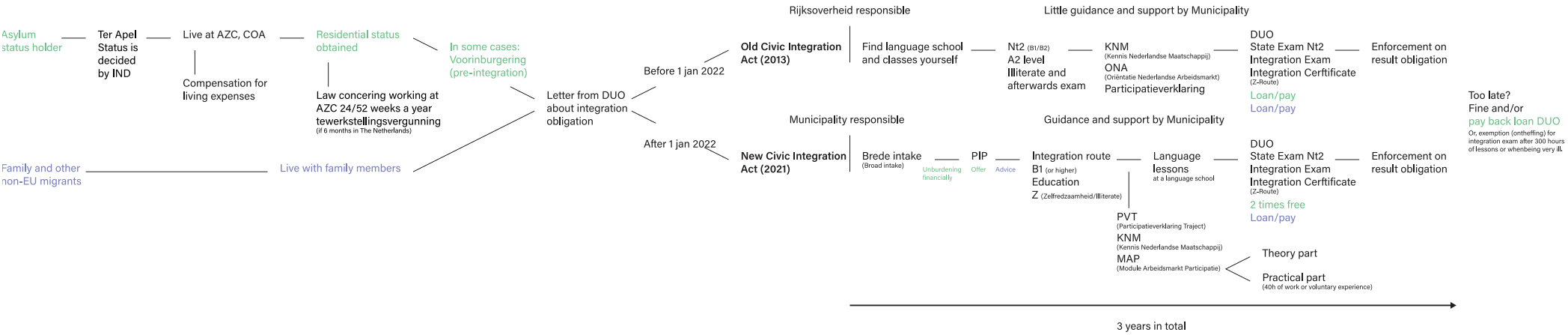
Professional, Divosa

Municipalities must act according to the law, but they also have some leeway to fill in certain things themselves, especially since the responsibility has been shifted from the Rijk to the municipalities. The quote above, by a professional from Divosa, an organisation or association of managers in the social domain which includes civil servants from the municipality, also stresses this. For example, which language schools or other parties they cooperate with or when they start guiding newcomers to work (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022c; Op Maat Inburgeren, 2021).

In addition, the political colour of the municipal council can also influence the implementation, for example, in Rotterdam, as described in the quote below.

“I did see in Rotterdam that they have developed very much in the last few years. For a while they were not allowed to do much for status holders. Because, well, that, they had a very right-wing coalition then.”

Professional, Divosa



Evenso, does the coalition agreement 2022 - 2026 (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022, p.18) of the municipality of Rotterdam state the following about welcoming newcomers:

“As a city, we take our responsibility in the accommodation of status holders allocated to Rotterdam by the state. However, Rotterdam already faces many challenges. We are therefore starting a lobby towards the State to make a fair contribution as Rotterdam to the targets for the housing of status holders: no longer by population, but by ability to pay, so that Rotterdam is spared more than it is now.”

Another important aspect to address is that different ‘clusters,’ or departments, built up the organisation of the municipality of Rotterdam. In practice, this means that people receiving guidance for their integration are in a different cluster, namely ‘Inburgering010’, which is a part of social development (Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling) than newcomers who have already finished their formal integration. They only receive a social assistance benefit and get guidance via work and income (Werk & Inkomen). Youth (under 27) also has different types of guidance via the youth counter (het Jongerenloket) (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-a).

4.1.3 Participation Law 2015

As explained in the introduction of this subchapter and in section 3.3.1, do many newcomers receive social assistance benefits, which is sorted under the Participation Law (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022f).

Figure 21 briefly explains the participation law (previously *Wet Werk en Bijstand*). One or more routes shown in the figure apply per person, for example, if you are over 27 and have children under 5. As one can see, there are strict rules about earning extra when the participation law applies to you. In addition, you must also report any income to your contact person at the municipality if it stays within the margin (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022d; 2022f). If you do not report your income, or this is too much, this is seen as social assistance benefit fraud (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022b). This is also where the extra link with informal work comes in. Then, you are not only working informally, which is not allowed by law, but also officially committing welfare fraud.

"So yes, many young people especially want to start when they have just arrived, that they really like to work. Yes. Only the Participation Act does not allow this. Participation law for young people, so for under 27, that is even stricter than for people over 27. And it says that you are not allowed to earn an euro because every euro you earn is deducted from your benefit. [...] So I actually explain that very quickly and quite strictly, because I don't want to create false expectations."

Professional youth, Municipality of Rotterdam

Likewise, are people receiving benefits obligated to report changes in their living situation or make sure their contact person at the municipality does this for them since these changes might affect their social assistance benefits. If you do this belatedly, even if it was by mistake, you might have to pay a fine or pay back the amount you received that was more than you had the right to receive (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-g).

This situation can be very stressful or also cause debts for newcomers. Reporting changes is done via complicated forms with complex words. Furthermore, the form has to be physically delivered to the municipality, either by post, via the contact person or at the right counter (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-h). Figure 20 shows an example of the first page of such a form.

More information on other laws and rules of influence for the topic of this thesis, namely the 'Wet dienstregeling aan huis' (Ministry of General Affairs, 2022b; 2022c) and 'Tewerkstellingsvergunning' (UWV, n.d.) can be found in appendix E.


Gemeente Rotterdam

Wijzigingsformulier

Heeft u een (aanvullende) bijstandsuitkering en verandert er iets in uw persoonlijke-, gezins-, woon- en/of financiële situatie of in die van uw partner of kind(eren)? Dan moet u dit doorgeven aan de gemeente. Uw uitkering kan veranderen als uw situatie verandert. Twijfelt u of u iets wel of niet moet doorgeven? Voorkom problemen en geef bij twijfel altijd wijzigingen door.

Hoe vult u dit formulier in?
Dit is het wijzigingsformulier bijstand. Lees voor u begint met invullen ook de informatie op [Rotterdam.nl/wijzigingendoorgeven](https://rotterdam.nl/wijzigingendoorgeven) goed door.

Bewijsstukken
Bij wijzigingen horen bewijsstukken. Bijvoorbeeld een kopie van een bankafschrift, huurovereenkomst of salarisstrook. Let op: maak altijd een kopie!

Inleveren of opsturen
U kunt dit formulier en de kopieën van de bewijsstukken inleveren of opsturen. Wanneer u de kopieën inlevert krijgt u een ontvangstbevestiging. Deze krijgt u niet als u de kopieën per post opstuurt.

Opsturen
Gemeente Rotterdam, Beheer Inkomens
Postbus 1024, 3000 BA Rotterdam

Inleveren formulieren locatie

☐ Herenwaard 23, 3078 AK Rotterdam, van 08.30 tot 16.30 uur

☐ Coolingsel 40, 3011 AD Rotterdam, van 08.30 tot 16.30 uur

Opsturen/inleveren formulieren overige afdelingen

☐ Jongerenloket
Coolingsel 40, 3011 AD Rotterdam
Bij bezoek: ingang Doelwater
inleveren van 08.30 tot 17.00 uur

☐ Participatie & Stedelijke zorg
Binnenrotte 158, 3011 HC Rotterdam
inleveren van 08.30 tot 11.30 uur

Privacy
De gemeente gaat zorgvuldig om met uw gegevens. Meer leest u hierover op [Rotterdam.nl/privacy](https://rotterdam.nl/privacy).

Ondergetekende

Achternaam (getuinden hier geboortenaam invullen)

Voorletter(s)

Aleen met een correct ingevuld burgerservicenummer neemt de gemeente uw wijziging in behandeling.

Burgerservicenummer (8 of 9 cijfers)

Telefoonnummer (10 cijfers)

E-mailadres (uwnaam@voorbeeld.nl)

Beëindiging uitkering

Datum beëindiging

Aantal bewijsstukken

Reden

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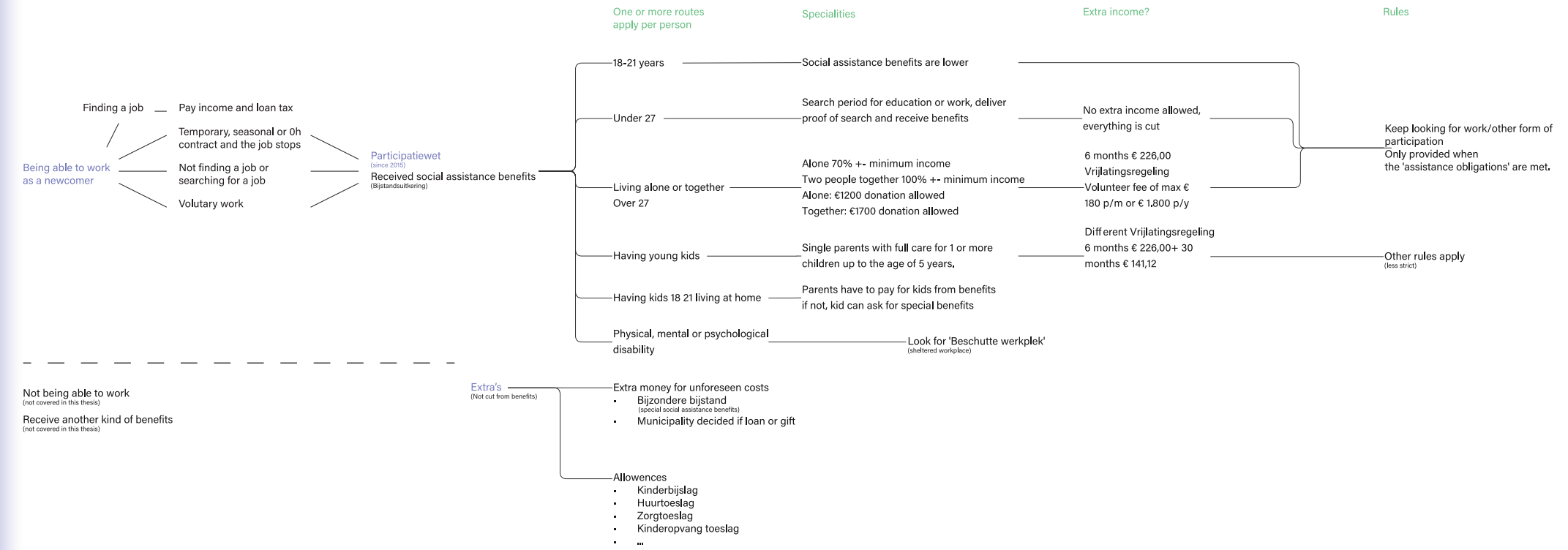


Figure 20: Form to report changes social assistance benefits (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-i).

Figure 21: Laws around work and social assistance benefits visualised (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-f; Ministry of General Affairs, 2023a; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022d; 2022f; Op Maat Inburgeren, 2021)

4.2 ROTTERDAM AND INFORMAL WORK

Subchapter 4.2 explains the Rotterdam context, starting with the Municipality of Rotterdam and informal work in 4.2.1. In addition, the opinions of Rotterdammers in the format of street interviews about the topic of informal work are in 4.2.2.

4.2.1 The Municipality of Rotterdam and informal work

Informal work happens everywhere, also in Rotterdam. The Dutch Labour Inspectorate (Nederlandse Arbeidsinspectie) found in 2022 during an investigation, for example, several newcomers working without an employment permit (UWV, n.d.). See appendix E for more details on this law. In this case newcomers worked as a meal deliverer via a platform employer (as explained in subchapter 3.3.2). They used the name of someone else to make an account (Nederlandse Arbeidsinspectie, 2022b). Furthermore, the Labour Inspectorate controlled several restaurants in Rotterdam and found or suspected people doing undeclared work there (Nederlandse Arbeidsinspectie, 2022a).

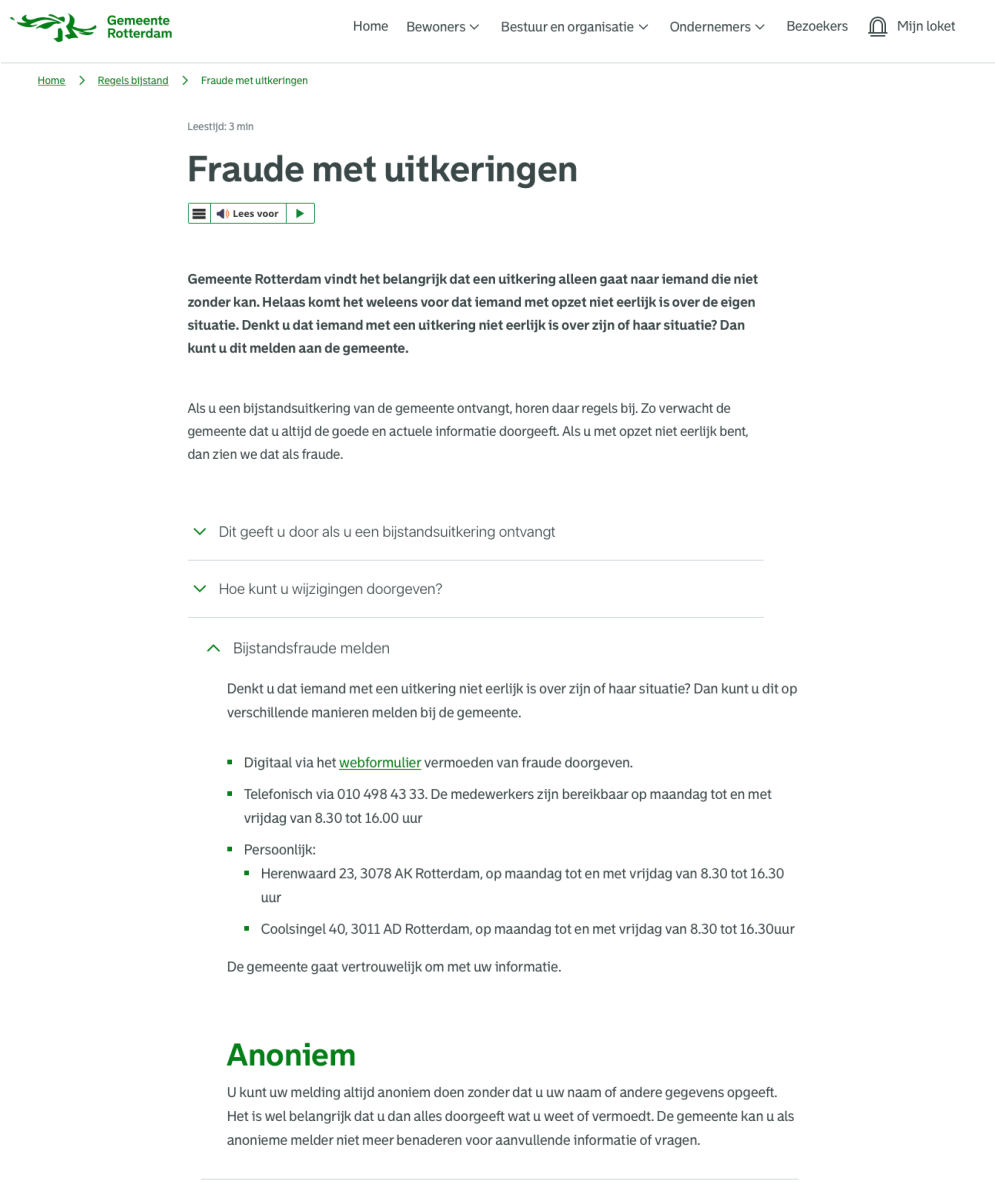
As explained earlier, not giving up extra income next to receiving a social assistance benefit is seen as ‘benefit fraud’ (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022b). Thus, reporting someone as a so-called welfare fraudster is also possible. It is easy to do so. The contact page for Work and Income on the municipality’s website indicates how to do it; see figures 22 & 23 (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-b; n.d.-d).

Moreover, does the Municipality of Rotterdam states the following about social assistance benefits fraud in their coalition agreement (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022, p.24):

“We want to prevent Rotterdammers falling between the cracks as a result of hard laws and regulations. That is why we apply tailor-made (maatwerk) solutions and use the possibilities offered by the national government to make exceptions if enforcement proves too harsh in practice. Real welfare fraud has no place; we track it down and we fight it. We are therefore increasing the number of social investigators so that we can follow up more reports with care.”



Figure 22: Form to report changes social assistance benefits (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-c).



4.2.2 Opinions from Rotterdammers about informal work

Setup and method

What do Rotterdammers think of informal work? What do they know about it? To answer these questions, I conducted interviews in the public space on the 15th of October, 2022. The goal was to learn more about Rotterdammers’ assumptions and opinions about the topic of informal work. Furthermore, to understand their different perspectives better and learn from their experiences with informal work. What is their mental model on this topic? Is it different from mine or maybe similar to the standpoint from the Municipality of Rotterdam’s point of view?

A prototype in the format of a big poster helped to start the conversations and get the passersby’s attention, see figures 24 and 25.

- The aim of the street interviews translated into the following questions on the poster:
- Wat vind van informeel/zwart werken? (Why do you think about doing informal/black/undeclared work?)
 - Wanneer vind je dat iemand informeel/zwart werkt? (When do you think someone is working informally/black/undeclared?)
 - Waarom werken Rotterdammers informeel/zwart? (Why do Rotterdammers work informally/black/undeclared?)

It was explicitly chosen not to include newcomers in the question asked, to let the conversation be more open and to make sure people would not interpret the intervention on the street differently. The statements on the right of the poster triggered conversation; it is hard for many people to answer yes or no to the questions, leading to a discussion. Also, it makes the poster more interactive and gives visual feedback for the interview. Furthermore, the poster offered the possibility to leave a comment for others who pass by to see. The place for the streetinterviews was the Blaak market on Saturday, a place in Rotterdam where many Rotterdammers come together. More notes and the setup can be found in the appendix F. Thirteen Rotterdammers participated in the pop-up interviews.

Figure 23: Form to report changes social assistance benefits (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-i).

Insights and take-aways

Informal work is part of society

"We all work informally sometimes", "It is better to defraud the state than private individuals", and "Informal work is a part of society, but if everyone would do it, we are all screwed". "But it does happen a lot".

Many people spoken to described informal work as something that will never go away, and many had some sort of experience with it. It was also interesting to conclude that people stated that it is better to fraud the system than fraud a private individual.

Okay or not okay?

"I have friends who earn 4500 informal with being a plasterer. I'm not sure if that is what you want. They do it via one of their dad's companies, which is an official company, I don't think that is really okay to do..."



Figure 25: Having a conversation with Rotterdammers passing by



Figure 24: The poster on a stand and someone grabs the stickers to leave his opinion on the right.

"I think it should be controlled more, but in a way like when you drive a bit too fast. You get a fine, you learn your lesson and pay more attention. But nothing too bad happens."
"It is officially fraud, but I think it is ok sometimes, but it depends a lot on the sector. It is easier to find, especially 'handyman work', saves a lot of money for a 'private individual' like me. There is not much to do the other way."

Working informally was viewed as something that is not allowed. However, it is also seen as something that is okay sometimes, for example, when you are 'at the bottom of society'. People spoken to also described the type of work and the money made mattered if it was okay or not. The opinions differed a bit here.

It depends on the sector

The question was to some interviewees if they thought informal work is more accessible than formal work and why. Many people answered that it depends a lot on the sector, for example, cleaning and construction.

"I still think it depends a lot on the sector if it is easier, such as cleaning. Easy to put a message on facebook, or someone you know in your neighbourhood. You can start the next day."

Insights from informally employed newcomers

One woman from Bulgaria with a young child explained that she understands a little bit of Dutch but does not speak it well. Therefore, she found it easier to find an informal job she said than a formal one. Also, she stated: *"I want to work officially, but it is pretty hard to be accepted here"*

The second informal working newcomer spoken to was from Lebanon and had just started working informally as an architect but was looking for a formal job. He also explained that he was looking for a formal job simultaneously.

4.3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

The laws newcomers encounter for integration in the Netherlands and receiving social assistance benefits are complicated. Additionally, if something changes in your situation, this can already affect things and making sure you are on top of reporting these changes goes through different forms, written in Dutch (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-g). Furthermore, the national government ('Rijksoverheid') and the municipality are still adjusting to everything concerning the new Civic Integration Act. What effect is it going to have? However, the old law applied for most newcomers (including many informal working newcomers) currently interacting with the system. What advantages do they get from these changes? In addition, explained in the other laws and rules of influence section, which can be found in the appendix E, employers also have a significant responsibility to make sure their employees work with the proper permits and under the right circumstances (Ministry of General Affairs, 2022b; 2022c; UWV, nd.).

The Municipality of Rotterdam wants to show that they act according to the law and take informal work seriously. However, if we look at the interviews on the street, it also shows that informal work is something many Rotterdammers have a form of experience with. Even so, the quote that 'it is better to fraud the system than to fraud a private individual' articulates that some experience a gap between their norms, values and rules and the ones set by the government, as Williams (2014) also describes it in his framework (see subsection 2.2.2). It shows that the mental model the Dutch state proposes differs from the one some Rotterdammers have. Stealing from the state is different than from a 'normal' person, implying that one is seen as worse than the other. Moreover, the statement that 'it depends on the sector' shows that more factors play a role according to Rotterdammers.

However, the conversations illustrated that there is, among Rotterdammers, not 'one' mental model of informal work. Some interviewees also clearly indicated that it is not okay to do and that it should be punished more or differently.

