



## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This issue of Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies collects six research articles from the Nordic countries.

The first article *Reconceptualizing Job Control in Participatory Interventions – Collective Sensemaking as a Missing Link* authored by Esben Langager Olsen, Christian Dyrland Wählin-Jacobsen, and Johan Simonsen Abildgaard investigates the connection between participatory organizational-level interventions (POLIs) and job control. The literature on this topic leaves many uncertainties on the effectiveness of POLIs in increasing job control. Through a qualitative study of a POLI in a Danish pharmaceutical company, the authors focus on the collective sensemaking processes in relation to the POLI and demonstrate the intricate contingencies that appear as participants are engaged in sensemaking processes in arranged action-planning workshops. It is concluded that studying the link between POLIs and job control as a sensemaking process has advantages in highlighting the stable aspects of the job and the dynamic properties of the situations involved in enacting job control.

Next, we turn to Sigurveig H. Sigurðardóttir, and Ásta Snorradóttir's article *Older Women's Experiences in the Icelandic Workforce- Positive or Negative?* Here, the authors have interviewed seven women between the age of 57 and 74 years who all have at least 10 years working experience after they turned 40. Using a semi-structured qualitative interview design, the authors analyzed the empirical material through a narrative approach that led them identify different themes in the interviews. The findings of the study throw light on the intersection of gender inequality and ageism in the Icelandic labor market.

In *Unions' Conceptualizations of Members' Professional Interests and Influence in the Workplace*, Arnhild Bie-Drivdal reports on the role of Norwegian unions as agents of professional knowledge. Her study focuses on two unions of professionals and one general union in the Norwegian public sector, and included data from union documents, speeches, and interviews with 12 workplace representatives. By using a framework from institutional theory, she conceptualizes ideal types logics: a union logic that focus on rights, wages, and working conditions, and a professional association logic that forefront professional autonomy, ethics, methods, practice, and quality of services. But the study demonstrates how these logics are hybridized and integrated in a distinct but weakly conceptualized 'union of professionals logic' that is limited to unions of professionals and used as a strategy for gaining influence.

Minna Salminen-Karlsson's article *Women in the Steel Industry: Closed in Corners or Provided with Possibilities* brings us to Sweden to explore how ambitions to increase the number of women in the steel industry have impacted organizational settings in the male dominated industry. Based on interviews and workshops with 12 women working in researcher and managerial positions, the author explores how the female talent pool

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<sup>1</sup> You can find this text and its DOI at <https://tidsskrift.dk/njwls/index>.



is brought in play in the organizations. By illustrating different prevalent gender equality discourses, the author discusses how these affect women's real-life experiences of working in the industry. Even though more women have found employment in the industry, gender equality does not seem to have increased, as women's career paths are often very different from their male colleagues. To a large extent, the organizational environment determines how gender equality ambitions unfolds in the industry.

In her article *The Invisible Civil Servant: How Female Senior Lecturers in Sweden Narrate Work*, Erika Wall also focus on the experiences of Swedish women. By using a performative narrative approach, she analyzes four interviews with female senior lecturers employed at Swedish universities. The analysis detects three common storylines in the interviews that revile how the informants on a subjective level consider their role and positions within academia: 1) *I don't think of myself as a civil servant*, 2) *You have to keep a certain level*, and 3) *It's a solitary duty*. The stories told by the interviewees express the gendered experiences of the women, and demonstrate the absence of alignment with the increasing administrative and bureaucratic roles that university employees are supposed to perform.

The final article of this issue, *The Pursuit of the Source, or The Inevitability of Death*, by Mats Persson and Jan Ch. Karlsson examines how chains of reference in secondary sources in management research of the concept of 'resistance to change' eventually transform a theoretical position put forward in the primary source. By employing a Critical Realist Discourse Analysis approach, the authors trace the concept through four stages before they eventually find the original source in Küber-Ross' model of organizational change. Interestingly, the authors observe that the model is systematically misinterpreted in the light of predominant ideological discourses in management studies.

Anders Buch  
Editor-in-chief