



Introduction

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DOI

To be announced

This issue contains six articles and two commentaries. The scientific content and perspectives of the articles are presented in the abstracts of each article. Here, on the basis of my own subjective assessment, I will present some broader societal perspectives presented in the eight contributions.

I will start with Hansen, Lind, and Møller's commentary. All three authors have extensively studied Nordic labor market systems for decades. Based on a brief presentation of the Danish unemployment benefit system and the challenges facing this system, a proposal is presented for a new system that will be less bureaucratic, not only still giving unemployed support for getting into work, but also having certain similarities with current proposals for basic income, making a life without work an opportunity.

Grönlund presents in her article data that deeply question widespread ideas about what causes gender inequality at the labor market. There is a widespread assumption, both in scientific and in the wider public, that gender inequalities largely are related to women's own strategies at the labor market. Women are choosing to pursue skills and career strategies that allow for high priority of family responsibilities. By studying selected employment groups at the labor market, Grönlund can however document that women's career orientation does not differ from men's. Wages, and career development for women is not related to their family responsibilities. The difference in pay and career for men and women must therefore be found somewhere else than in women's family commitment.

The discussion about precarious working conditions, characterized by temporary employment conditions, has a prominent position in the public debate. Berglund, Håkonsson, Isidorsson and Alfonsson contribute to this debate, first by presenting how temporary employment has evolved in Sweden over a number of years. In addition, the relationship between temporary employment and later stable employment is analyzed over a long period of time. The authors find that the effect of temporary work on long-term employment depends on the types of temporary employment involved. Certain types of temporary employment thus seem to be used by the employer to screen the employability of the employee, while others are used for achieving flexibility.

The interest in reducing sickness absence has been high for decades, without very significant results. Liff, Eriksson and Wikström, who have studied practices for preventing sickness absence, contribute to the explanation of the modest results. They find that the top management's focus on statistics, procedures and formalities are limiting possibilities for using 'weak signals' in the prevention of work-related illnesses. Initiative against sick leave can, according to the authors, find inspiration in established crises management.



Rostad, Fridner, Sendén and Løvseth contribute to the established discussion about the effect of compensation for sickness for absenteeism (absent without being ill) with the financial costs this has for the workplace, and presenteeism (being present even when you are ill) with the unfortunate consequences this may have for the workplace and for the individual. The authors study how the extent of presenteeism varies by changing compensation for sick leave. The authors find that that prevalence of presenteeism was higher in countries with lower levels of paid sick leave.

Does redundancy in periods of recession have the consequence that the labor market will miss labor in the long run? Jolkkonen and her colleagues contribute to our knowledge in this area by using new methods to investigate the long-term employment consequences of redundancies, depending on the economic cycles. First, they find that for the vast majority of those fired during a recession, it is possible to find their trajectory back to stable employment. For those who do not succeed, age seems to be the key factor of explanation.

Work is a cornerstone of modern society, and changes in work were a key element in the ‘great transformation’ in the 19th century. For the three major classical sociologists, Marx, Durheim and Weber, changes in the world of work were essential for understanding modern world. Karlsson and Månson confidently confront the three’s understanding of work, and by that put the work of today into perspective.

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