INTERMEZZO A: FROM RESEARCH TO A DEEPER ANALYSIS

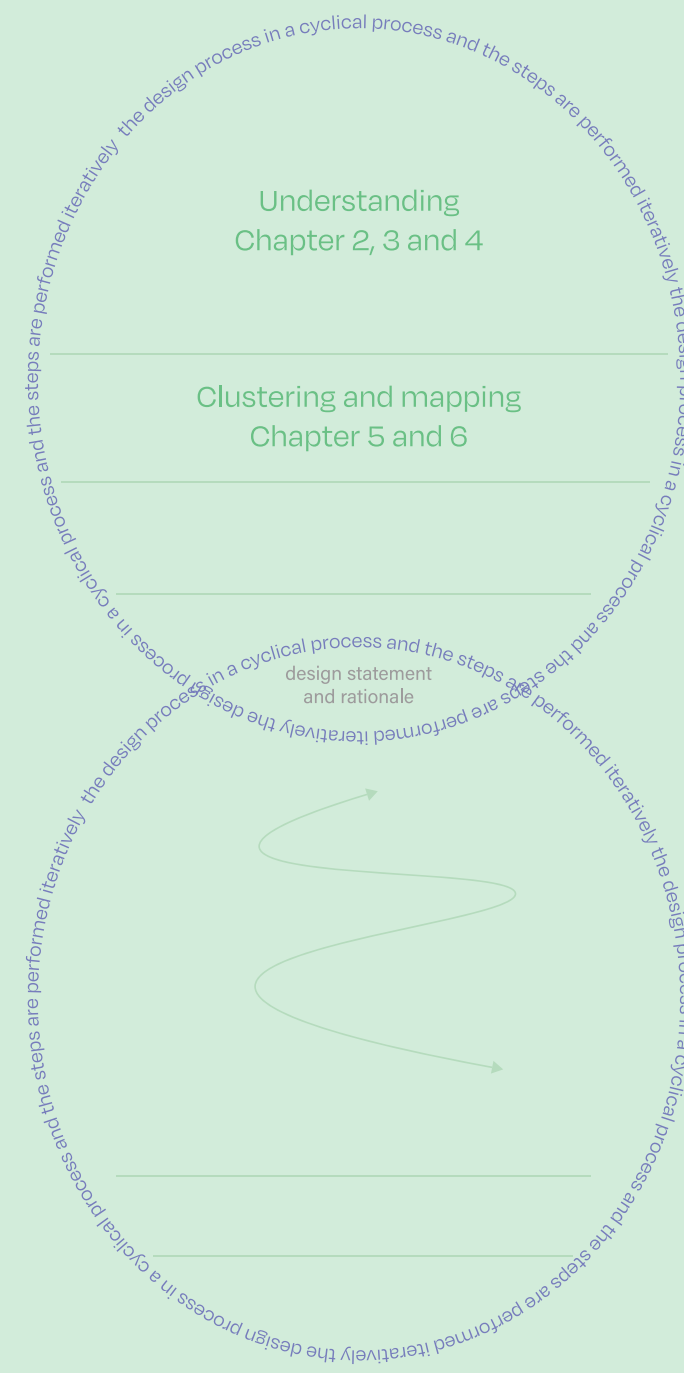


Figure 26: Approach, from understanding towards clustering and mapping.

The first chapters of this thesis introduced and researched the topic based on the proposed research questions, from a broad and explorative standpoint. However, to narrow it down and continue towards a deeper analysis and a comprehensive overview of needs and themes it is needed to find where, and how to eventually intervene in the complexity. Looking at the illustration in the approach, we are now going downwards in the oval, where the radius is getting smaller (figure 26).

Hence, chapters five and six describe these steps, going to another layer of the gained information, focussing on the following questions:

Why do newcomers work informally: what are the underlying themes?
What are the needs a newcomer has when looking for a formal job?

- Subquestion: What are the frictions and paradoxes newcomers encounter when working (informally)?
- Subquestion: What roles do the municipality of Rotterdam and other organisations play in the process of guiding newcomers to work?

The fifth chapter explores this by mapping the newcomers and informal work in various ways, intending to connect the research gained, such as translating this into a newcomer's journey when arriving in the Netherlands. Chapter six describes deeper insights from the nineteen in-depth interviews (see section 2.1 for an overview of the participants), which are clustered into driving forces , supported by OpenEmbassy's analysis and the literature research described earlier. The driving forces are the clusters that drive and shape the context, in this case: newcomers and informal work (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011). Seven themes present the driving forces. The methods of finding the underlying themes, needs, and why newcomers work informally are defined in 5.1 and 6.1. Chapter seven elaborates on the driving forces, by framing directions for the design to intervene.

5.1. MAPPING GOAL AND APPROACH

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, newcomers and informal work is a complex problem (Snowden & Boone, 2007). Various mapping methods explore this complexity and support it in understanding.

- The mapping goal is on multiple levels;
- For myself, to get a grip on all the information and how everything is connected.
 - With OpenEmbassy, to think about the subject together. Such as using the iceberg model for a session. The goal of the iceberg model is to observe and notice events, find patterns, the structure and eventually mental models underlying those events (The Donella Meadows Project, n.d.; (Jones & Ael, 2022). Insights gained here are used in the maps presented in this chapter and also in the sixth chapter. The notes and the setup of the iceberg model session can be found in appendix I.
 - As a form of communication for readers of this thesis and other third parties, since it is not possible to tell real individual stories of people, such as people participating in testing and evaluating the concept.

5.2 ACTORS MAP

Figure 28 visualises an actors map of the current system (Jones & Ael, 2022). The goal is to provide an overview of all the stakeholders interacting with the newcomer concerning informal work and integration. Different sources provided the information for the actors map, such as the interviews, colleagues from OpenEmbassy and the iceberg session. Furthermore, various government and municipality resources explaining the integration steps, including who is responsible or involved and what happens when working informally (DUO - Inburgeren, n.d.; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022a; 2022d), as described in the third and fourth chapters. A video from 'Op Maat Inburgeren' (2021) also provided step-by-step information on the new Civic Integration Act and which stakeholders are involved (Op Maat Inburgeren, 2021).

The map's structure is from a human-centred perspective; thus, the newcomer's position is in the middle of the map. The second layer illustrates the community of the newcomer. Moreover, the third-layer actors operate at a city level, which can be a person, like a client manager or an organisation. Actors in the fourth and outer layer act on the national or EU level. Figure 27 displays the setup. Some actors are placed in the middle of two layers because they operate on multiple levels.



Figure 27: Setup actors map.

The map shows that many actors are involved, 'bigger' and 'smaller', from individuals living in the neighbourhood to the EU deciding on integration legislation. It also indicates that much bureaucracy is involved with those governmental institutions, which can be cumbersome and slow. Besides, it is less humane as a result. Furthermore, the community is the closest circle to the newcomer. This may not be a new insight, but this map shows where (low-threshold) opportunities may lie. In addition, family and friends who are not in the Netherlands (yet) are also naturally close to the newcomer, for instance, through contact via social media. The municipality is a circle away from the newcomer and is not part of the community, partly because of the power relationship that comes with contact.

Thus, one can conclude various insights that are insightful for the design phase of this project: The design can interact with the system around the newcomer in multiple ways. However, through the government, it will never be fully equal due to the permanent and not-going distance. How can design take this into account and make this relationship more trusting?

Employers are in the first circle; also, there can be a certain professional distance here, but they are not part of the government. Moreover, OpenEmbassy's (and other organisations') position on the map is also a valuable takeaway. Since they are in two places on the map, they operate nationally and on the community level. Therefore, they can take in a different place than governmental organisations. According to this analysis, the government is not at the community level, but always on a further layer, namely the city layer on a municipal level.

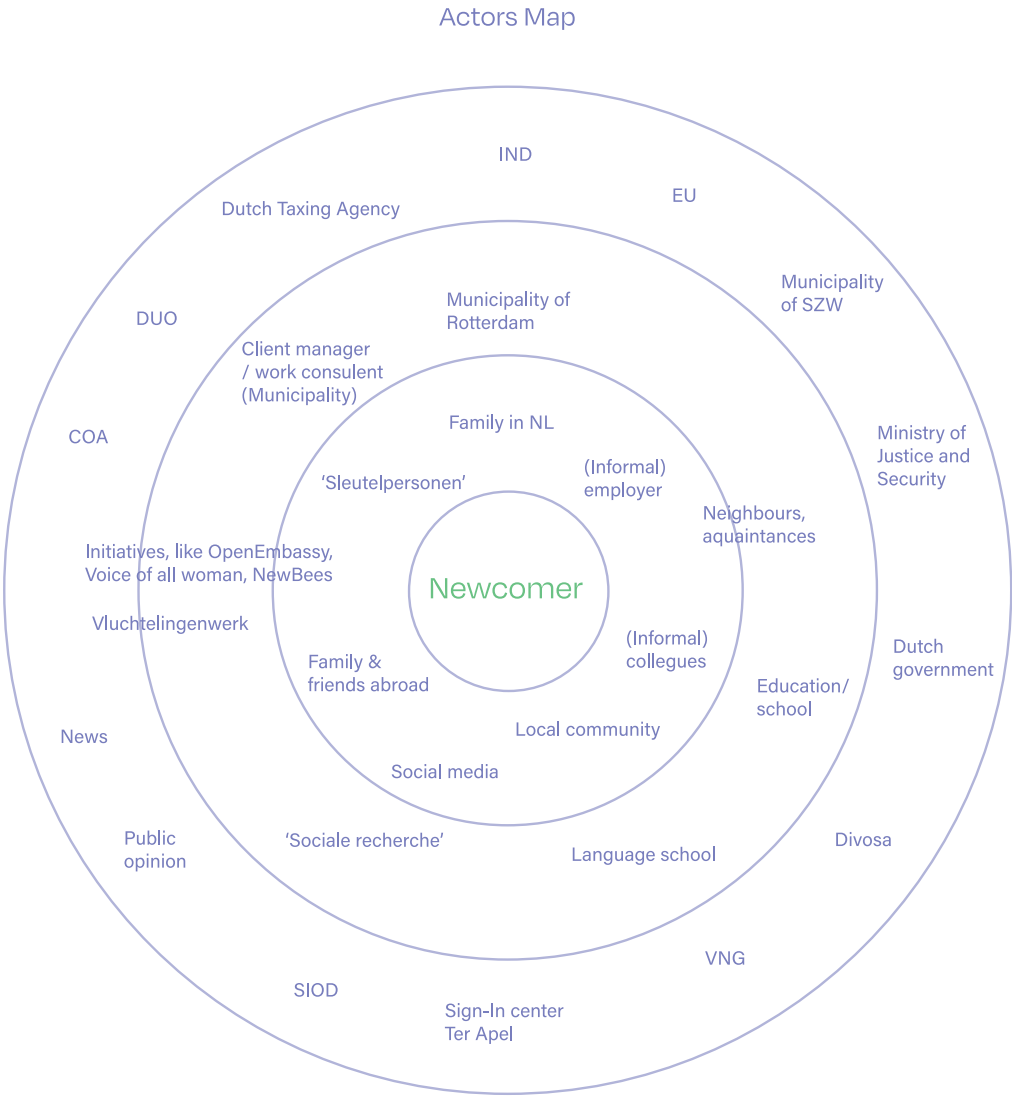


Figure 28: Actors map (DUO - Inburgeren, n.d.; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022a; 2022d; Op Maat Inburgeren, 2021)

5.3 JOURNEY MAPS

Subchapter 5.3 explains a ‘giga’ journey map in 5.3.1 and an example of a fictional persona journey in 5.3.2.

5.3.1. Giga journey map

To visualise all the different steps of newcomers in the Netherlands and to have an overview of when and how a newcomer interacts with these different actors, I created a ‘giga’ journey map (figure 29). This type of mapping is inspired by *Gigamapping* (Sevaldson, 2022). The journey map starts when the newcomer decides to flee until finding an (informal) job in the Netherlands. The research described in the earlier chapters, combined with information from the interview and expertise of OpenEmbassy have been input for this map. Moreover, the map uses terminology for legislations which can be found in chapter four and appendix E. The map is displayed on the pages 56 - 57. The legend of the map indicates what the colours mean, and can be found in the bottom left corner.

The giga journey map visualises the interaction with the actors mapped in 5.2 on a timeline. Furthermore, it connects legislation to possible experiences of newcomers, such as the influence of a social assistance benefit. In addition, it links the options for informal work to specific moments on the journey.

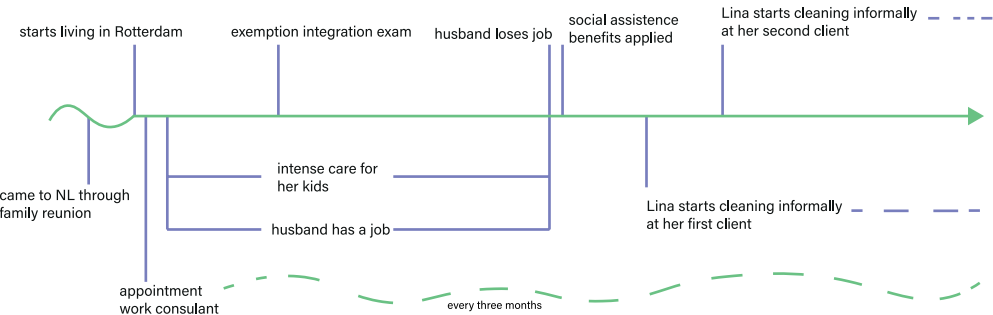
Henceforth, the map provides insights into the clustering process, explained in the next chapter. It connects different dots to understand what this means for the newcomer's needs at a specific journey step. Moreover, where the municipality of Rotterdam steps into the journey and where possible moments for informal work arise. Both accommodate understandings of where a possible design for newcomers in Rotterdam can eventually intervene. Rotterdam can eventually intervene.

5.3.2. Persona journey's

Everyone’s story is different, and each of them gives different insights. As individual stories of ‘real’ people cannot be told here, therefore four representative persona journeys are created to respect privacy and sensitive information. These journeys tell a fictional story of a newcomer working informally, to explain why and how some newcomers work informally. The set-up consists of an introductory text, a timeline, needs & opportunities and the newcomer’s network. Figure 30 shows one of the persona journeys on page 55. The other three can be found in the appendix H. A colleague from OpenEmbassy, familiar with the project of informal work and newcomers, reviewed the four persona’s journeys together with me and small iterations were made here, in the details of the story mainly. Furthermore, the persona journeys were used as a part of the evaluation, which will be described in chapter 10.

Figure 29: Giga journey map (on page 56, after the persona journey) (Divosa et al., 2022; DUO - Inburgeren, n.d.; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022a; 2022e).

Journey Lina



Lina's Story

This is Lina, she is 45 years old and has lived in the Netherlands for about 6 years. Her husband was the first to flee to the Netherlands from Iraq. She herself and her children came later via family reunification. She has a family with 3 children between the ages of 10 and 19. She has started her civic integration, but has been granted an exemption from this. She speaks a little Dutch, but is uncertain about this. Her husband had a temporary contract, and is currently looking for a job. They receive social assistance together, but this is difficult to make ends meet. In Iraq, she did not work, but she notices that in the Netherlands it is difficult to make ends meet if the wife does not work. Besides, her children are older now, so she has less to worry about here. In the beginning in the Netherlands, Lina did not work and her husband provided the income. But, this was still quite tight in the beginning. Her husband lost his job and she ended up on welfare again. She heard that other women were doing cleaning work, and so she started cleaning via via when one of her friends stopped here. She now does this for two more families. Lina sees her contact person at the municipality once every three months, which she finds difficult and she is not sure what she gets out of it. Sometimes her husband goes along, even though this is not quite the intention. This is because he speaks better Dutch. She does not understand everything in the conversation and only comes because otherwise she thinks there could be consequences. Lina would like to find a formal job with the help of her contact person from the municipality. For example, together with other women from her community. She would like to have a stable job, where she can use her other skills, such as organising things and bring people together. And, eventually save money for her family and their pension.

Local Network



Needs and opportunities

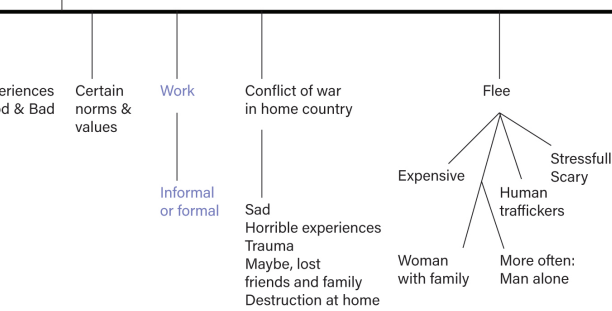
- Guidance towards work in groups with other women
- Something to follow the conversation better, for example in her own language
- Feeling more at ease in the conversation, and experience less pressure
- A way to express her goals and needs in the Netherlands, what does she want?



Figure 30: The persona journey of ‘Lina’. The journey describes personal story, journey, network and possible needs and opportunities

Newcomer Journey Timeline

COUNTRY FROM WHICH FLED

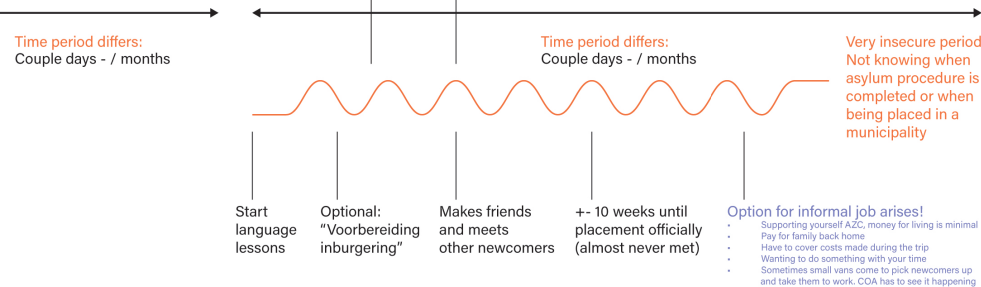
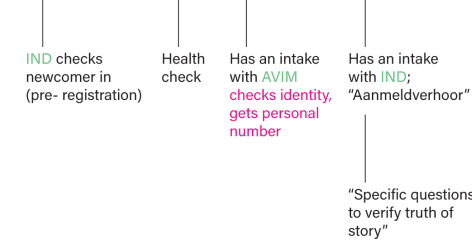


OPTIONAL IN BETWEEN COUNTRY

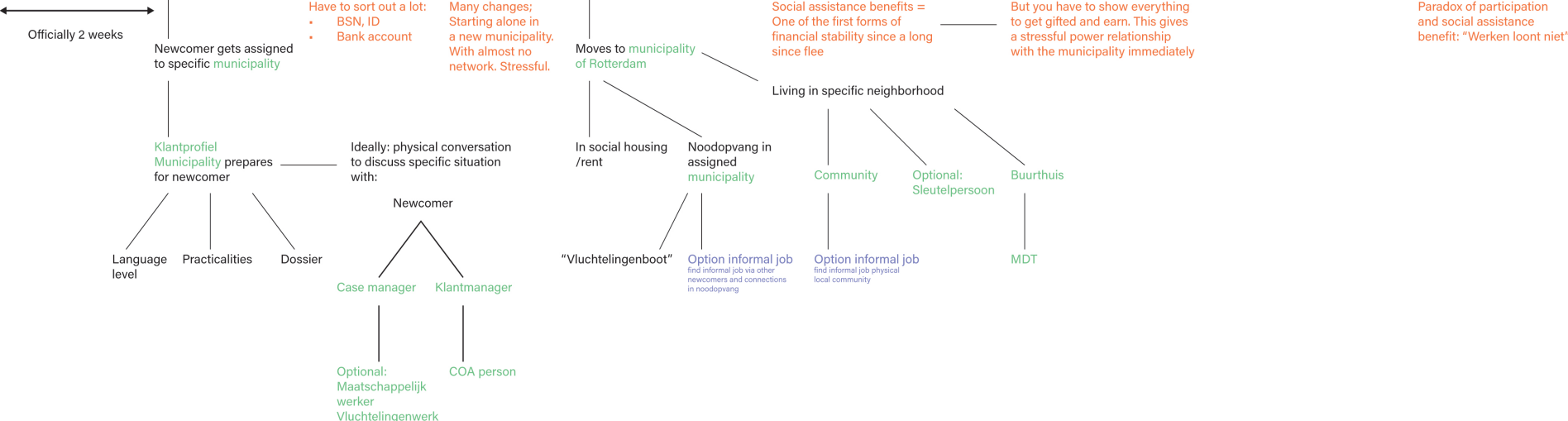
For example: Turkey Sudan Libya East/South Europe

Option for informal job: Staying for a while in an in between country and learn a bit of the language and culture provides options to work informally

NEWCOMER ARRIVES IN THE NETHERLANDS



NEWCOMER ASSIGNED TO MUNICIPALITY



Laws and effect of policy

Work or informal work

Actors

Notes on what is happening

5.4 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Coinciding everything and mapping took place over a more extended period. This allowed me to puzzle through the information visually, such as connecting the laws with different steps in the journey.

Interesting to address is that the first contact for newcomers with the Dutch government is with IND and newcomer registration centre Ter Apel, which immediately sets a specific tone and implies power relations. Moreover, as the actors map visualises, there are many relationships and organisations surrounding newcomers. In addition, the journey map connects the different actors. It visualises the legislation’s complexity and that it involves something almost at every step. Furthermore, the persona journeys have different functions, as explained earlier. For example, the reader can empathise and understand more with the different situations and that it is difficult to express your situation when conversing with the municipality. The next chapter will continue on describing newcomers’ needs, in the format of driving forces.

6.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Subsection 6.1 states the objective of the analysis in 6.1.1 and the method in 6.1.2.

