



Introduction¹

This issue of Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies makes six new research articles available.

The first article of the issue is written by Marit Lensjø: *Grounded Theory Analysis of Work-based TVET and Intersectional Challenges Between Constriction Workers*. It explores the Norwegian technical vocational education and training (TVET) model that combines school-based education with work-based apprenticeship in authorized enterprises. Lensjø used an ethnographic approach that combined fieldwork and interviews with apprentices, plumbers, and a vocational teacher, and she paid specific attention to how plumbers and apprentices negotiated craft-centered work in workplaces that are increasingly dominated by labor migrants. Linsjø study detects a shift from master-apprentice traditions toward more instrumental forms of learning, and she observed signs of erosion of skilled work on the construction sites. These findings point to broader tensions in the construction industry between professional and democratic values, and neo-liberal values that emphasize efficiency and cost-effectiveness, which have consequences for the TVED-model in particular and skilled work more generally.

In *Existential Driving Forces to Work after Retirement: The Example of Physicians' Mentoring*, Mattias Bentsson and Marita Flisbäck are looking for the driving forces that motivate retired people, who do not need to work for economic reason, to continue working. Based on qualitative interviews with formally retired Swedish physicians who have continued work as group supervisors or mentors in a training program, Bentsson and Flisbäck explore and discuss the existential reasons the physicians give for continuing to engage in work. Besides having their professional experiences and identities recognized in the mentoring practices, the authors also point to the specific meaning-seeking phase of life of the retired physicians as significant to explain what drives the physicians. Handing over knowledge to the next generation of professionals signifies that the lived and appreciated practices of the physicians will go on after their eventual death. The authors stress that understanding the existential driving forces that cause individuals to continue working after retirement needs to be considered in policies meant to encourage an extended working life.

Olav Nygård explores the entries to the Swedish labor market in *Immigration Background and Differences in School-to-work Trajectories of Early School Leavers*. Studying population-level registry data of a cohort born in 1984 and 1985, he examines the trajectories of young people the first 10 years after compulsory school. Through sequence analysis, the study identifies four clusters of school-to-work trajectories: an exclusion trajectory, an education trajectory, a precarity trajectory, and a career trajectory. The majority of school leavers are not 'dropouts', but eventually returns to education and work. Still, many school leavers enter the precarity trajectory. Nygård's points to a number of structural factors to explain this such as informalization of the labor market, increasing

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

levels of general precariousness, and discrimination against migrants and women. Early school leavers thus face different prospects in the labor market depending on their backgrounds, parental resources, and gender.

In *Young Workers on Digital Labor Platforms: Uncovering the Double Autonomy Paradox*, Cæcilie Sloth Laursen and her colleagues study the experiences of young workers' working with online and location-based digital platforms in Denmark. Based on 12 qualitative interviews with Danish platform workers under the age of 30 years, they conceptualize the workers experiences through 'a double autonomy paradox': on the one hand, the young workers appreciate the autonomy and flexibility given by the digital platforms, but on the other hand, they also experience non-transparency, invisible management, and disorientation relating to the algorithmic management systems that leads to limited control over the work processes. The lack of control may negatively impact the well-being and potentially the health of the young workers.

Ann Cecilie Bergene and Ida Drange discuss union strategy and the socializing role of unions in *Social Class, Union Strategies, and Preference in Wage Outcomes in Norway*. Based on data from nationally representative survey sample of the Norwegian working population, Bergene and Drange examine the attitudes and preferences of the respondents in relation to wage inequality and wage bargaining. Although socioeconomic status is highly correlated with respondents' attitudes and preferences, the authors also find indications that union confederation membership is associated with the respondents' attitudes and preferences when the data is adjusted for social class and party-political preferences. This leads the authors to conclude that unions are not being structurally determined by their external context and a subsequent self-selected membership constituency, but that the unions possess agency in actively constructing and shaping the societal context and their own constituency. Unions thus play an important and active political role in society in shaping and supporting the redistributive welfare state.

In the last article of this issue, Katri Pöllänen takes us to Finland in *Organizational Culture and Masculinities in a Startup Company in Finland*. Through an organizational ethnography, her research explores the gendered practices of a startup company. In contrast to many traditional and well-established companies, Pöllänen describe the startup culture as informal, relaxed, and low in formal hierarchy. However, the informal organization of work was structured by gendered, masculine practices that served as a criterion for inclusion and exclusion. 'Locker room talk' and 'rambunctious humor' were abundant and underpinned the youthful and masculine image of the startup company.

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