6.1.1 Objectives of analysis

The third research question, as described in Intermezzo A and 2.1.1, is about why newcomers work informally and forms the base for the objective of the clustering analysis.

What are the underlying themes for informal work, and what are the needs a newcomer has when looking for a formal job?

Furthermore, the following subquestions:

- Subquestion: What are the frictions and paradoxes newcomers encounter when working (informally)?
- Subquestion: What role do the municipality of Rotterdam and other organisations play in the process of guiding newcomers to work?

Thus, this analysis aims to unravel these needs and the reasons why frictions appear. Moreover, the in-depth interviews were with newcomers and professionals working or living in Rotterdam; therefore, the analysis gives insight into the second subquestion.

6.1.2 Thematic analysis method: clustering into driving forces

Interviews with newcomers, experts and other actors, performed by OpenEmbassy and myself, formed the basis for researching these questions. As described in the research approach in 2.1, the NADI-model formed the basis for the setup of the questions for the additional seven in-depth interviews (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017). Quotes and notes from the all the nineteen interviews were highlighted and written into statement cards (Sanders & Stappers, 2020).

Thereafter, these statement cards were clustered; this can be found in appendix J. The clustering resulted in thirteen driving forces (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011). The driving forces are the clusters that drive and shape the context, in this case: newcomers and informal work. The driving forces consist of a title, main problems or opportunities, and

a description supported by quotes from different interviews. Insights from the street interviews, the analysis from OpenEmbassy and the earlier described literature research support the driving forces (figure 31).

The driving forces are presented in seven themes, since some of the driving forces are close to each other or talk about similar topics. These themes represent the underlying structure of the experience newcomers have with informal work (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017). Images were made to help visualise the driving forces. The background of the images is watercolour paint, which were scanned in the computer and thereafter adding a digital collage layer.

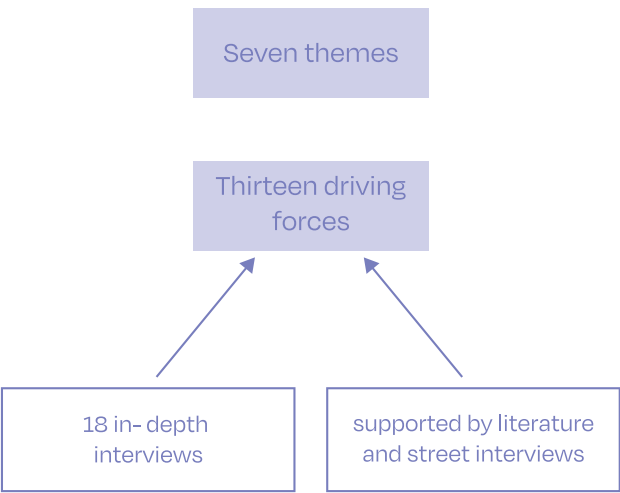


Figure 31: Input seven themes

6.2 DRIVING FORCES PRESENTED IN SEVEN THEMES

The second subchapter presents an overview of the themes in 6.2.1 and the seven themes in 6.2.2.

6.2.1 Overview of the themes

As described in the last section, thirteen driving forces resulted from the clustering. To get a comprehensive overview of the underlying needs, do seven themes present the driving forces. Figure 32 visualises an overview of the clustered driving forces into the themes.

The thirteen driving forces are:

1. (Paradox of) fear and security in the search for financial stability
2. Jumping in the unknown deep without a life jacket
3. (Lack of) understanding the Dutch welfare and labour system
4. Under pressure
5. Lost in translation
6. The forgotten groups
7. Starting behind and catching up
8. Language matters
9. The threshold of every step
10. Organisational jungle
11. We talk about it but we don't talk about it
12. Distrust in the government
13. Trying to be autonomous and self-reliant in the web of laws

The 'force' field, where all the thirteen driving forces are present

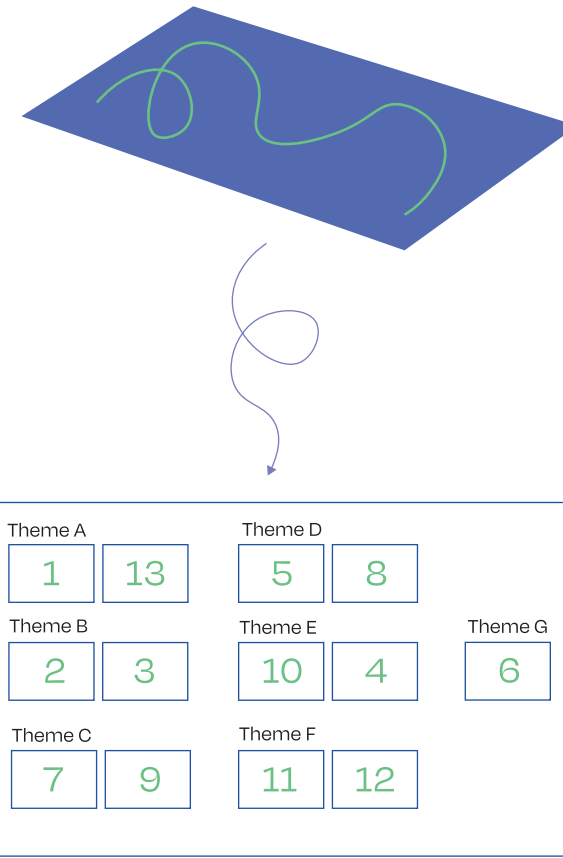


Figure 32: An overview of how the driving forces categorise into the seven themes.

6.2.2 The seven themes

Theme A: The search for financial stability

Driving force 1: (The paradox of) fear and security in the search for financial stability (figure 33)
Driving force 13: Trying to be autonomous and self-reliant in the web of laws (figure 34)

Newcomers can experience stress when it comes to their financial situation. As explained in chapter 3.3.1, many newcomers receive social assistance benefits. This benefit feels like a safe haven and can be the only form of financial stability for a long time (driving force 1). It is scary to give this up, for example, when you start a formal job. There is always a chance you end up in the benefits again, and sometimes it takes four weeks to receive your money when you apply.

“So yes, a lot of the youth, they also don’t dare to just take that step towards work. No, because for all we know you can’t keep it up. Something happens and suddenly you have no income. Yes, the benefit does provide a safe haven, so to speak. [...] And you just can’t make a mistake, because you’re right back again. You have no savings, don’t have enough salary to build up a savings account. Yes say then with your UVW and then another benefit. Yes but that’s such a stressful situation.”
Professional youth, Municipality of Rotterdam

“Many newcomers have gone through a lot the moment they arrive in the Netherlands. They need space to breathe for a while. And if the work consultant says right away that you have to work and then you can lose benefits, this can cause a lot of stress. They are happy that they have no stress about financial matters just for a little while.”
Expert from the Eritrean community 2

Besides, newcomers want to work; however, on their way to work, they encounter all sorts of laws that discourage or make the steps to work bigger (driving force 13). The discouragement already starts in the AZC, where newcomers are only allowed to work 26 weeks of the 52 weeks in the year. Furthermore, rules surrounding the participation law, which are even stricter for those under 27, are complex for newcomers (interview professional expert youth, Municipality of Rotterdam), such as additional allowances (toeslagen), which also change when you take the step to work. You have to change these manually.

In addition, newcomers often start at the bottom of the labour market, where they earn the minimum or close to the minimum wage. In a family situation, where only one of the two works, this can mean that their financial situation mostly stays the same when

receiving benefits. Also, some newcomers experience debts they cannot always share with their client manager, for example, when these debts are caused by a part of travel of fleeing, which was not legal. Debts amplify this fear of leaving the benefits. When working informally, you can keep your social assistance benefit and have a little extra income on the side. When these informal incomes suddenly stop, you do not have to be scared that you have nothing to fall back on financially. Furthermore, newcomers have no financial buffer, as many people in the Netherlands; therefore, handling a financial setback can be very hard.

“I have a lot of debt because I am trying to bring my husband to the Netherlands. That costs more than 20,000 euros. I have already incurred a lot of debts. I am trying to get him safely from Sudan to the Netherlands. It will take me years to pay off these debts. Eventually, I want to want to find work in the formal labour market. But if the municipality forced me to do something I don’t want to do, I would do it. Otherwise, I will get another fine. I have made a lot of debts with different people that I sometimes have sleepless nights. When a friend saw that I was having financial problems, she offered to go and help me. She knows I can cook Eritrean well. She helped me find customers who want to order food. Unfortunately, it is not weekly. When people have a party (e.g. christening party, birthday, wedding) they order from me.”
Informal working newcomer woman 2

At a meet-up at Pakhuis de Zwijger about the future of work, a member of the audience who was working at the municipality of Amsterdam, also addressed this factor of ‘werk moet lonen’ (work must pay) (more details in appendix C). She explained that “our system is thought out in a way that is hard to get out of the benefits because of laws and rules, which make the gap only bigger and more complex. People must watch for their allowances they must stop receiving or apply for, and many more things.” And, according to her, “the municipality does their best to guide these people in the best way possible.” She explained that it is cheaper for the government to keep people unemployed than to guide them to work, which means that it costs the municipality more money to guide

“They get the feeling that the work consultant just wants them out of benefits quickly. Newcomers are then more likely to choose to stay on benefits and work undeclared on top of that. If they no longer feel like doing that work, they can easily quit. They always still have benefits.”
Expert from the Syrian community

someone to work than the amount they receive when someone goes out of benefits. This is a complex and demotivating paradox. Thus, newcomers looking for work, but stumble upon the system, find their form of autonomy in an informal job. They perceive informal work as more flexible, with no or less specific requirements. Plus, keeping the benefits gives a secure feeling (interview expert from the Syrian community).



Figure 33: (The paradox of) fear and security in the search for financial stability (on the left).
Figure 34: Trying to be autonomous and self-reliant in the web of laws (on the right).



Theme B: The vulnerability of an informal working newcomer in the Dutch welfare and labour system

Driving force 2: Jumping in the unknown deep without a life jacket (figure 35)
Driving force 3: (Lack of) understanding the Dutch welfare and labour system (figure 36)

When working informally, you are in a vulnerable position (driving force 2), especially when being a newcomer and do not fully understand the system you are part of (driving force 3).
As newcomers arrive, they enter a new country without clearly knowing their rights. As explained in the framework of OpenEmbassy (2019), rights and responsibilities form the pillar of integration. This can result in newcomers being disadvantaged by different people, while they may or may not be aware of this. For example, when working informally, you get injured at work or work very long hours. However, it can also happen when signing a contract. How do you know exactly what you signed for in the contract? For instance, when you get an offer for a temporary contract, 0-hour contract, and this suddenly stops (as explained in chapter 3.3). In addition, when it comes to informal work, this can also happen via a so-called in-between-person. The company thinks they work legally, while newcomers can be taken advantage of. This can result in unforeseen consequences, such as the in-between-person does not pay you like you thought you agreed upon in earlier conversations. Many things can go wrong here. Whom can you ask for help?

“In a parcel delivery, the employer hires a region coordinator, who is responsible to keep that region running. That person is employed, but is himself responsible to hire parcel deliverers, to run that region. These are either self-employed, but often newcomers, people without contracts, are being recruited from the AZC.”
Informal working youngster 1

Newcomers working informally often lack an understanding of the Dutch welfare and labour system. For example, one can think of where their social assistance benefits or additional allowances come from. Some newcomers have a basic understanding, but some think the UN gives them the money, and some see the benefits as basic income (interview informal working woman 3; interview professional, Divosa; interview professional 3, Municipality of Rotterdam). How this works is usually very basic explained in the asylum centre. However, in the centre, you are often still busy thinking about other things when you are there (interview professional, NewBees). Plus, you are not working or receiving social assistance benefit yet, so connecting the information with your daily life is more complex.

“I understand where my benefit comes from, from taxes for example. But, I know a lot of Eritrean newcomers I know don’t understand it. They think, for example, that it is an allowance for refugees from the UN. I think this can be repeated.”
Informal working woman 3

“In the AZC, information is often shared about the benefits of working white, insurance, pension accrual, and so on, but that the municipality should also be aware that this does not stick at once. Especially when the whole system is totally unknown, these kinds of topics don’t persist.”
Professional, NewBees

Moreover, the format of explaining is additionally essential. The explanation is not always in the newcomers’ native language, and the information is often not repeated. Furthermore, there needs to be more understanding of why working formally keeps the Dutch state going and how the system uses taxes. A fair remark here, made by the professional youth from the Municipality of Rotterdam, is how easy this is to understand when you are at the bottom of society yourself. Where do you see these things that should be fixed for you? Moreover, the paradox about working formally and understanding your advantages here is that you only know the advantages of formal work when you start working formally, such as a pension or vacation days.

Additionally, every country has a different system and different rules and laws. It is more than just non-European newcomers that have to learn how to deal with this. However, when coming from a country where work is arranged much differently, it is hard to change this thought, or mental model about ‘work’ all of a sudden.
The quote by an expert from the Syrian community explains this:

“The system in the Netherlands is very complicated for people from Syria. People are used to working somewhere without a contract and getting their money paid in cash at the end of the month. Here in the Netherlands this all works differently, many people don’t really understand the need for such a contract and that everything has to be documented.”
Professional, NewBees

Figure 35: Jumping in the unknown deep without a life jacket (on the left).
Figure 36: Lack of understanding of the Dutch welfare and labour system (on the right).



Theme C: Being always 1-0 behind

Driving force 7: Starting behind and catching up (figure 37)
Driving force 9: The threshold of every step (figure 38)

"Newcomers go through a lot to get here, and do not yet have the resilience to start working right away."
Expert, NewBees

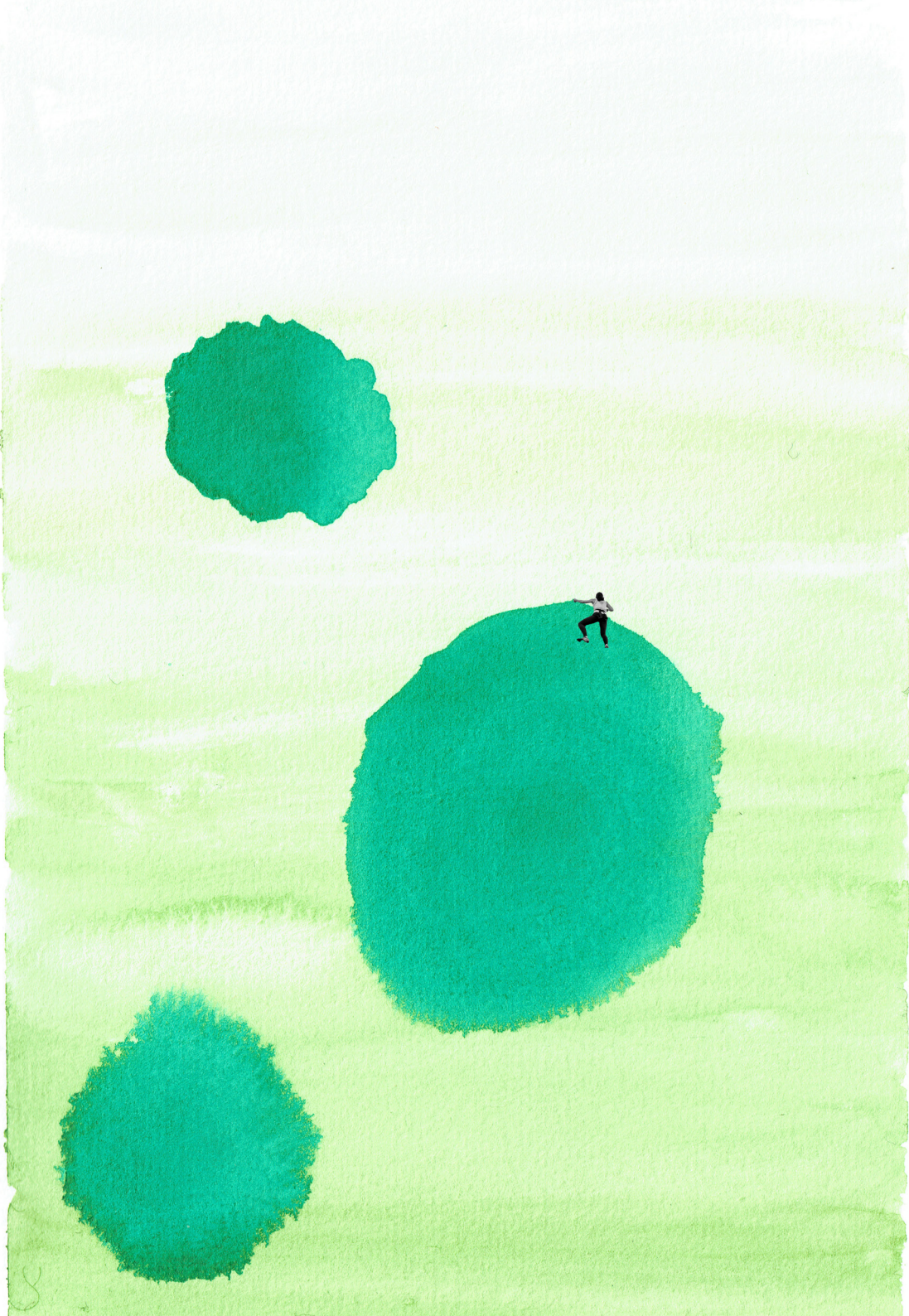
"They may want to be self-reliant, but sometimes it's just not feasible. Yes, also because what you notice, for example when I call to the municipality or have to call somewhere from time to time. I am taken a bit more seriously somewhere than when they call. So that also makes it kind of difficult to promote that self-reliance because sometimes they are also just not taken seriously."
Social worker 2, Rotterdam

Newcomers encounter different obstacles, and you can frame it as that they are 'always 1-0 behind'. Furthermore, often the journey that newcomers made was intense, and it can be hard to have the resilience to immediately start working when you have been through a lot (interview professional, NewBees). Plus, as a social worker also explained, even when newcomers know what to do, they are not always taken seriously. Language can play a role here, but also the discrimination of newcomers.

In addition, it is normal to feel a sense of belonging, but here a newcomer stumbles across privileges that other people may have. Such as financial privileges but also having the freedom to study and look for a job you like a lot, instead of finding a job and simply having no other choice (interview professional youth Municipality of Rotterdam). Especially, when the municipality also sees it this way and does not look for a sustainable, but a 'quick' job.

Taking the step to formal work means going over many thresholds on the way. These thresholds feel lower or are even less apparent when doing informal work. Formal work, mainly when sourced via a specific job offer, but even if this is not the case, there are always needs and wishes from the employer. Hence, the employer has all sorts of expectations reflected on the newcomer (interview professional, Divosa).

Figure 37: Starting behind and catching up (page 88).



"Yes, not based on the vacancy, but then there is already a list of wishes. And those are then secretly the wish to speak a bit of good Dutch. That behaviour has to look motivated, fresh, being on time, and so on."
Professional, Divosa

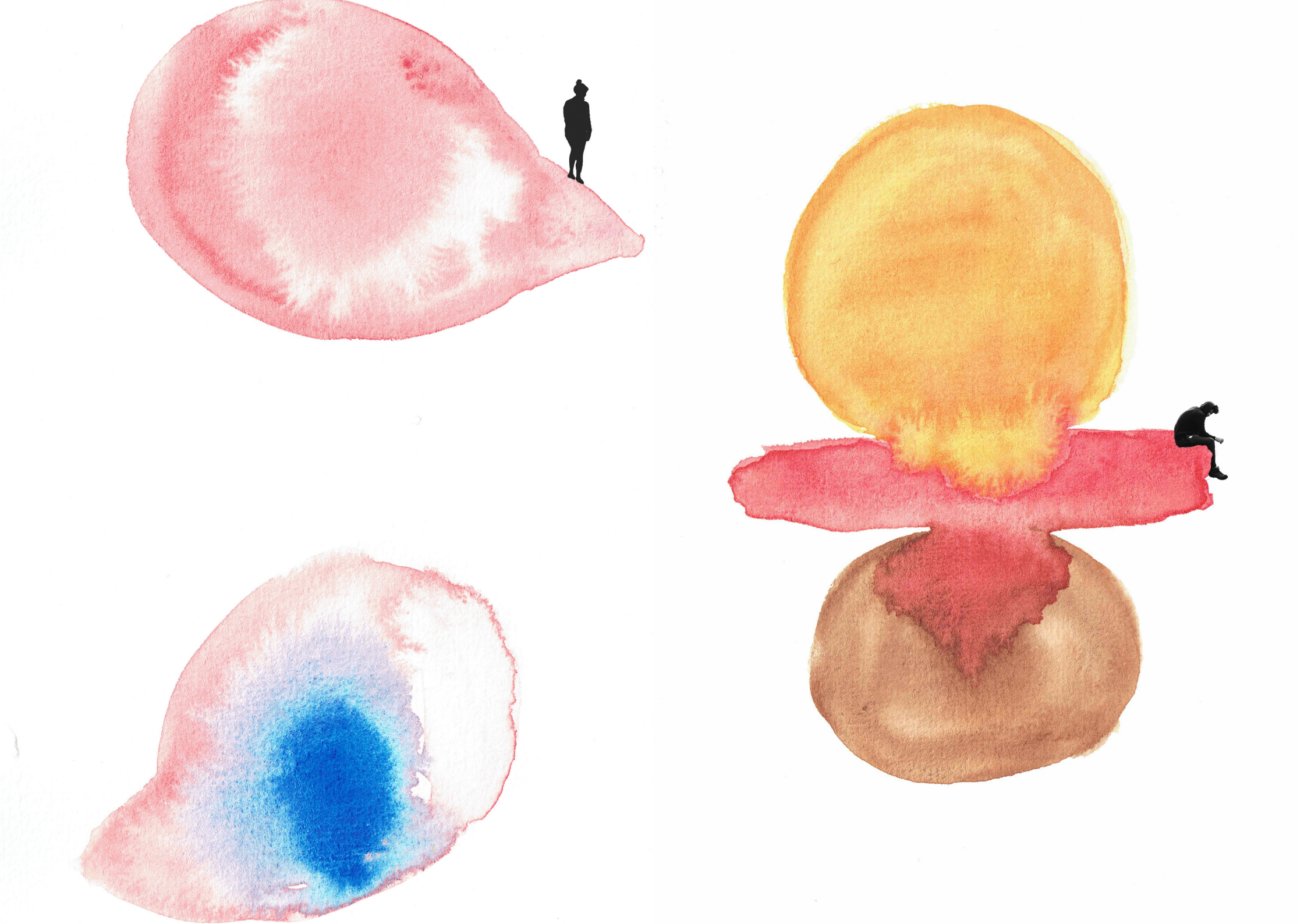
"But my experience is often when they eventually do have to go to work and even if it's reluctant and they're there for a while, they like that. You had to cross the threshold, I think."
Professional 3, Municipality of Rotterdam

As the professional from the municipality explains, she experiences that when a newcomer takes the step and goes over the threshold, the job is usually experienced as positive after a while (2022).

In addition, there are many steps where things can go wrong and it differs per situation (and municipality) who guides the newcomer to work. Ideally, this is done by someone who knows the newcomer well and knows where the newcomer needs guidance. Furthermore, can a failure experience, small or big, influence the application for a new job again (interview professional, Divosa).

Figure 38: The threshold of every step.





Theme D: Lost in translation

Driving force 5: Lost in translation and identity (figure 39)

Driving force 8: Language matters (figure 40)

"But that is also up to us to explain that of, that is important here. We also had a once indeed example of someone who had not come to his employer the day after, because the day before his boss went to help him with doing the work. And he thought of oh, my boss is helping me, so I must not be good enough. Did he not come the next time. Yes, but well. You can say not unmotivated, but that yes, that's those cultural differences surely?"

Professional 3, Municipality of Rotterdam

When starting to work in a new country, you are also experiencing a new work culture parallel to your own (unwritten) norms and values and those of your new home country. Referring back to the introduction of this thesis, where the term mental models were mentioned, these norms and values also have an underlying mental model which is not easy to change.

These different mental models can cause friction but also, of course, opportunities. One can also say that many things are scaled under 'culture differences', which is not always the case. Moreover, language and communication also play a role here and can cause miscommunications. These miscommunications vary from small things, such as being on time at work, but if they add up an employer can interpret this the wrong way. However, a relevant question is: who is responsible for preventing these miscommunications? Is that the contact person from the municipality, the employer, or the newcomers themselves?

"And often for example the vast majority of the people we help who are Syrian or Arab. And yes they have travelled through Turkey, for example, and the moment you travel through Turkey and have lived there for a while, you speak Turkish. Moroccans, not all of them, but a large part of the Moroccan population here who also speak a dialect of Arabic."

Social worker 2, Rotterdam

Furthermore, as a social worker explained in the quote, speaking a language, such as Arabic or Turkish, also opens up opportunities for both informal and formal work.

"Language is a big problem in finding a job. Many formal jobs require a certain language level. Newcomers want to work and do not yet know Dutch well enough. To overcome that period, people start working informally."

Expert from Eritrean community 1

When working in a Dutch-speaking environment, your language usually progresses very quickly. Nevertheless, with the ticking time clock of the integration exam, having a full-time job next to formal integration is quite challenging. Additionally, OpenEmbassy states in their research that there are not a lot of workplaces working multi-language, and explains that the mother tongue can be used effectively to learn Dutch (2022). Moreover, (informal) online work can also open up opportunities since speaking a specific language on a required level is less of an issue (OpenEmbassy, 2022).

Furthermore, living in a new country also raises the question of identity. Who am I in this new country? What are the things I want to achieve here, and how do I cope with other things happening, such as family members and friends still living in the country one fled from (interview Social worker 3, Rotterdam).

"What is actually almost never talked about? I've never seen in the media, refugees feel alone because they can't find a girlfriend, wife, husband or boyfriend? [...] Yes and then how do you deal with that and this and so and so and in collectivist and individualist society? And then what should I do? [...] A bit of an identity dilemma."

Social worker 3, Rotterdam

Figure 39: Lost in translation and identity (on the left).

Figure 40: Language matters (on the right).

Theme E: Pressure on the organisation and professional

Driving force 10: The organisational jungles (figure 40)
Driving force 4: Under pressure (figure 42)

"Yes, well, you actually always have two layers. That is very interesting. You have a policy layer. Yes, which is also about money. And you have implementation layer. Well the implementation layer, that's often just. I think it works quite well with each other because we all have the same goal. Yes only about those policy layers. From my perspective, that doesn't always go well. Yes, because agreements are made there about who does what while we in the implementation we just do it, so to speak. And so we do things differently from what was agreed in policy. Sometimes we do more, sometimes, for example, VluchtelingenWerk does more. [...] And as long as we get the space in an implementation to do what we think is important, it often goes well."
Professional youth, Municipality of Rotterdam

Many actors active in the field of integration are big (governmental) organisations. Furthermore, often, those organisations are structured in different layers. You can separate these layers into an executive layer and a policy layer. Additionally, the executive layer has to act the way the policy layer proposed it, which is directly influenced by the decisions made in the municipal council (interview professional Divosa). However, in practice, things can go differently than one thought, and as described in the quote, this can cause friction (interview professional youth, Municipality of Rotterdam). For example, when a civil officer in the executive layer spends time on something that is not their responsibility, it costs the municipality money. Eventually, the officer can get reprimanded when one does this frequently. Moreover, this division is not only felt internally but also by other organisations in contact with the municipality, civilians, and therefore also newcomers. For example, many things are located in a different 'loketten', and one can feel the rigid structure when in touch with the municipality (see also 4.1.2).

As explained earlier in this thesis, the municipalities' responsibilities and tasks changed when the new Civic Integration Act was enacted (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022c). Also, a municipality has a certain freedom to work with the law. Some things every municipality has to do by law, and other things can be thought out individually. This freedom is also logical; for example, bigger and smaller municipalities can tailor their different needs.

"Caseloads are very high for work coaches, high turnover on the north side of Rotterdam. And that keeps people under the radar. They should be on top from the start and be clear right away. If they do pay attention, poeple can do what they want."
Professional 2, Municipality of Rotterdam

Another thing affecting the quality of the newcomers' guidance is the labour market tightness (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022a). This development is also something the Municipality of Rotterdam is dealing with, which results, for example, in a high caseload (interview professional 2 Municipality of Rotterdam, 2022). A caseload means: how many newcomers you are responsible for guiding. Additionally, the client managers and work coaches have to deliver a lot of administrative tasks as well. This feeling of being 'under pressure' affects the quality of the guidance. An example here is how often a newcomer switches contact in the municipality.

"I have had four different consultants in six years. It varies from person to person, but I experience a lot of pressure."
Professional 2, Municipality of Rotterdam

While having a personal, long-term connection helps to build trust and understanding. Furthermore, when newcomers are done following a particular track or guiding-to-work activity, they need to be helped with appropriate follow-up steps. Otherwise, the informal working newcomer often returns to their old situation (interview expert Eritrean community 1).

Figure 41: Organisational jungles (on the left).
Figure 42: Under pressure (on the right).

Theme F: We talk about it, but we don't talk about it with the government

Driving force 11: We talk about it but we don't talk about it (figure 44)
Driving force 12: Distrust in the government (figure 43)

"But I also don't mind discussing it if I have certain suspicions. So if I think someone is working black or working informally, I'll mention that too. Yes, I also indicate that and say look, I want to offer you a job, but you keep refusing. But you do want to continue working part-time without benefiting financially. That's odd. That's right yes. It would only be beneficial if you earned informal money there. [...] Yes, because I don't think it's necessary either. I don't think it should be secret either. Yes, because that's not taboo. And of course, I don't expect people to say no, yes, you're right, I do earn informal. I don't expect them to say that, but I do want them to know that I see, yes, that I understand. So yes. So I try to start a conversation with them."
Professional 3, Municipality of Rotterdam

"We don't really talk about undeclared work but we know from each other that the other is working."
Informal working woman 1

Informal work is something we talk about, such as in this thesis itself. Though it depends on the situation, one sometimes chooses not to talk about it. As the assumptions of Rotterdammers (subchapter 4.2.2) and the history of work (subchapter 3.1) also showed, it is something that people experience as 'part of society' and has been 'the standard' for most part of human existence. Hence, it will not be something that will go away entirely, this would require a shift in some people's mental model. Thus, you can say it is a 'taboo' but also not. You talk about it, but you do not talk about it always and with everyone or leave out specific details.

Quotes from the in-depth interviews also articulate this observation, such as, the influence of different newcomer communities. Newcomers help each other out in informal work or find a job through their community, both offline and online (interview expert NewBees; interview informal working woman 2; OpenEmbassy, 2022). Online it happens in different Facebook groups, some groups with mostly newcomers, but also groups where people looking for work or an informal employer are both members. These situations are examples of informal work being quite present and in the open.

However, this openness is not there when it comes to talking about informal work with someone for a governmental organisation, such as the municipality. This is mainly because any civil servant has to act under the law, which results in a civil servant having

to act and report when encountering someone working informally. This is part of the 'Ambtenarenwet' from 2017, in paragraph 3 article 6: *"De ambtenaar is gehouden de bij of krachtens de wet op hem rustende en uit zijn functie voortvloeiende verplichtingen te vervullen en zich ook overigens te gedragen zoals een goed ambtenaar betaamt."* (Officials are required to fulfil the obligations imposed on them by or under the law and arising from their duties and also to conduct themselves as befits a good public servant.)

Nonetheless, this does not mean that work and income consultants and client managers do not suspect informal work, as explained in the first quote (interview client manager and work consultant status holders, 2022). Indirectly, these topics come to the table, and formally they have to act. However, civil servants also do not want to give a sanction when they think that is not the best solution, 'ambtelijke ongehoorzaamheid' (civil servant disobedience) is sometimes seen by them as the better solution. Furthermore, telling that someone works informally also happens in the community or is possible via a website called meld.nl or the municipality's website itself. (interview Professional youth; Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-d).

"Our boss Aboutaleb, among others, but also other high-ranking politicians and civil servants. They also sometimes plead for civil servant disobedience. Yes, if that's more convenient. And then I have to justify why I didn't report that and what my motivation is behind it. And then eventually one comes out like yes, I have been naughty or I have done well. [...] And sometimes you just don't want to hear things."
Professional youth, Municipality of Rotterdam

These different factors make it a complex topic between newcomers and the municipality and almost impossible to talk about. How can you address, for example, that you have work experience, but this was only informal? Furthermore, many newcomers distrust the government, based on past experiences in the country they fled from, or because of the first interactions with the Dutch system (see chapter 5).

"I have little contact with my work consultant. I don't even know who my work consultant is. To be honest, I'm glad the municipality doesn't approach me very often. When I have an appointment at the municipality, I always feel as small as an ant."
Informal working woman 2

"The client, the status holder, usually comes from a regime where the government could not be trusted. So how do you then go about your first one of your first independent contacts with that government after coming out of the asylum place? How are you then going to be open about that? Of course, it is also an illusion. So usually trust has to be built. If it is built at all, that also takes time. Yes, then you also need to have say stable client manager who still knows who you are, who still knows that next year, yes on that still sits in that place, yes not I know what another target group is. Isn't this about another project within the municipality has come? So that building of trust from the municipality is actually quite difficult for those reasons."
Professional, Divosa

Additionally, the newcomers interviewed feel pressure from their contact person from the municipality. As explained in the quote on the last page, the relationship is minimal or not apparent (interview informal working woman 2; interview expert from the Syrian community, 2022).

What is also good to mention is the power relationship that is automatically there between a newcomer, the municipality and other governmental organisations.

The conclusions from the actors map in chapter 5.2 also touched upon this point. This power relationship is much felt by newcomers, as described in the quote by an informal working woman, she is 'feeling as tiny as an ant'. How the contact is taking place, and many other little and big things, greatly influence this relationship. Moreover, in the new Civic Integration Act, the municipality also has a duty to unburden financially ('financieel ontzorgen'). This means, for example, that the client manager manages or has an insight into your bank account. Also, when newcomers receive a social benefit, all paychecks must be handed to them (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022a). Both situations imply even more the power relationship.

Furthermore, many newcomers come from countries where a government is not visible or not to be trusted (see also subchapter 3.2). This 'mental model' about governments does not change overnight when one starts to live in the Netherlands (interview professional, Divosa; interview expert from the Syrian community). These, and other factors combined, result in a general mistrust in governmental organisations.

Figure 43: Distrust in the government (on the left).
Figure 44: We talk about it but we don't talk about it (on the right).

Theme G: The forgotten groups

Driving force 6: The forgotten groups (figure 45)

“I would like to be properly guided by the municipality to find work without being put under pressure. It is often easier for men to enter the formal labour market than for women. I feel that the municipality invests much more in men. Men also have a better chance because most of them get a driver’s licence. I would also like to get my driver’s licence, but without guidance and extra lessons, I will not be able to learn it.”
Professional 3, Municipality of Rotterdam

“We don’t really talk about undeclared work but we know from each other that the other is working.”
Informal working woman 1

Women, especially those guided by the old Civic Integration Act, can be described as a forgotten group.

Most newcomers that come to the Netherlands alone are men (68%), and the majority are young men (under 35). In addition, women and children more often come as family migrants (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022b). Newcomer women experience that there are more programs that are suited for men, for example, with more practical and physical jobs. Furthermore, they do not always feel heard and understood by their work coach from the municipality and experience pressure. It can also be that the woman is not allowed to work or is expected to take care of the kids in a family situation. However, this can be challenging to find out. For example, when the man is here longer, he speaks the language better already, and the woman falls out of the picture when the man starts to work. Alternatively, the man experiences something that can be called the Breadwinner principle: “the member of a family who earns the money to support the others” is the main idea of the breadwinner model (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). The earner traditionally works outside the home to support the family financially, while the non-earner stays at home to care for the young ones and the old.

Furthermore, women can need a different approach than men, an expert in the Eritrean community, for example, explains this:

“Women in the Eritrean community can find it more comfortable to go to activities and gatherings in a group situation. Also, you need to invite them personally, without being pushy.”
Expert Eritrean community 1

Also, it is not easy to find a (full-time) job when the woman has young kids and can not afford daycare 5-days a week. A professional from the municipality of Rotterdam explained that there are programs during school hours, but she admitted that there were not that many. Plus, there are women who are single moms and have it even more difficult financially. It is hard to live from the social assistance benefit for them, and having a little income on the side to pay their bills is very welcome.

Another interesting fact to mention is the gender division in informal work. Men often work in construction, and women have jobs like cleaning, hairdressing, beauty, or cooking (OpenEmbassy, 2022).

Figure 45: The forgotten groups



6.3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Regulations make the newcomer and, occasionally, the professional get lost in the web of bureaucracy. While in theory, the regulations should make it ‘easier’ or guide you in the right direction. As Frissen (2019) and Strang et al. (2019) explain, laws and rules should start from the newcomers’ viewpoint as well, which it does not now. Furthermore, this also connects to how much there is to ‘do’ for the professional: the administration, guiding the newcomers properly and connecting them to the correct information and guidance. Moreover, how to do so when you also have to stay between the lines?

When the newcomer arrives, they are always one step behind and may arrive having experienced horrible things, while trying to understand how the government system works here and figuring out your obligations. Besides the notion of, who am I here, and who do I want to become in this place? Moreover, unfortunately, the thought of, is it even possible? And why should I trust the government here? As shown in OpenEmbassy’s framework (2019), there is much more to it than just formal integration, whereas it is about feeling included. Work is just a ‘benchmarks and means.’ Women can experience falling even more between the cracks. They are not always being seen or not guided in the way that fits their needs.

Superimposing Williams’ (2014) typology (see page 28) and the insights from the driving forces in the seven themes, one could say that the Dutch government is now tackling informal work in the direct way, particularly in the form of ‘sticks.’ Such as, threatening with fines and more social investigators to track down ‘fraudsters.’ And, using the ‘carrots’, the incentives, seems to function less. ‘Het loont niet’ for many newcomers to work formally, and the threshold is higher for employers to take the formal route via, for example, the ‘*tewerkstellingsvergunning*’ or the law ‘*dienstregeling aan huis*.’ Looking at the indirect controls, reducing the asymmetry between government and society is happening less at the moment. Through informal institutions, changing values, norms and beliefs, such as in the format of tax education, is currently not in the right way or at the right time, such as already at the AZC, when you are not yet working.

Another critical point is the general distrust in government, in combination with the fact that the municipality has to act when encountering informal work. Both these factors make talking directly about informal work at the municipality hard or even impossible. Nonetheless, the municipality is the first line of governmental contact, as shown in the actors’ map in 5.2, and wants to support newcomers by guiding them to formal work. Thus, they play a vital role in the system of guiding newcomers to work. How can the issues and accessibility of informal work be discussed without directly being discussed?

Conversation can be an instrument to narrow the gap of mistrust between municipal officers and newcomers. The next chapter explores how the driving forces can be used to open up spaces for opportunities.

7.1 METHOD

A session was set up with a colleague from OpenEmbassy to discuss the driving forces and possible design opportunities. More on this session can be found in appendix I. This session resulted in three possible directions described as frames in section 7.2. Multiple driving forces and insights from OpenEmbassy's analysis (2022) support the frames. The frames furthermore state different design opportunities.

Figure 46 shows how the frames are extracted from the driving forces. The circled driving force inside the three frames forms the primary influence for that specific frame.

- Driving forces that are 'always there'
- 1. (Paradox of) fear and security in the search for financial stability
 - 4. Under pressure
 - 5. Lost in translation
 - 8. Language matters
 - 7. Starting behind and catching up
 - 10. Organisational jungle
 - 11. We talk about it but we don't talk about it
 - 12. Distrust in the government
 - 13. Trying to be autonomous and self-reliant in the web of laws

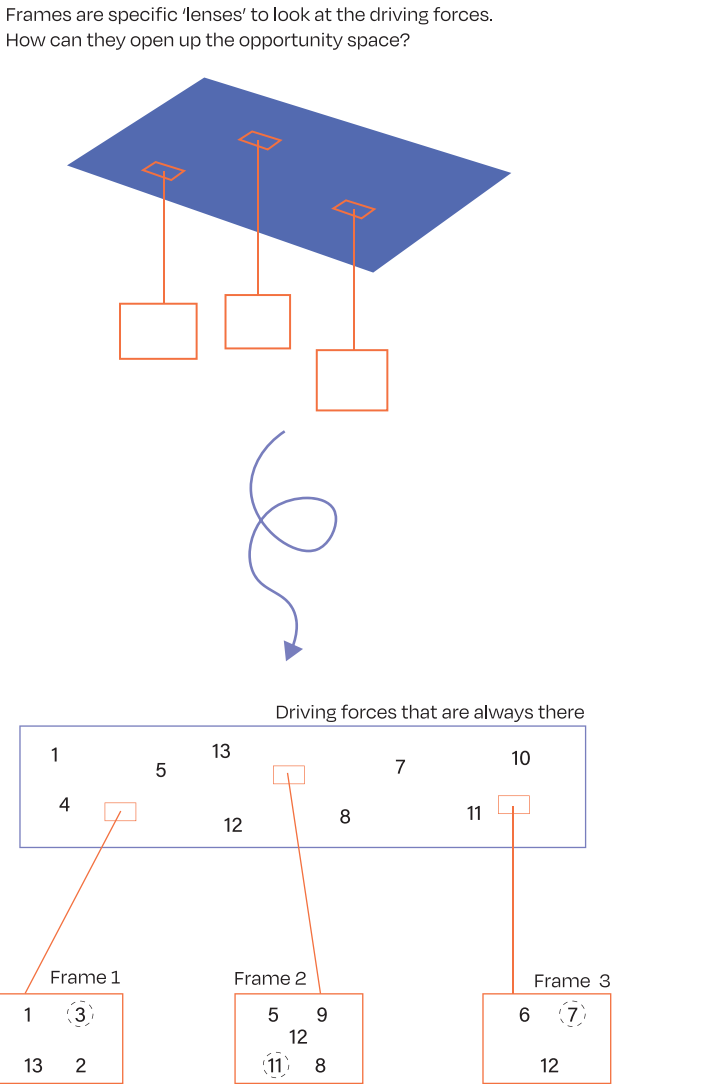


Figure 46: The frames extracted from the driving forces

7.2 THREE FRAMES

Subsection 7.2 describes the three frames in 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3.

7.2.1 Frame 1: Provide more knowledge and insights into the labour and tax system

- Main driving forces of influence:
- 3. Lack of understanding the Dutch welfare and labour system
 - 1. (Paradox of) fear and security in the search for financial stability
 - 13. Trying to be autonomous and self-reliant in the web of laws
 - 2. Jumping in the unknown deep without a life jacket

As described in theme C in 6.2.2, many informal working newcomers need more understanding of the Dutch labour system and insight into social assistance benefits. When having less knowledge, this can be taken advantage of. Moreover, it can result in making different, less-informed choices, causing you to be more vulnerable (driving force 2). Furthermore, the complexity of the web of laws pushes the newcomer more into informal work where they can find a form of autonomy and independence (driving force 13). They stay in the social assistance benefit and find a form of security here (driving force 1).

How are knowledge and insights into the labour system explained now to newcomers? Currently, newcomers subjected to the old Civic Integration Act learn about working in the Netherlands in the ONA ('Oriëntatie op de Nederlandse Arbeidsmarkt'). In the new law, this is the MAP (Module Arbeidsmarkt en Participatie). In a document from Divosa, the ONA is described as a program with the right content according to their evaluation but not a suitable format. It was very abstract, language-focused and not focused on the practicalities. Furthermore, the people explaining the ONA were often people from the language school, not specialists in guiding newcomers to work. The MAP consists of eight parts, but learning about informal work is not precisely one of them (Divosa et al., 2022).

The municipality of Rotterdam does not explicitly give information about informal work to newcomers in the MAP currently. One of the interviewees also mentioned that she had basic information about the Dutch welfare system in the AZC. However, she explained that many newcomers do not remember this correctly (interview informal

working woman 3; Professional, Newbees). Furthermore, the government now shares its knowledge by discouraging informal work in the format of fines or other sanctions, following Williams (2014) terminology, using deterrents ('sticks').

Design opportunities and principle:
An opportunity arises by preventing future informal work through better insights for newcomers in the system, especially for newcomers who were or are subjected to the old Civic Integration Act. However, the design should do this in a way that newcomers do not feel pressured by the municipality. For example, presenting a plan with perspective is a method to do so (OpenEmbassy, 2022). The design should make clear what the end goal is and how it can help in guiding towards formal work, thus focussing on what the advantages are for formal work. Following Williams' (2014), this approach fits under indirectly tackling undeclared work and reducing the asymmetry between formal and informal institutions by changing informal institutions (values, norms, beliefs) by raising formal work's benefits (see chapter 2.2.2). An option here is explicitly highlighting the differences between formal and informal work in a not-too-patronising or didactic way. A method here is using storytelling (OpenEmbassy, 2022). Hence, the key of this frame is: changing perspective towards formal and informal work. Figure 47 visualises a changing perspective as a room with a new view.

"The design intervention should give more insight for newcomers into the tax and labour system to highlight the positive sides of formal work, by making use of methods such as storytelling."

7.2.2 Frame 2: Improve accessibility to talk about it

Main driving forces of influence:

- 11. **We talk about it but we don't talk about it**
- 5. Lost in translation
- 8. Language matters
- 9. The threshold of every step
- 12. Distrust in the government

Language matters. In whatever form it is used (driving force 8), also in the sense of how to communicate about informal work. In some situations, this is difficult or not even an option because of the consequences, for example, with the municipality (driving force 12). However, in some cases, we do talk about informal work; what is different in these settings? When is this comfortable to do so (driving force 11)? Furthermore, language is an essential means of communication and expressing yourself influences the ability to find a job or even talk about (informal) jobs (driving force 9). In addition, miscommunications can arise due to language or the inability to understand or use it properly (driving force 5). How can informal work be addressed among newcomers, and what role does language play in this (driving force 9)? For example, in preparing a CV, you cannot put your informal experience on it. Thus, the direction of this frame is; how can one improve the accessibility to talk about it?

How accessible is it to talk about informal work now?

Since the municipality has a regulating role, it is usually not accessible to talk about informal work, as explained in the description of the frame. Plus, many newcomers distrust the government. Furthermore, regarding communication, the municipality of Rotterdam wants to communicate in Dutch or sometimes in English. This automatically makes the current information inaccessible and excludes newcomers who do not speak Dutch well enough to understand complicated information. The following was stated in the coalition agreement of the city council in Rotterdam on language (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022 p.19):

"Official communication from the municipality is in Dutch, important information in English. When public health, safety or public order so requires, we also communicate in other languages. This is then always of a temporary nature."



Figure 47: New insights when looking out of the window frame, make it a room with a view. The three photos used to visualise the frames are all taken in Pristina, Kosovo by me.

However, as chapters five and six explain, informal work happens for a reason. How can we talk about those underlying reasons?

Design opportunities and principle:

A design opportunity can manifest by making informal work something that can be discussed indirectly, which makes it more accesible (figure 48). Thus, discussing the underlying reasons for informal work and not explicitly addressing it. Moreover, OpenEmbassy (2022) stresses in their research that there should be more focus on soft skills because a newcomer cannot put informal work experience on a CV, which makes the step to the formal market bigger.

"The design intervention should make talking about the underlying reasons of informal work more accessible by indirectly talking about it."

7.2.2 Frame 3: Focus on the forgotten groups

Main driving forces of influence:

- 6. **The forgotten groups**
- 7. Starting behind and catching up
- 12. Distrust in the government

Newcomer women can be described as a forgotten group. For example, they can be less in the picture of the municipality because their partner is working and thus out of social assistance benefit. Also, it is even more challenging for a single mother to make ends meet (driving force 6). Moreover, the interviewed informally employed women experience much pressure from their contact person at the municipality to do what they are told (driving force 12). How can these women be better and more inclusively guided to work while it is also clear what they can get out of it? Is 'the threshold' even higher for women in some cases, and do they experience certain prejudices (driving force 7)?

How is it done now?

The municipality offers some workplaces and jobs, especially for women, for instance, during kids' school hours. However, it is sometimes unclear to women what they can get from specific workshops, like the example of the empowerment course. This course had great intentions. Nevertheless, it was unclear to the women participating



Figure 48: Open the window, provide accessibility

(OpenEmbassy, 2022). Furthermore, there are several programs where professionals can educate themselves and learn more about guiding female newcomers to work, for example, through e-learning (Redactie KIS, 2021).

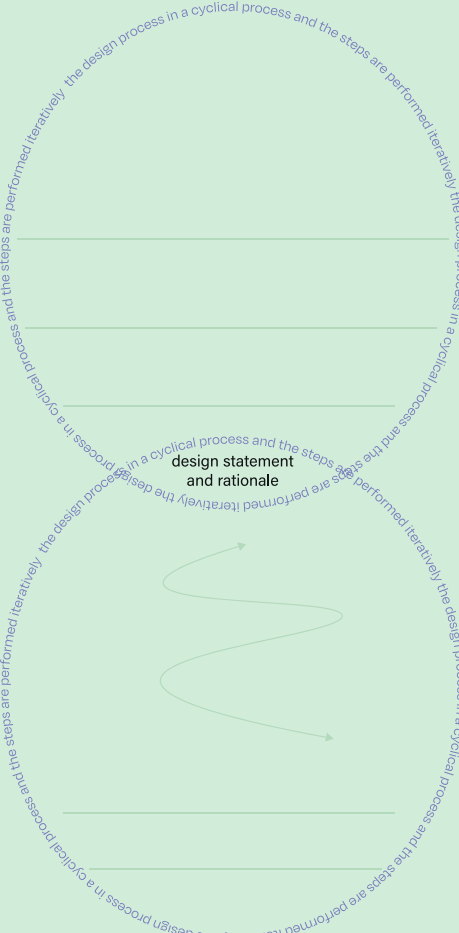
Design opportunities and principle:
A design opportunity presents itself in designing something that gives professionals more insights into these different needs for women or something for newcomer women, together with the municipality to use together. Thus, providing the municipality with a different focus (figure 49). Furthermore, an option is to connect with existing organisations with the experience of guiding women, such as Voice of All Woman (Voice of All Women, n.d.), She Matters (She Matters, n.d.) and Stichting Mano (Stichting Mano, n.d.) plus approaching women in groups (OpenEmbassy, 2022).

“The design intervention should emphasise the needs of newcomer women by changing the focus within the municipality.”

Figure 49:Change the focus, just as the lens has here.



INTERMEZZO B: FROM FRAMES TO A DESIGN DIRECTION



The approach, visualised in figure 50, shows that we are now where the two circles overlap. The frames synthesise towards a design statement. Choosing one frame and only focusing on that one was challenging since all the driving forces described in chapter six are intertwined. Hence, the ideation started parallel next to choosing a specific direction. Moreover, the an interaction vision supported in figuring out the desired interaction, combined with the choice to focus on the interaction between a municipal officer and a newcomer. The latter was based on the driving force of distrust in the government and for this project, specifically the municipality. How could the design intervene here? In what way is this possible? Informal work is a topic you can not directly discuss, but how can it be discussed?

These questions steered the choice towards an intervention that can be used during a conversation between newcomer and municipal officers, such as work coaches and client managers. In these conversations, the design could focus on the underlying reasons for doing informal work instead of the fact that someone is not doing formal work.

Subsection 7.3 elaborates more on the chosen direction and interaction, followed by the design statement and rationale in 7.4. The chapter finishes with the first version of the design principles in 7.5.

Figure 50: Going towards the other design circle

7.3 CURRENT AND DESIRED INTERACTION

Subchapter 7.3 explains the the chosen direction in 7.3.1 and the interaction vision in 7.3.2.

7.3.1 Chosen direction and current situation

Chosen direction

The second frame, improve accessibility to talk about it, forms the basis for the chosen direction; however, as explained in Intermezzo B, since all driving forces are interconnected, the other two frames are still indirectly important. It is also essential for the design intervention to be as inclusive as possible and, for now, less specific to a type of newcomer. Therefore, women, a focus in frame three, have not been taken as the focus. However, it is essential that the design intervention is inclusive and reflects the interests and needs of these women.

Furthermore, what came out of the first ideas and brainstorms was that the intervention has the municipality of Rotterdam as a place of focus for it should occur. Nevertheless, it would be interesting if different parties, such as OpenEmbassy or other civil society organisations, could also use the design intervention.

Chosen current situation

The interaction between the newcomer and contact person (work consultant or client manager) has been chosen as the place to intervene, as described in the conclusion in Intermezzo B. However, as theme F states, many newcomers perceive these conversations as stressful, visualised in the drawing in figure 51. What can they get out of it? How can newcomers and municipal officers talk about the underlying reasons for informal work without directly discussing it and maybe experiencing negative consequences?



Figure 51: Current interaction on the left, where the municipal officer has ownership over the conversation and the desired interaction on the right. Here both construct the conversation together.

7.3.2 Interaction vision and desired interaction

To determine the mechanism and desired goal of the interaction, drafting an interaction vision of this desired interaction helps find the interaction qualities for the design (Pasman et al., 2011). Figure 52 shows photo's of the chosen interaction vision.

The interaction with the design intervention should feel like ... climbing together with someone in a climbing hall.

Personal	→	You choose which climbing path you want to do, yellow, red or black this time?
Reciprocity	→	(Dutch: <i>wisselwerking</i>) You have to equally work together with the person standing on the ground. Otherwise you can not go up!
Trusted	→	You have to trust each other and work together, trust the advice the one standing on the ground gives you. You are secured to each other with physical, sturdy clips.
Explorative	→	You decide where and how to climb, if you do not feel like you can handle it. You can choose to stand on another colour, or do a different path.
Symmetry	→	Eventually, while climbing together multiple times, you work towards a more symmetrical relationship where you both share ownership.



Figure 52: Photos of the interaction vision (Unsplash, n.d.)

7.4 DESIGN STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

Thus, combining the design direction and interaction vision and working towards a design results in the following design statement (see also figure 53):

The design intervention wants to make talking about the underlying reasons for informal work more accessible by creating a more symmetrical and trusted relationship between municipal officers and newcomers.

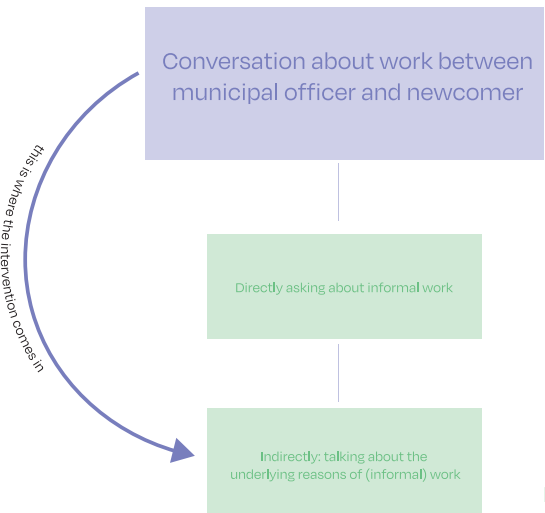


Figure 53: A visual of the design statement

WHAT + HOW leads to VALUE
————— FRAME —————

Figure 54: Abduction two, design reasoning (Dorst, 2011)

The design rationale is set up following the reasoning of Dorst (2011), see figure 54.

WHAT = the design intervention

HOW = by creating a more symmetrical and trusted relationship, such as in the interaction vision

VALUE = talking about the underlying reasons for informal work together with a municipal officer is more accessible

7.4 DESIGN PRINCIPLES 1.0

Eight design principles support the design rationale. These design principles serve as a guide for the ideation phase and a point of reflection. The insights from the analysis of chapters five and six, combined with the analysis of OpenEmbassy (2022), with the chosen direction of the design rationale, form the basis for drafting the design principles. Two categories divide the principles. The first category consists of more practical design guidelines, and the principles in the second category are more general and situated at a higher level in terms of abstraction.

First category:

- DP 1. The design should be visual and or easy to understand, without speaking Dutch.
- DP 2. If the design contains language or words, they should be able to be made available in different languages.
- DP 3. The design should have a clear goal for the newcomer. Why do we use this? What does the newcomer want? What are we working towards?
- DP 4. Every newcomer has their own story and situation. The design should be able to adapt to specific needs, or be able to embrace these differences.

Second category:

- DP 5. Newcomers may feel pressure from their contact person at the municipality, or other organisation. The design intervention should not be 'something extra' you 'have to' do because it is imposed on you.
- DP 6. The design should not stereotype and should be as inclusive as possible.
- DP 7. The design should consider the unequal power relationship between newcomers and professionals.
- DP 8. Newcomers may feel pressure from their contact person at the municipality, or other organisation. The design intervention should not be 'something extra' you 'have to' do because it is imposed on you.

INTERMEZZO C: FROM RATIONALE TO A DESIGN INTERVENTION

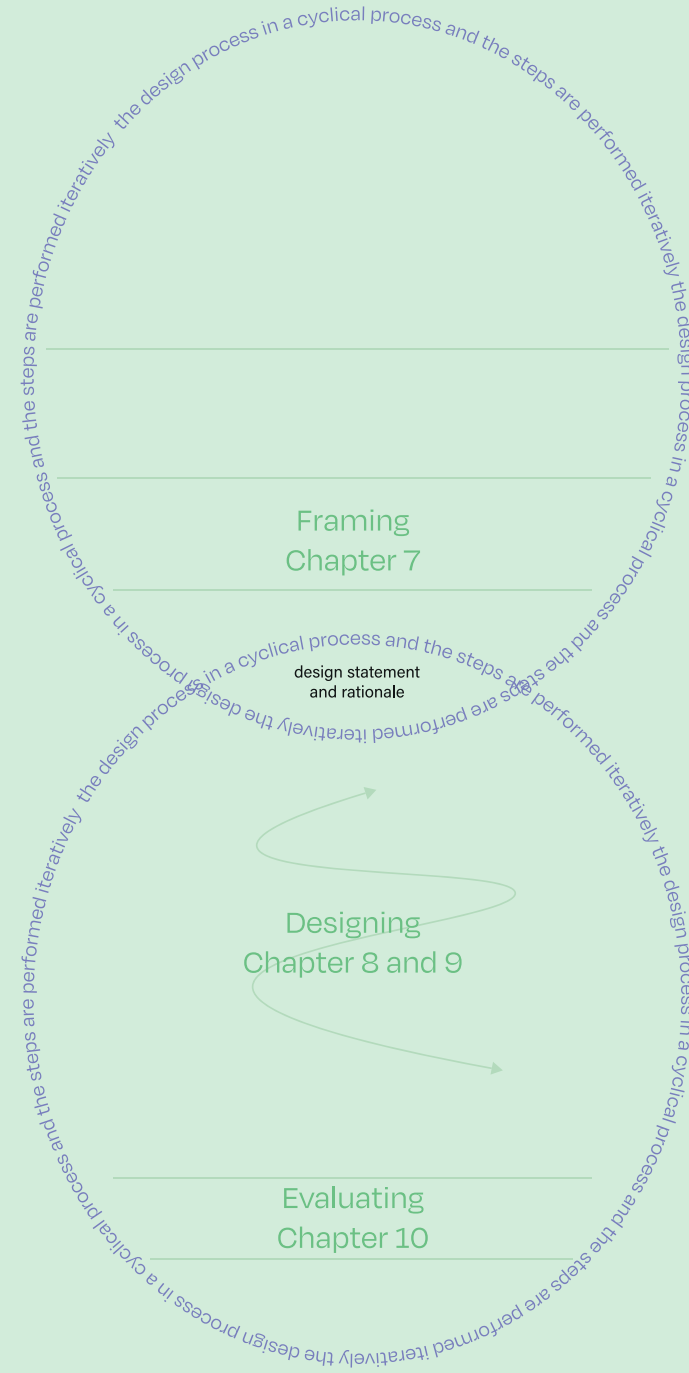


Figure 55: Approach, moving from design statement and rationale towards designing

The design rationale of making talking about the underlying reasons for informal work more accessible , by creating a more symmetrical and trusted relationship between professionals and newcomers, forms the basis for the design phase.

As explained, the design direction steered for the choice of the conversation between newcomers and municipal officers as the place to intervene in the system of informal work and newcomers. However, how to do so could be manifested in different ways. Referring to the design approach, this part of the project was about opening up again and exploring ideas for a possible design intervention.

The chosen direction talks about underlying reasons for informal work, explored in the analysis of chapters 5 and 6. For instance, the fear of letting go of the social assistance benefit and not trusting the government to discuss your specific situation and needs. However, how can these reasons be translated into the content of the design? Instead of talking about the problematic issues with informal work, the content of the designed conversation focuses on reasons behind doing informal work and the possibility of finding the needs of newcomers. Furthermore, the rationale does not include talking directly about informal work with the municipality since this was not an option: the municipality has to act according to the law. Everyone can have their personal reasons and obstacles. Likewise, the chosen direction also had its practical obstacles, of which the first ones are listed in the design requirements 1.0. What is possible to do and manageable for newcomers and professionals?

The following chapters explain this development from the rationale to the design intervention (figure 55). First, chapter 8 defines the reasoning for the concept choice and some main iterations that were made about the content of the concept. Furthermore, chapter 9 illustrates details and the design of this project's concept and evaluations and tests (chapter 10), which result in further recommendations.

The thesis ends with a final discussion and conclusion of the project in chapter 11.

8.1. FROM IDEAS TO THREE CONCEPTS

Subsection 8.1 states the evaluation of three concepts in 8.1.1 and insights from a learning session with the Municipality of Rotterdam in 8.1.2.

8.1.1 Evaluating three concepts

The chosen direction, in combination with the interaction vision, formed the design rationale. In the ideation, I explored different ideas around the interaction between newcomers and municipal officers. Furthermore, sessions with colleagues from OpenEmbassy and design students helped me get inspiration and reflect. Appendix K shows the results of these sessions, and other drawings from ideations Three idea directions emerged from the ideation phase. Two participants with experience in the municipality evaluated these three ideas (figure 57). The three ideas are: *'het afsprakenboekje'*, *'de verhalenkaart'* and *'de routekaart'*, which are shown in figure 56.

'Afsprakenboekje' (appointmentbooklet)

A booklet where the newcomer has a 'basic' administration of appointments to have more overview and ownership here. Likewise, a place to store letters and write down a question before an appointment.

'Verhalenkaart' (storycard)

Different cards lead to a digital link where a fictional story of a newcomer is shared. The story is based on the experiences of newcomers and informal work. Through the medium of storytelling, the topic of informal work is explored between newcomers and client managers or work coaches.

'Routekaart' (routecard)

The 'routekaart' consists of cards with different topics around informal work, forming the conversation route. Both the municipal officer and the newcomer choose cards. A topic on the front of the cards is presented, which can be an underlying reason for informal work. The back of the cards gives example questions relating to the topic on the front.

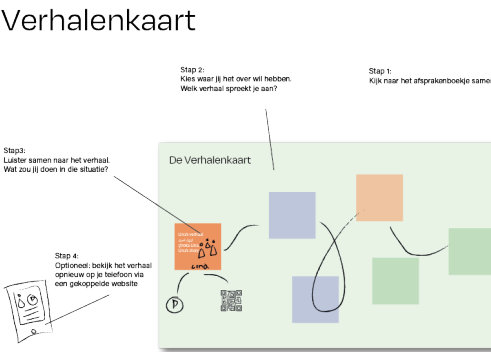
Routekaarten



Afsprakenboekje



Verhalenkaart



General experience from the evaluation

Both the participants recognized the idea of having a specific, sometimes uncomfortable, power relationship with the municipality, and agreed that it is almost impossible to discuss informal work there. The municipality means well, but it does not always feel like that for many newcomers. Needs are not understood or misunderstood. Furthermore, ownership misses in these conversations.

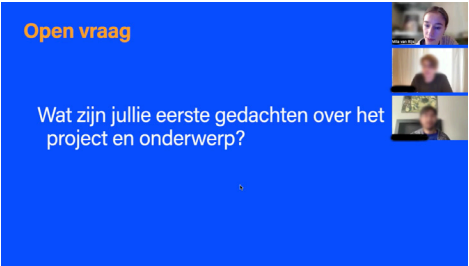


Figure 57: Snippet of the online evaluation session with two participants

Evaluations per concept:

Subsequently, the session led to several insights which helped to decide which concept(s) to continue with. Opportunities and limitations are listed per concept.

'Afsprakenboekje'

- + Makes making notes more practical, and immediately gives more acknowledgment to the fact that it is good to make clear appointments, and keep structure.
- It should not be something extra, or too much. The municipality already has a lot that they need to check and do.

'Verhalenkaart'

- + It is personal, which the participants both appreciated a lot. Also, it can reach more people than just the ones present in the conversation. It can go around in the newcomer communities, if you get it to the right person.
- How do you get people to do it? And, how many stories do you need to keep it personal and individual? Also, it can require some concentration, which can be hard during a stressful conversation.

'Routekaart'

- + The municipality has a physical route card, which is a one pager with some key milestones on it, like passing your integration exam. It is set up quite basic, and it does not provide guidance towards the steps after the integration exam, which are maybe even harder and less clear for many people. Thus, both thought the 'routekaart' was the idea that resonated the most with the situation.
- + Furthermore, changing the ownership and going towards a more reciprocal relationship. And therefore being able to go home with a more satisfied feeling, as explained in the quote.
- It is still somewhat optimistic, what does the municipality expect here? Maybe it can be presented differently, not just for refugees or newcomers. But, a tool that the municipality can use for more types of conversations with Rotterdammers.

"Also that the direction of the conversation is then more in the hand of not the municipality but the person in front of it. Through which I think if you give the direction to someone to someone who comes there. That someone also goes home more satisfied, after the conversation. Because, he or she could lead the conversation and talk about what they wanted to talk about. Without forgetting something, because I think that's what it is then. It's a topic. But each icon can also be drawn very broadly. It's not focused on one thing. It's more of a conversation starter, than a conversation topic."

Participant during the evaluation

Figure 56: The three concepts

8.2 ELABORATING TOWARDS ONE CONCEPT: WERKKAART

8.1.2 Insights from the municipality learning session

The first concepts described in 8.1.1 were briefly presented at a learning session with the municipality of Rotterdam to discuss the analysis of OpenEmbassy. In this learning session, OpenEmbassy presented their analysis, and afterwards, the municipality and OpenEmbassy shared their learnings from this analysis. The municipality commented that informal work is a hard topic to discuss, and they struggle to do so, especially in the cluster Work and Income. Furthermore, the municipal officers also stressed that there is little time for work coaches and client managers during meetings with newcomers and that they often have to do many things at these appointments.

When we discussed the possibility of a game sparking conversation, they stated that building more trust between newcomers and the municipality could be interesting. Nevertheless, also with the note that this differs a lot per person. For example, having a dialogue or reflecting on a certain level in Dutch can be quite challenging. Another thing is measuring the impact of such an intervention. Measurable impact, for instance, the number of people leaving social assistance benefits, is essential in the municipality. How can such an intervention promise that? It can take much time to ‘measure’ results here. Chapter eleven reflects on how to measure the impact of Werkkaart.

The last subchapter of chapter eight describes the decision for the concept in 8.2.1 and the adjusted design principles in 8.2.2.

8.2.1 Iterations made on the concept

The ‘*routekaart*’ combined with the ‘*afsprakenboekje*’ form the base for the initial concept. The evaluation session showed me that the ‘verhalenkaart’ is too impractical in the chosen setting. Furthermore, the learning session at the municipality gave me the insight that they are most interested in building more trust in their relationships with ‘clients’. Moreover, from the newcomer’s perspective, expressing your needs in an appointment can be challenging, and this should be a starting point for the further development of the concept. Furthermore, these needs can be (a part of) an underlying reason for informal work. The idea iterated into cards, each with a different topic, called the *Werkkaart*. It supports the design rationale in the following way:

The newcomer and professional both choose cards (**reciprocity**) to structure their **personal** conversation. Therefore, they can lead the conversation from both sides, creating shared ownership and a more **symmetrical** dialogue. Which, eventually, can lead to a more **trusted** relationship. In addition, they can structure every conversation differently, and the design intervention consists of just a few ‘rules’. Hence, the participants can **explore** the design every time again.

OpenEmbassy’s framework (2019), based on the framework from Strang et al.(2019), forms the base for the cards’ content. The next chapter elaborates more on the specific cards. A colleague from OpenEmbassy, who has worked as a municipal officer in Rotterdam, evaluated the first version of the content. We changed specific cards, added some, or wrote them down more understandably. Furthermore, an iteration here was to provide the design with a ‘manual’ to ensure the design is not misused. Appendix L includes the notes of this evaluation session.

8.2.2 Design principles 2.0

Furthermore, the chosen concept led to an iteration of the design principles presented in chapter 7.5 to better fit them to the specific concept.

First category:

~~DP 1. The design should be visual and/or easy to understand, without speaking Dutch.~~
DP 1. Werkkaart should include illustrations which visualise the topic of the card.

~~DP 2. If the design contains language or words, they should be able to be made available in different languages.~~

DP 2. The topics on the Werkkaart should be able to be made available in multiple languages, and the Dutch words should be where possible easy to understand or on B1 level.

~~DP 3. The design should have a clear goal for the newcomer. Why do we use this? What does the newcomer want? What are we working towards?~~

DP 3. Werkkaart should have a clear goal for the newcomer and professional. Why do we use this? What are we working towards?

~~DP 4. Every newcomer has their own story and situation. The design should be able to adapt to specific needs, or be able to embrace these differences.~~

DP 4. Every person has their own story and situation, thus needing specific guidance in the conversations. The cards and other elements of Werkkaart should be adjustable to these needs, or be able to embrace the different needs.

Second category

DP5. The design should consider the unequal power relationship between newcomers and professionals.

~~DP 6. Every newcomer has their own story and situation. The design should be able to adapt to specific needs, or be able to embrace these differences.~~

DP 6. Every person has their own story and situation, thus needing specific guidance in the conversations. The cards and other elements of Werkkaart should be adjustable to these needs, or be able to embrace the different needs.

DP 7. The design should not stereotype and should be as inclusive as possible.

DP 8. Newcomers may feel pressure from their contact person at the municipality, or other organisation. The design intervention should not be ‘something extra’ you ‘have to’ do because it is imposed on you.

Principle added from evaluation with colleague OpenEmbassy:
DP 9. Guidance for the use of the design should be provided, to make sure the design is not misused by professionals.

New requirements added after concept’s choice:
DP10 : The content of the cards suits OpenEmbassy’s framework of the 14 indicators of integration (OpenEmbassy, 2019)

DR11: The first prototypes of the design are tested, and show that the content of the cards sparks a conversation on the deliberate cards, for at least 10 minutes and preferably longer.

DR 12: The design should have as a desired effect to change ownership from only the professional to a shared one in the conversation.

The design principles steered the concept, and supported in designing towards the intervention as presented in this project. The next chapter explains the intervention and the design choices.

9.1 WERKKAART EXPLAINED

Subchapter explains the design of Werkkaart in 9.1.1 and elaborates on the content of the cards in 9.1.2.

9.1.1 Werkkaart: samen werken naar werk

Werkkaart (translated to workcard in English) is a card set which municipal officers can use together with the newcomer they are guiding to work. The design has as its main goal to make the conversation more symmetrical, and to create shared ownership over the conversation. Which starts already from the main rule of the game: both the players, newcomer and professional, choose cards to shape the conversation together and decide what to talk about. Werkkaart does not tackle informal work directly, but purposely indirectly. Since, as described in chapter 6 in theme F, directly discussing the topic of informal work with someone from the municipality can cause trouble. The newcomer may get a fine or is seen as a fraudster, or the municipal officer is summoned because of not reporting it, and not thus not following the legislation.

The design consists of 45 cards, an appointmentbooklet ('afsprakengids') with an opportunity card ('kanskaart'), a manual and a game board (see figures 59 & 60). Eight themes categorise the cards, of which one is a category with empty cards. The seven other categories are work ('werk'), home ('thuis'), care ('zorg'), relationships ('relaties'), municipality and organisations ('gemeente en organisaties'), learning and skills ('leren & skills') and lastly money ('geld'). The game board serves as a board on which all the different cards can be divided per category, to get a more comprehensive overview. Werkkaart comes in a box, where all the elements can be put in. Subsection 9.2 elaborates the step by step user scenario and 9.3 explains more on the design details of the different elements of Werkkaart. All the cards, and other elements of Werkkaart can be found in full in the appendix M.

9.1.2 Content of the cards

The cards' content comes from different input, of which the framework of OpenEmbassy (2019) based on Strang et al (2019) forms the base, other cards come from underlying reasons for informal work and other topics that the municipal officer and newcomer

discuss together at their appointment. The latter includes topics around work, such as volunteer work and education, but also practicalities, letters they receive or things that need to be sorted, that newcomers discuss at their appointment. Figure 58 illustrates the different categories and where the topics of the cards originated from.

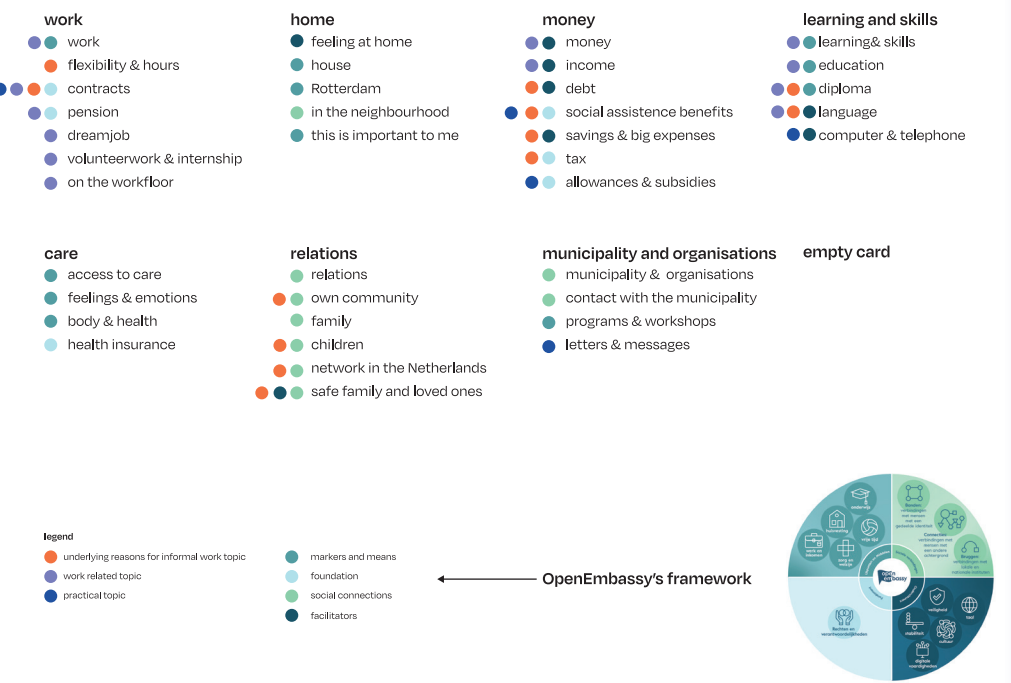


Figure 58: The content of the cards, based on OpenEmbassy's framework (2019) and research from this thesis.

Figure 59: Werkkaart presented with all its elements (next pages).

Figure 60: Laying down cards (next pages)





9.2 A USER SCENARIO OF THE WERKKAART

The first sections of this chapter introduced Werkkaart. But, how does Werkkaart work step-by-step? The following pictures in the scenario (figure 61) explain the scenario of how a municipal officer and a newcomer use Werkkaart. The scenario starts when they use Werkkaart for the first time. The last two pictures explain Werkkaart at home, and a second time it is used

Figure 61: Scenario Werkkaart, continues on the next pages



1. Together the newcomer and municipal officer unbox the Werkkaart **box**.



2. They look at the two-sided **manual**, to see how Werkkaart works.



3. The newcomer and municipal officer explore the **cards**, to see what topics there are.



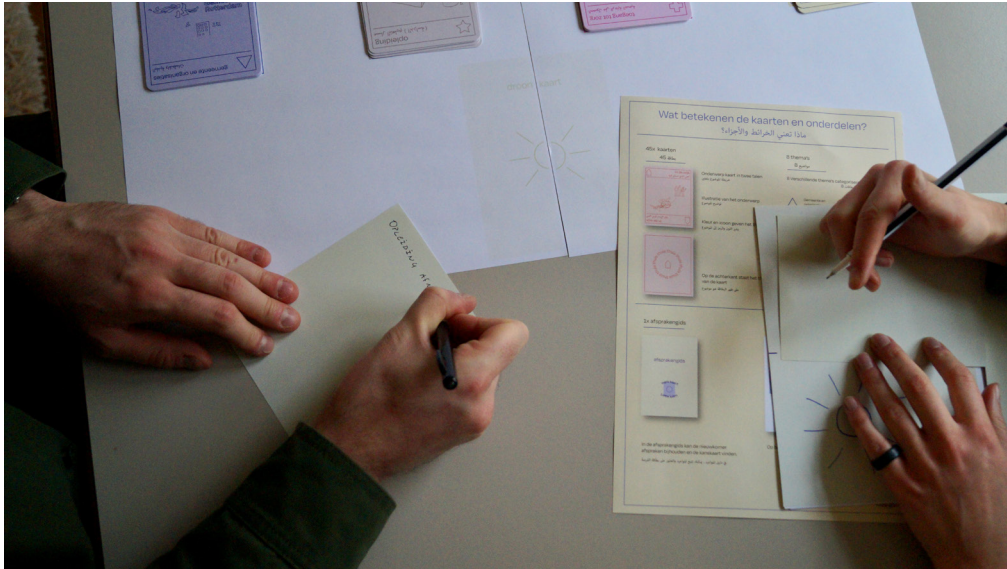
4. They place the cards on the **gameboard**. The municipal officer places *learning & skills* 'on the board.



7. Then, he decides to pick some other cards as well, such as the card with the topic *work* on it.



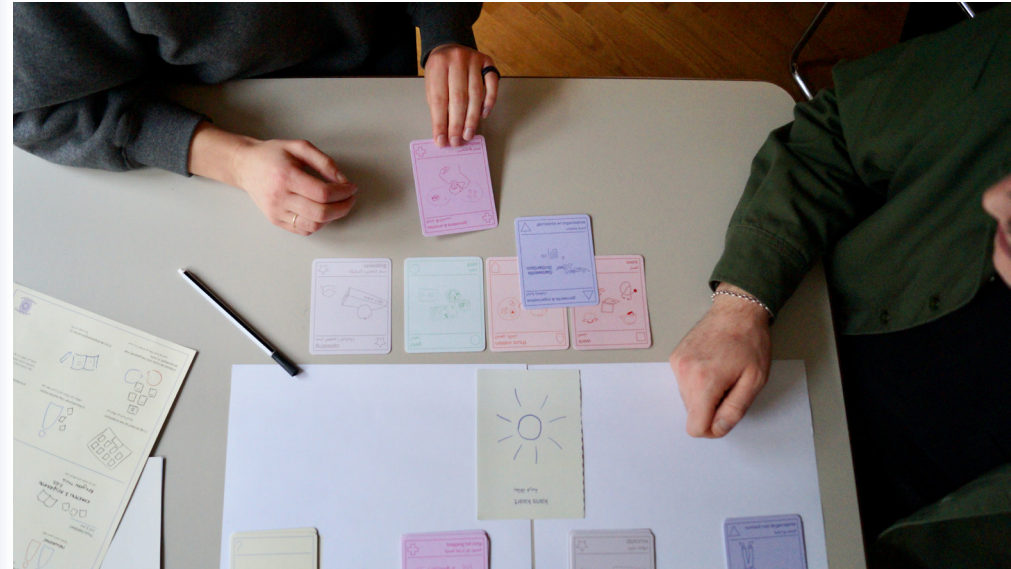
8. Then, the municipal officer has her turn to pick the cards she wants to add to the conversation. She chooses the card *municipality & organisations* here.



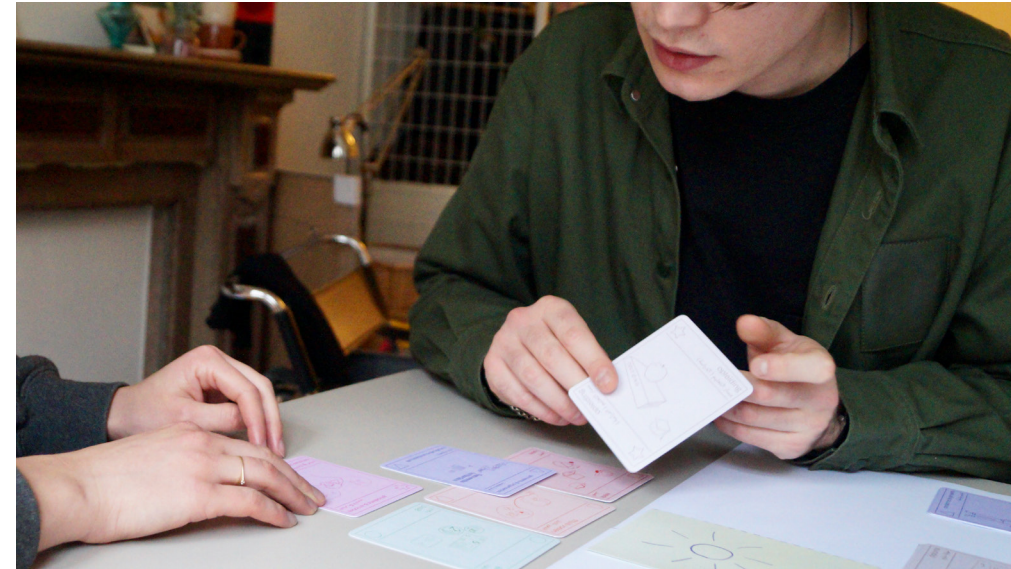
5. Together they fill in the **appointment booklet**, since it is the first time they use it. They also discuss what the **opportunity card** means to the newcomer. He decides to write down: finish education.



6. First, the newcomer decides what to discuss. He picks his first card, which is an **empty card**. He explains to the municipal officer he would like to discuss a specific job offer he saw online.



9. A conversation is starting, and they discuss some topics of the cards. For instance, the card *feelings & emotions*. The **opportunity card** is in sight while they talk.



10. The newcomer uses a card to express that he wants to bring up a topic again, which is *education*.



11. The conversation continues, both the professional and newcomer use the cards as a tool in the conversation.



12. During the conversation, the **opportunity card** is used to keep track if the things dicussed support the opportunity the newcomer would like.



15. They put Werksysteem back in the **box**.



16. At the end of the conversation, the newcomer takes the **appointmentbooklet** home. Here he can look back at the things they discussed.



13. On the back of the **opportunity card**, the newcomer wrote down the thing he wants to get out of the guidance to work: finish his education in the Netherlands.



14. When the appointment is almost over, the newcomer and municipal officers write down the things they discussed in the **appointmentbooklet**.



17. Before his next appointment with the municipality, the newcomer looks at the cards together with his family. What do I want to discuss this time? He makes some notes in the **appointmentbooklet**.



18. At the next appointment, they use Werksysteem again. Before they start, they look at the **appointmentbooklet**. What have we discussed last time? And, the newcomer already wrote down some quick questions he has, and wants to discuss.

9.3 DESIGN DETAILS OF WERKKAART

The third subchapter explains the design details of the different elements from Werkkaart. Appendix M provides the complete overview of all the elements of Werkkaart.

9.3.1. The Cards

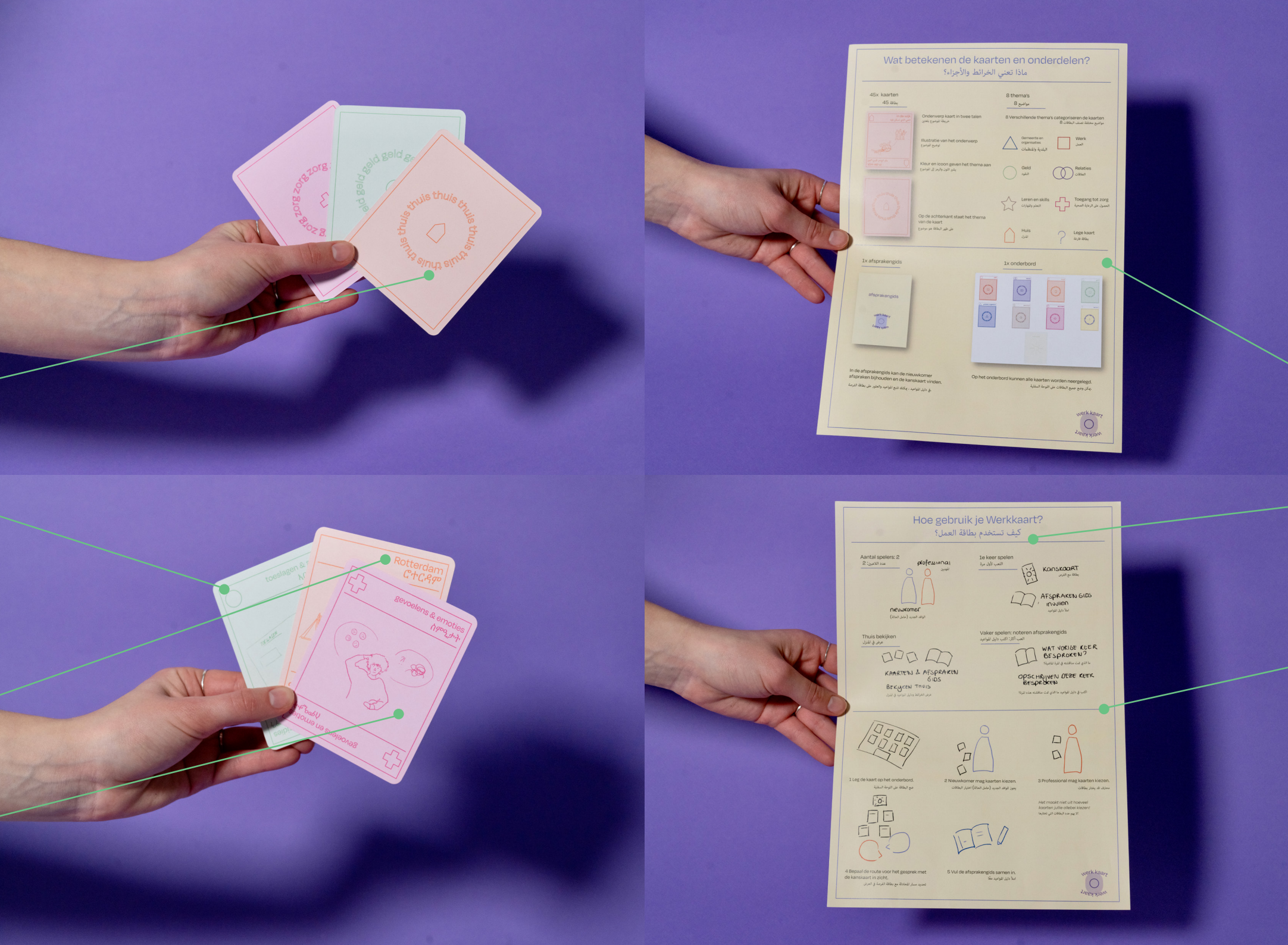
The back of the card, figure 62, illustrates the category of that card and corresponds with the icon and colour of the front of the card.

The icon and colour visualise the category of the card.

The card's topic (figure 63) is in two languages, Dutch and languages commonly spoken by newcomers. Werkkaart is now translated to Arabic, Turkish and Tigrinya. The topics of the cards were evaluated with a colleague from OpenEmbassy to evaluate if they would be easy to understand. For some words this is difficult, such as 'subsidies.' Thus not all the words are officially on B1 level.

An illustration explaining the topic of the card. An illustration can support the topic for newcomers who can not read Dutch or the other language that well. The style of the illustrations is purposely not to abstract, to avoid misinterpretations of the card.

Figure 62: The back of the cards.
Figure 63: The front of the cards.



9.3.2 The Manual

A two-sided manual is provided with Werkkaart. On one side, it shows all the different elements that are in the box, and what they mean (figure 64)

The manual is also has an explanation in Dutch and a second language

The other side shows how to use Werkkaart, with the help of the 'rules of the game' and a small scenario (figure 65).

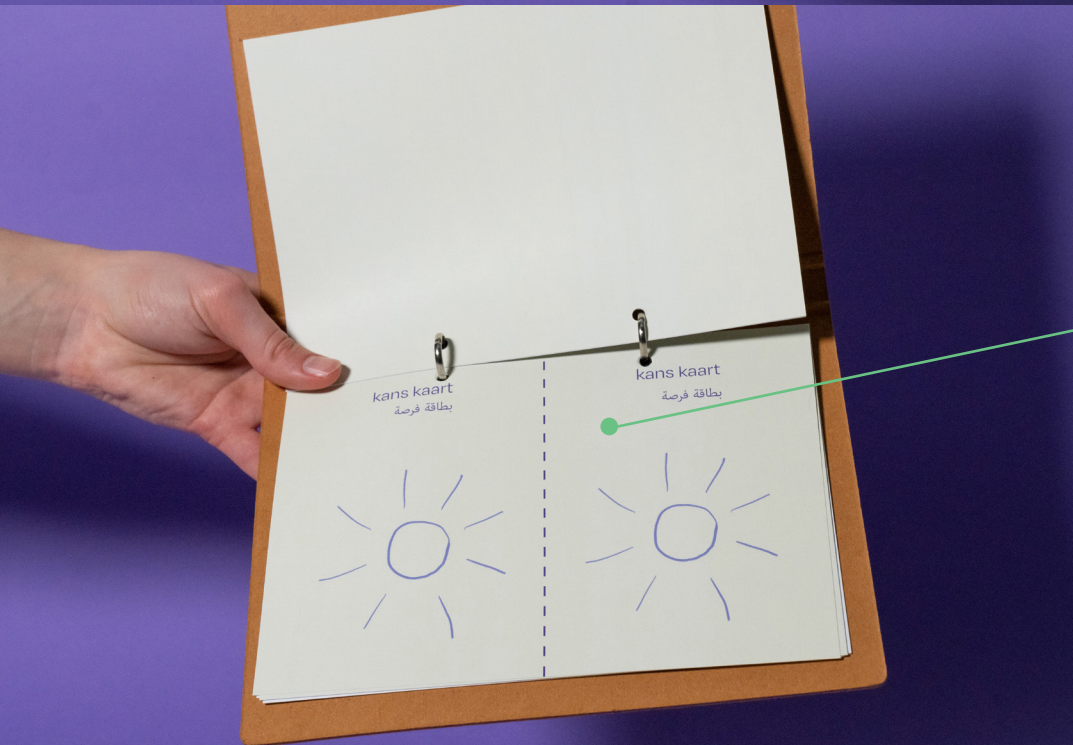
Figure 64: Manual side one, showing the elements of Werkkaart.
Figure 65: Manual side two, showing how to use Werkkaart.



9.3.3 The box and appointmentbooklet

Box

All the elements come together in a box (figure 66) Werkkaart's logo is visualised on top of the box. Furthermore does the box fit all the elements inside. When you open the box, the first thing you see is the manual.



'Afsprakenids' (appointmentbooklet) and 'kanskaart' (opportunity card)

The *afsprakenids* (figure 67) serves as a reference for the newcomer. What did you discuss last time? There is also space to already write down a question for the next appointment.

In the appointmentbooklet the *kanskaart* is also provided. On this card, the newcomer can write down what he or she wants to get out of the appointments with the municipality, what is their goal in the Netherlands? The opportunity card is placed on the gameboard, to have a visual reminder. The appointmentbooklet has multiple opportunity cards' in there, if this needs to be changed.

Figure 66: Werkkaart's box
Figure 67: Appointmentbooklet

9.3.4 The Gameboard

The gameboard serves as a place to keep an overview of which cards and themes Werkkaart consists of. The graphics on the board correspond with the eight categories, and there is also a designated place where the '*kanskaart*' can be put, to keep it in sight (figure 68).



Figure 68: The gameboard, with a designated place for all the categories

10.1 APPROACH OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation of Werkkaart consisted of four sessions with a municipal officer, newcomers and experts. The goals of these evaluations with Werkkaart are on different levels. Namely the usability, the experience and the effect when using Werkkaart. Does Werkkaart function the way I designed it, and do they use it as intended? Does it bring out the desired effect, namely talking about newcomers’ needs or underlying reasons for informal work? In addition, what is the participants’ overall experience when using Werkkaart? Moreover, based on the evaluation, does Werkkaart meet the earlier stated design principles?

Unfortunately, it was not possible to test Werkkaart in a ‘real’ conversation between a client manager or work consultant with a newcomer. Because municipal officers could not try this out with a newcomer on relatively short notice. Furthermore, if this were possible, I would not be able to be present in these conversations for privacy reasons. This is a limitation for testing the Werkkaart, which also affects the results of this evaluation.

10.2 METHOD OF THE EVALUATION

Subchapter 10.2.1 provides an overview of the different evaluations, followed by the set-up and data collection in 10.2.2.

10.2.1. Overview of the different evaluations

Four evaluations have been performed, each with a slightly different set-up and goal. Two tests have been done with the first prototype, shown in figure 69 and two with the second prototype, as presented in chapter 9. Table 1 shows an overview of the four evaluations.

The first prototype did not consist of a game board and a box yet. Furthermore, the manual was not fully worked out. Also, several cards have been changed after the tests with the first prototypes. Furthermore, the material of the first prototype was of a less high fidelity.

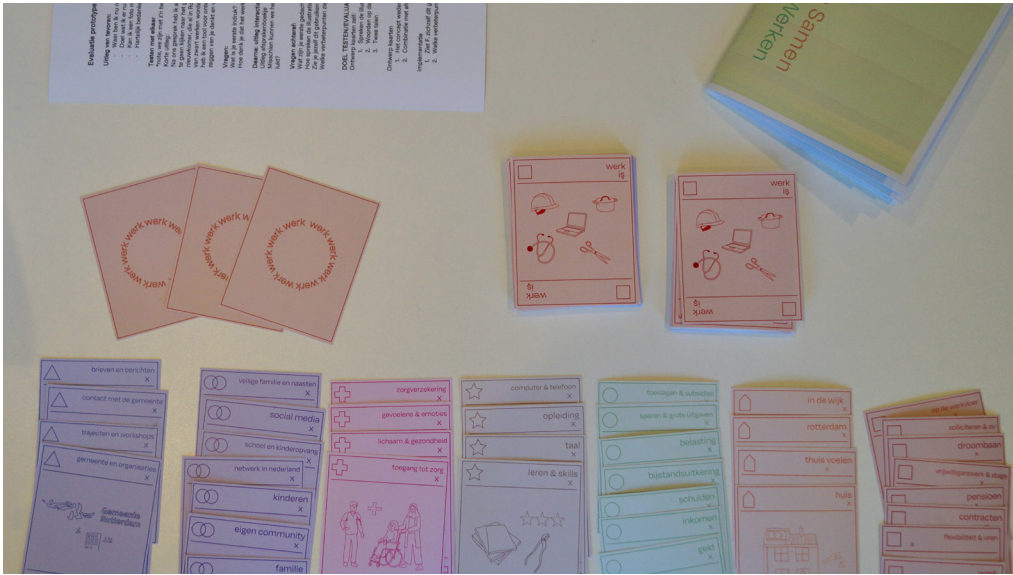


Figure 69: Werkkaart’s first prototype and test set-up.

Name	Goal of the evaluation	With who	Which prototype?	Method	Details in
1A	Municipality’s perspective: How does a municipal officer see this in their practice? What are their thoughts, recommendations and limitations?	1 municipal officer working in the executive department, also interviewed earlier in the project	First prototype, cards and appointment booklet	Having a conversation and evaluating Werkkaart	Appendix N
1B	Newcomers perspective: Testing Werkkaart with newcomers with experience with the municipality. How do they use Werkkaart? Does it evoke the desired effect? What is their experience in the test? In this test, the cards were tested without the ‘afsprakengids.’	5 newcomers with experience with the municipality @ Stichting Mano Rotterdam	First prototype, cards	Test with the use of roleplaying and evaluating ad reflecting afterwards	Appendix O
2A	Newcomers perspective: focus on the illustrations. Do the illustrations match the theme on the cards? How would they be interpreted by different newcomers?	1 newcomer who participated in test 1B @ Stichting Mano Rotterdam	Second prototype, as presented in chapter 9	Evaluating Werkkaart’s illustrations	Appendix P
2B	OpenEmbassy’s perspective: Testing Werkkaart with colleagues focussing on the interaction. How do they use Werkkaart? Does it evoke the desired effect? What is their experience in the test? Also, what do they think of Werkkaart and OpenEmbassy?	10 colleagues from OpenEmbassy, of which some also have a newcomers perspective or the perspective of guiding newcomers	Second prototype, as presented in chapter 9	Test with the use of roleplaying and evaluating and reflecting afterwards	Appendix Q

Table 1: Overview evaluations

10.3 RESULTS AND INSIGHTS FROM THE EVALUATIONS

10.2.2 Set-up and data collection

Different set-ups formed the four evaluations' base. The set-ups include points, such as time planning and questions for observations and reflections afterwards. Furthermore, to remember better what was said, voice recordings were made of these evaluations. The municipal officer was interviewed before, signed a consent form for the previous interview and was asked again if he agreed to record the evaluation session. The newcomers with lived experiences from Stichting Mano were asked for consent via a consent form (appendix B). I explained the consent form in detail, and others helped explain it in their own language. I recorded a video of this test (1B), which they gave consent for, directed at the table to ensure their face was not in the video.

The colleagues from OpenEmbassy were asked for their consent verbally before the recording started, and here I asked if it was okay to take pictures with or without their faces.

Details on the roleplaying set-up
Evaluations 1B and 2B used roleplaying to test the difference in conversations without and with Werkkaart. Two people enacted a newcomer and a municipal officer, based on the personas shown in chapter five. A connecting municipal persona was made per newcomer persona.
First, they had a conversation without Werkkaart; after that, they switched roles and had a conversation with Werkkaart. Before the second conversation, I asked them what they thought Werkkaart was without me explaining it to observe usability. Next, I explained Werkkaart and answered questions where needed. After the explanation, the participants switched roles and used Werkkaart in a conversation. Afterwards, I asked the participants about their experiences and observations.

This subchapter describes the results and insights per evaluation, and ends with concluding insights of the four evaluations together.

10.3.1 Evaluating with a municipal officer (1A)

Usability

Topics on the cards

It was clear to the municipal officer, without explaining how it worked first, that the prototypes were cards structuring the conversation. The municipal officer understood the themes and immediately stated that these were themes he all discussed, however not in every conversation all at once. Moreover, he connected without me purposely explaining that the prototype included themes concerning informal work, such as the cards 'tax' and 'contracts'.

The cards impose a frame

He also mentioned that Werkkaart can limit the conversation, because the cards impose a specific frame. Of course you can use the 'open cards,' but is this enough? It is a great tool to give structure, but it is also a specific structure.

It's a lot

When all the cards were on the table, he started categorising them. However, a first impression was also: it's a lot! We need some structure to organise them. After evaluation 1A and 1B a game board was made, to structure the cards.

Experience

Overall, he was enthusiastic about the cards and the design, however we also reflected on social work and tools. For example, even using a tool for conversation can be something social workers are not always open to.

"It's actually very calm this, that it actually gives structure. Maybe in my head I just make it too difficult. It's social work's thing to throw out everything new, people are very confident in their own abilities."
Municipal officer, evaluation 1A

Effect

Boundary conditions, trust and reciprocity

The municipal officer stated that he thought the cards would give the newcomer more ownership in the conversation, however, how can you make sure that this ownership will actually be there? We reflected on if the design needed some sort of boundary conditions to ensure this a bit more. The municipal officer expressed that it is definitely an attempt to give the newcomer more ownership, but as long as there is a power relationship and the relationship is not reciprocal, the ownership will always be with the municipality. However, it would be a bit different if the use case was different, for example, if the newcomer would bring this to the table instead of the municipality. So, he would say yes, it builds more trust, if the boundary condition of giving the newcomer more ownership is met.

"I think the great thing about this is that you give someone direction and autonomy in the conversation. I think I try very hard to do that already, but I think colleagues who do that less themselves, who are less aware of it, are surprised by this. Specifically for those status holders, who are less able to express themselves, less assertive."
Municipal officer, evaluation 1A

Bringing up a topic

When discussing the 'afsprakengids', and being able to think about what you want to discuss beforehand, the municipal officer stated that both sides always have a specific agenda. A question, a letter received, or something they need to discuss. However, bringing this up can be hard for the newcomer sometimes. For example, because they are nervous or do not dare to ask it out of respect. Thus, the 'afprakengids' could be a tool to do so already.

Limitations and recommendations

Missing some topics

He missed some topics, such as a card specifically for 'diploma' and one talking about what the newcomer deems as important. The latter can say a lot about newcomers' needs and thus guidance to work, according to the municipal officer. These two cards were added after this evaluation.

Culture sensitivity of the cards

On one card (see figure 70) I wrote down the letters ABC to indicate primary school, and this brought up the topic of culture sensitivity of the cards. This would be important

to iterate on, specifically with someone understanding the newcomers and municipal officers perspective.

It takes time

Using a new tool takes time, and this is especially hard to take when time is precious which is the case at the municipality. He reflected upon if therefore the municipality would be able to adapt a tool and take the time to actually implement it, or, if they would be too hesitant to do so. Thus, the effects should be clear and measurable to them.

"It takes time, and the question with the municipality is always whether you have that time. It's also quite often: people come to bring information and municipality comes to get information."
Municipal officer, evaluation 1A

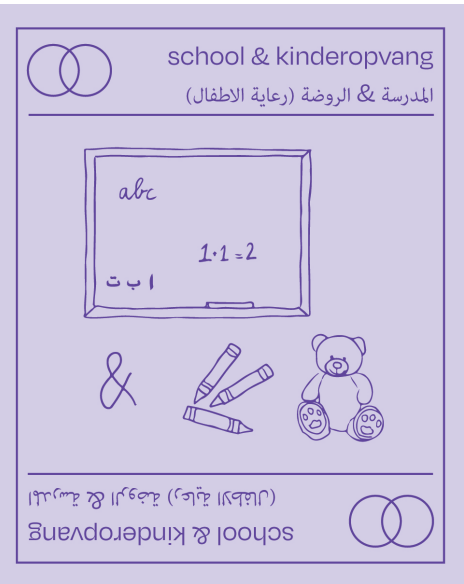


Figure 70: The card 'school & daycare'.

10.3.2 Testing with four newcomers (1B)

Usability

Overview and cards at home

After the test without the cards, it was clear that the cards needed some explanation before they were able to use them. Furthermore, they recognized how to categorise the card, but they had to take some time to look through them and get to know them.

After this test, together with the insight from evaluation 1A, the gameboard was developed to get more overview.

What do you mean with...?

Some questions were asked about specific cards during the roleplaying with Werkkaart. Such as, what do you mean with municipality and organisations? Also, how many cards can I pick? It was clear that a manual was needed to get some guidance here. The ‘how to use Werkkaart’ side of the guidance was partly iterated based on the insight made in this test.

Using a card to bring up a topic

Observing the two conversations, one without and one with Werkkaart, I noticed that with Werkkaart, the participants could use a card to bring up a topic while the ‘municipality participant’ was talking. The participant playing the municipality noticed this, and the ownership over the conversation changed towards the newcomer participant. Figure 71 shows a screenshot of the video during this moment.

Experience

First of all, the roleplaying itself was fun to do with the participants. It was easy for them to recognise the situations and there were a lot of giggles during the test. This made the atmosphere of the test comfortable. In addition, before and after the test, several participants told stories of themselves at the municipality and that they recognised topics very much. Afterwards, one participant asked if she could take the cards with her to use in conversations with the municipality or give them to friends to use.

“Is there a place where I can find the cards? I would like to use them in my appointment with the municipality!”
Participant, test 1B

Effect

Second language

When I explained that there would be a second language on the cards, the women participating in the rooms said this would be a big plus. Especially since, if you get someone to help translate, this is usually only the first or second meeting. Thus, they



Figure 71: Snippet from the video of the test 1B, she is using a card to ‘interrupt’ and bring up the topics on the cards again.

stated it would have helped them to express at least better which topic to bring up.

Remembering what you want to say

The card helped the participant role playing the newcomer persona to remember what she wanted to bring up. The cards physically lie in front of you, which can help to remember which topic you already thought about to bring up.

“While playing the newcomer persona, I recognised that the cards helped me to remember what I was planning on saying in the conversation. I recognise having this feeling of not remembering what to say at the municipality, so the cards would be great for this.”
Participant after using Werkkaart, evaluation 1B

More at ease, more ownership vs pretending everything is okay

During the test, I asked the participants who were not roleplaying to make some observations (figure 71). One of the observers wrote about the conversation where Werkkaart was used and that the participant playing the newcomer persona told her story at ease (figure 72, next page). This is also something I observed during the test. The persona she played worked informal for many reasons, but she mainly wanted to show that nothing was wrong in the conversation without the cards. With the work cards, she did pick cards for the underlying reasons: ‘language’ and ‘own community’ and told her story.

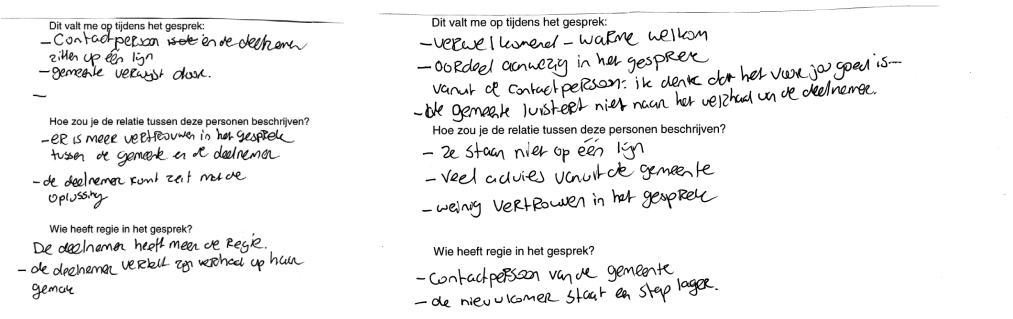


Figure 72: Observations on the two conversations, on the left without Werkkaart and on the right with Werkkaart.

Limitations and recommendations

A limitation was that I, unfortunately, heard at the start of the test that there was less time than planned after all and fewer people. As a result, I had to change the planning a bit on the spot and adjust it accordingly. In addition, the personas were too complicated and lengthy to read for some. On the other hand, the role-play itself went very well, and it was also fortunate that in between, several things could be translated by participants for each other. The second limitation was that the appointment guide was not tested in this evaluation due to limited time.

The test produced several recommendations, such as having a better overview of which cards you have and a visual instruction of how it works. These were iterated into the game board and manual, together with insights from test 1A.

10.3.3 Evaluating the illustrations from a newcomer perspective (2A)

The participant evaluated six cards during this evaluation. The chosen cards each had a different type of illustration: with people, objects, icons, a logo, text or letters.

Usability

Object out of context

From the usability point of view, the participant mentioned that an object in itself can be understood differently. For instance, I had chosen the card ‘debts’ to evaluate, and

she mentioned that she initially thought the picture showed a book, while I had drawn this as a wallet.

Not understanding the system

In addition, the card for applying for a job (see figure 73) visualises several different steps. Here, the participant indicated that she recognized the steps, as she understands how the system of applying for a job works in the Netherlands. However, if you do not understand this system, you see a letter, a computer and talking clouds.

Experience

Style of the drawings

The participant mentioned that the drawing style spoke to her and that the visuals helped to see what the topics meant. Especially since some words are difficult to find a direct translation for, here an illustration can support what is meant with the specific card.

Combination of the topic and illustration

When talking about a specific card, feeling at home (‘thuis voelen’), the conversation changed to diverse cultural meanings for words like home. She mentioned that for her in the Syrian culture, feeling at home means close family, food and safety. It does not matter where this is, the Netherlands or somewhere else. Thus, the illustration on the card would not fit that feeling for her. She understands the card but would not feel anything for it as the drawing is now. Figure 74 shows this specific card.

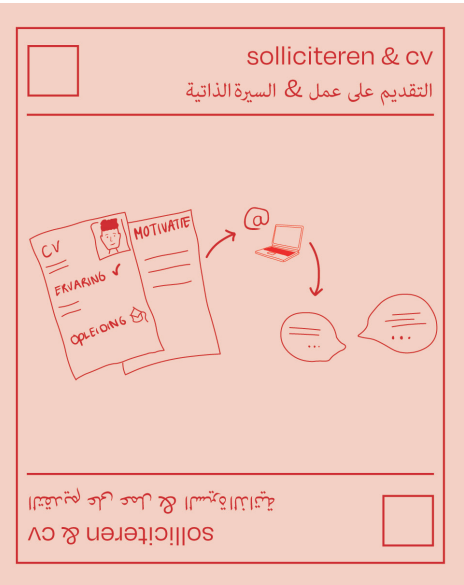


Figure 73: The card ‘solliciteren & cv’, which consists of different steps to show the application process.

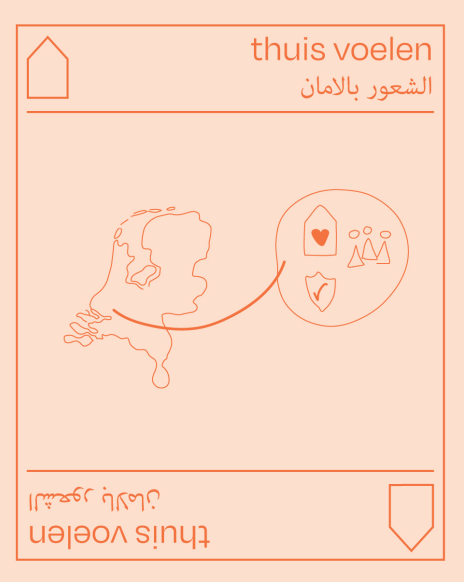


Figure 74: The card ‘thuis voelen’, with an illustration visualising the Netherlands with a line towards icons meaning ‘safety, home, people’.

Effect

What if the municipal officer brought cards like this into the conversation?
She mentioned that she thinks cards, especially when not looking like ‘something serious from the municipality’, would be helpful to reduce the stress in the conversation. Especially when the words are not too difficult, plus in their own language supported with a visual.

“Not every newcomer has a perfect conversation with the perfect outcome, sometimes they think we are robots that just understand and do what is expected from them”
Participant about conversation with a municipal officer, 2A

Limitations and recommendations

The evaluation provided several insights on how the illustrations work with the card’s topic and whether the illustrations are ‘understandable’. However, only six cards have now been discussed. A recommendation would be to test the illustrations with different newcomers more specifically. A limitation during this test was that I could only discuss the illustrations with one person, as the second participant could not make it.

10.3.4 Testing at OpenEmbassy (2B)

Usability

Different use of the gameboard
In one of the tests, the participants used the gameboard differently. I decided not to interfere here and see how this would affect the conversation. The participants indicated afterwards that putting the cards this way helped them get an overview of when to discuss what card and that the game board served as an ‘agenda’ reminder. This reflection connects to another test done with three other colleagues. A participant with the observer role noticed that she missed some kind of ‘template’ to place cards and decide on the agenda together. The figure on the right shows this different use.

“I missed a starting template for municipal officer and newcomer, where they first set their own agenda before starting the conversation.”
Observing participant, during test 2B

Manual & rules — it still needed some explanation on the details
After the participants shared their thoughts on the design and prototype, I explained Werkkaart in more detail. Here I noticed that the primary concept of the cards was clear, but the ‘connecting’ elements, such as the appointment guide and opportunity cards, needed more explanation. Furthermore, the game rule of, you can choose how many

cards you want, was unclear to participants. Some indicated afterwards that they would have preferred a set rule on how many cards one can pick to clarify this part. Similarly, I got questions about when the participants could pick a card. According to the rules, the newcomer starts picking cards, and the professional follows. However, it is also okay to adjust during the conversation if needed. Nevertheless, this confused participants, and I also observed that this affected the ownership of the conversation.

“Do I talk now, or do I choose now?”
Participant while using Werkkaart, during test 2B

Cards are visual and easy to understand
An overall observation I made was that the cards themselves were clear to the colleagues that tested Werkkaart. Furthermore, they appreciated the visual aspect. Nonetheless, the colours were not distinct enough for one of the participants. Especially the colours that looked too much alike: orange-red, blue-purple. He needed clarification about how to order them.

“It’s so visual, and I can understand what it means!”
Participant when observing Werkkaart, during test 2B



Figure 75: Participants using the game board differently. They put only several cards on the board, and layed the other cards out in front of them.

Experience

Role-playing was great to try out and also worked well here. I also noticed several colleagues had one or both sides of the experience. For example, I know well how some officials respond, always with ‘I already know’, or ‘yes but’, furthermore, how newcomers react to certain situations, like not hinting at what is actually happening. Similarly, during the conversations, they understood which themes were interesting to bring up and hence what cards to pick. Also, from the official’s side, I observed that some colleagues have experience in having conversations with newcomers to find out something and ask specific questions.

Effect

The number of cards per theme
A participant indicated that the number of cards per theme could indicate to the municipal officer that a theme with more cards is more important than another with fewer cards. In comparison, the strength is the variety of themes, as OpenEmbassy also stands for in the indicators of integration framework (2019).

“If the municipality person receives this game, and sees that ‘work’ and for example ‘relationships’ are thicker, more cards. Wouldn’t they think it is more important than ‘care’, unconditionally.”
Participant reflecting, 2B

Ownership changes during the conversation
After the discussion, four participants shared their observations via a questionnaire (appendix R). One insight here is that Werkkaart gives more room for ownership for the newcomer through the cards’ format. However, the municipal officer still has much influence in setting the agenda.

“I wouldn’t say ‘shared ownership’ because to me this conjures up the feeling that they also have the same interests, which is not always the case. I would rather say, that the direction kept changing and that the cards were a tool to take back the direction in the conversation (e.g. by asking ‘why did you put this card down’ or by putting something as a counter-reaction which again refers to the cards ‘that’s why I put this card down’).”
Observation shared by a participant in a questionnaire afterwards, 2B

The effect of power relationships
The balance of power always has a significant influence, even when using Werkkaart. Besides, the municipal officer is used to taking direction, so a participant in the questionnaire afterwards mentioned. Hence this is not likely to change. A participant

who played the newcomer persona reflected that he felt interrogated without the cards. Moreover, the same participant experienced the role of a municipal officer while using Werkkaart, as if he was given proper ‘permission’ through the cards to ask questions about that card to the newcomer.

“That I (in the role of the municipality) was more inclined to ask out of curiosity why someone put down certain cards. And that it’s easy to come back to that, so I noticed that I explicitly referred to the cards and pointed to them.”
Participant reflecting, 2B

Recommendations and limitations

The test with ten colleagues at OpenEmbassy resulted in several recommendations, such as the question of whether the physicality of the cards might actually reduce their accessibility. Since, a digital version could be cheaper, easily forwarded, and less likely to be lost. In addition, the question of how client managers can use Werkkaart for the new Civic Integration Act. Werkkaart could be interesting to be used during the broad intake (‘brede intake’ in Dutch, see chapter 4 for details on the new Civic Integration Act and chapter 5.3.1 for where the broad intake is in the newcomer journey). Also, the point mentioned in the observation under effect is the influence of power relations. This influence could be even more explicit, for instance, in additional material. The municipal officer can still strongly direct the conversation even with the cards.

It is essential to mention that OpenEmbassy’s participants are experts. This is valuable for insights but can also be a limitation. For instance, it is easier for them to understand what Werkkaart means with specific topics.

Werkkaart and OpenEmbassy

At the end of the test, I asked what Werkkaart can do for OpenEmbassy and how it relates to their work. In every test, the participants recognised the framework of OpenEmbassy (2019) and connected the cards to indicators of Strang et al. (2019).

Several colleagues also had ideas on other possibilities for Werkkaart within OpenEmbassy’s practice. For example, using Werkkaart during conversations with newcomers in Action Research (see 1.1.4). Or making it measurable, in line with a section of OpenEmbassy called ‘monitoring and evaluation’. An idea here was to measure which cards newcomers and professionals use during conversations. These numbers could yield interesting data to provide insights into newcomers’ needs in various conversations.

Figure 76: Observing participants making notes during the test (next page).



10.4 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Concluding, the evaluation was valuable with many takeaways. This subsection addresses the key ones, according to the usability, experience and effect. In the next chapter, 11.2 discusses the recommendations for Werkkaart.

Usability

The participants stated that they enjoyed the look-and-feel of the cards, and the multiple languages in combination with the illustrations.

However, many participants indicated that Werkkaast consists of many cards. The game board, a part of test 2B, gave more overview, but not always obvious how. The topics on the cards were clear, but some specific cards appeared too abstract for several participants, especially in test 1B, such as the car 'municipality and organisations'. Furthermore, the illustrations should be evaluated more if they are understandable with the topic of the card.

Experience

The participants were generally positive towards Werkkaart and recognised the feeling of having little ownership in the conversation from the newcomer's perspective. The roleplaying was successful and fun. Moreover, the topics were recognisable. Nevertheless, I noticed during the evaluation with the municipal officer (1A) that he also stressed that Werkaart takes time to book results, while time is precious for the municipality.

Effect

The physicality of the cards serves as a means to raise a topic and start or interrupt the conversation. Werkkaart can thus influence the direction of the conversation. However, because of the power relationship, it always remains with the municipal officer. Werkkaart can emphasise this more explicitly in explanations such as the manual.

Limitations

An overall limitation of the evaluation that I noticed, was the fact that the participants were not acquainted with the cards, while in reality Werkkaart would be used multiple times. Furthermore, I was present in the room to observe and explain the evaluation, which may influence the results and the comments people had.

11.1 CONCLUSION

Synthesising the project’s outcomes and looking back at the initial aim; *How can OpenEmbassy increase the accessibility to the formal labour market for newcomers while learning from the informal labour market in Rotterdam?* From the results of the evaluation of Werkkaart, I can conclude that the intervention argues for **a new way** of increasing accessibility towards the formal labour market. The learnings from the informal market are included in the design of the cards, and also the insight that it is impossible to talk directly about informal work. It is inaccessible for newcomers to do so with the municipality. Hence, the design rationale states that talking indirectly about informal work could be a way of doing so.

Nonetheless, the results in the evaluation of this project need to be researched more to claim if the aim is met. The discussions and recommendations in the next subchapters will elaborate more on the project results.

11.2 DISCUSSION: REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS

The process

The topic of informal work and newcomers is a complex problem (Snowden & Boone, 2007) that one can explore from many different perspectives. The project dove into various themes through different design and research methods.

The frameworks from Strang et al. (2019) and OpenEmbassy’s (2019) provided a base to fall back on and helped me reflect on the bigger picture of integration and inclusion in a new place. It is essential to guide newcomers to formal work, but that is only part of it. Furthermore, Williams typology (2014) enabled me to notice the current approach to tackling informal work in the Netherlands, especially in Rotterdam, from the nudges on the municipality’s website and the coalition agreement to the statements made by Rotterdammers on the street. What Rotterdammers state about informal work is not always in line with what the institutions propose. How can this gap be influenced, if this is even possible? Furthermore, this mental model influences the view on informal work, especially when coming from a place where the institutional system works differently, as many newcomers experience.

The interviews provided different perspectives on integration, the municipality, informal work, and, most importantly, the needs of newcomers. Additionally, the insights and contacts provided by OpenEmbassy were a big plus for the outcomes of this thesis. However, these many different insights also made it harder to keep seeing the common thread of the project through it. Everything is connected to everything, the stumbling block of a complex problem. Mapping the insights into journeys provided a visual connection. The driving forces continued to hold richness for me, providing insights into how everything is connected. However, making them concise was challenging, especially since I had to choose what was essential for the message to come across while, in my perspective, everything could be. Clustering them together into seven themes provided an overview.

Nevertheless, framing and formulating a design rationale was a puzzle. The interaction vision provided much guidance for me here. Moreover, the design rationale also steered the project towards the reason I started doing this project in the first place: talking about something you cannot talk about. That is interesting. Making the loop around it is where Werkkaart comes in.

The outcome

I intended to make Werkkaart with OpenEmbassy’s framework (2019) as the foundation. My colleagues at OpenEmbassy made the connection with the indicators, which is a desirable outcome of the evaluation. Furthermore, the participants who evaluated Werkkaart were generally positive about the intended effect. Mainly, I observed that the

physicality of the cards supported the mechanism of (taking back) ownership.

However, they were also sometimes sceptical and asked me the most relevant question: will the municipality use it? How feasible is the concept? And, how viable? Will it survive in the long term? Before that may be the case, there is much to be improved, which section 11.2 will elaborate further on in the format of recommendations. Nonetheless, as described in 1.3.2, the outcome of this project can be seen as an intervention in the system since it will not solve the initial problem (see figure 77).

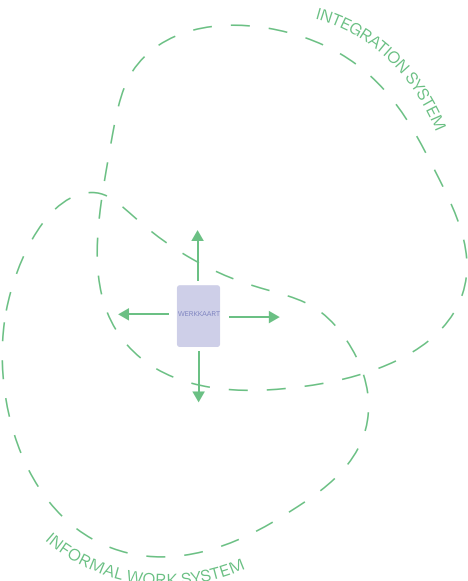


Figure 77: Werkkaart in the integration & informal work system

11.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation led to different recommendations, already partly discussed in chapter ten. This section will outline some of these suggestions for the future of Werkkaart. The first recommendation is researching how the gameboard, or a different element, can provide a better overview since the evaluation showed that it is a lot to take in at once. Furthermore, an iteration can be made on the topics and illustrations on the cards, specifically on the usability and culture-sensitivity aspects. This should be tested more vividly, for instance, with the support of various newcomer perspectives but also with experts. In addition, Werkkaart now consists of quite a lot of different cards, which can be more expensive to produce on a smaller scale. A recommendation would be here to research if a more compact version of Werkkaart can provide a lower cost and broader accessibility.

Another thing that can be improved is the so-called ‘rules of the game.’ The developed manual supported understanding the various elements and steps. However, it should be tested more on how Werkkaart can enhance structuring the agenda together more, for example, in the format of an agenda template and choosing a set amount of cards.

In addition, an evaluation of a more long-term use of Werkkaart. This evaluation can also provide quantitative and qualitative data, such as how many newcomers using Werkkaart go out of the social assistance benefit towards sustainable work compared to newcomers not using Werkkaart. In combination with involving the client managers and work consultants with the further development, to let them feel more ownership over Werkkaart and ensure it aligns with their practice. Both these recommendations would improve the feasibility and viability of Werkkaart and make its effect, if met, more convincing. Nonetheless, practical obstacles need to be overcome first, namely the time constraints and workload the municipality has, in combination with the alignment of the alderman and the city council.

Furthermore, OpenEmbassy can also test how Werkkaart could be fruitful in their other practices, as colleagues indicated during the evaluation. Such as using Werkkaart for action research and ‘monitoring and evaluation.’

Lastly, research if (elements of) Werkkaart can be included in components of the New Civic Integration Act, such as the broad intake (brede intake), a part of the PIP (Plan Inburgering en Participatie) and MAP (Module Arbeidsmarkt en Participatie).

11.4 DISCUSSION: REFLECTING ON THE IMPACT

In addition to reflecting on the process and posing recommendations, it is also necessary to reflect or philosophise on the possible long-term impact the project and intervention could make or have already made.

First of all, I have spoken to many people about this project, which may get them thinking about the topic, such as several municipal officers and social workers in the interviews. With this conversation, I may consciously or unconsciously influence their way of working, or mental model, towards guiding newcomers to formal work. The next time they assume someone works informally, they may want to use a different approach than the fines the municipality proposes. Similarly, to the newcomers I have spoken to, I showed them in a way that the municipality is also there to guide them and is interested in their needs. As the introduction (1.3.2) states, changing mental models has a significant leverage point (Meadows, 1999). Nevertheless, it is also close to impossible, and one can also consider whether it is ethical. Do I want to have that much influence on someone, especially concerning the sensitive topic of informal work and newcomers?

Werkkaart is an experiment in probing this system. The impact of the intervention can be more factual, as described in the last paragraph of the recommendations, by measuring what can be achieved with Werkkaart. However, designing is also about making educated guesses using abduction, as in the format of the design rationale (Dorst, 2011). You make the design and deduct its outcomes using reasoning and evaluations. Make a new prediction, act again and sense what it does in the world, causing the system and designer to learn again. The designer uses their learnings and proposes a new guess in the format of a design experiment using abduction again; however: the system is dynamic and not the same as the last time the experiment was done. This logic aligns with the philosopher Peirce, who uses a pragmatic approach towards reasoning (Douven, 2021).

This reasoning describes how I view Werkkaart and its impact: it is an experiment in a dynamic system that may influence some mental models. A way to do so is using the mechanism embodying alternatives. Vink et al. (2019) argue that this is a possible response to reshaping mental models in service design. For the evaluation of Werkkaart, I asked participants to roleplay a newcomer or municipal officer in the evaluations, which can give a new perspective on conversations between newcomers and municipal officers about work. A quote shown in the evaluation from a colleague illustrates embodying alternatives: *“That I (in the role of the municipality) was more inclined to ask out of curiosity why someone put down certain cards.”* The same participant reflected feeling *“interrogated”* when playing the newcomer without

Werkkaart.

In conclusion, I can not predict the actual impact of the project and Werkkaart. However, I can have some hope that the people who contributed to this project will reflect on their actions concerning the topic of this thesis.

“We can’t control systems or figure them out. But we can dance with them!”

Donella Meadows (2008, p. 170)

11.5 PERSONAL REFLECTION

Challenging topic

Where to intervene as a designer when there are policies and rules for everything? I had to dive deep into the context of the topic of this thesis and also found out that designing for public organisations involves many practical obstacles, which sometimes demotivated me. What can I really do? What is my function as a designer here? However, I was also in the outsider position and learned to forget a bit about the practicalities and try to develop a design that would inspire the different actors involved.

Making decisions

As a person, making decisions is not my strongest point. I want to know and consider it all; a blessing and a curse. What was the read thread in the project again? It made moving forward towards deciding on the design a difficult step. Furthermore, it also felt like a scary step: is this what I will do for my graduation? Talking to others about the struggles I had helped a lot in moving forward and sharpening ideas. When the ‘designing’ of Werkkaart started, I was back on track and found much joy in making all the different drawings and design details.

For further projects, I know for sure that I am not a lone wolf in design. For me, the fun is very much in coming up with ideas and discussing them with others. And keep reflecting on what the goal is for different decisions for projects. Is it really needed for this specific step, or is it just interesting?

Interviewing, discussing and evaluating

I enjoyed doing the different interviews and evaluations a lot in this project. I got most inspired at these moments, and they also made me realise what I was doing it for. Furthermore, it was always exciting to do. What do others think of this thing I made? It also stresses that the users and broader system are essential for design, in whatever project you are doing. Besides this notion, I am also grateful for all the participants who took the time to talk to me or evaluate my design.

OpenEmbassy

When I first walked through the office door, I remember feeling very welcome, and I immediately felt a part of the team. Next to the fact that I learned a lot from the work of all of my colleagues and OpenEmbassy’s mission, everyone was also very interested in what I was doing. I look back on it with a warm heart and feel very grateful for collaborating on this project with this fantastic company and group of people. Also, how they supported me with the project and all the other things happening besides it.



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ADDITIONAL IMAGE REFERENCES

Interaction vision:
Photos from the following authors on unsplash.com: @Rahadiansyah, @Bady abbas, @Viktor Bystrov

Drawings Werkkaart:
Some drawings of people in Werkkaart were based on references from freepik.com from the following authors: @pikisuperstar @rawpixel.com @upklyak @wayhomestudio @pch.vector

Driving forces:
The collages were made using the following photos from Unsplash
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