Abstracts

Masculinity and Safety among EMTs and slaughterhouse workers

Ann-Dorte Christensen, Morten Kyed, Claus D. Hansen, Sune Qvotrup Jensen, Lotte Bloksgaard & Kent J. Nielsen

This article addresses the relation between masculinity and safety at work. The overall objective is to examine the relationship between masculinity and safety among men in the two industries characterized by a high accident ratio (Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and slaughterhouse workers). The research question is how masculinity – that is the ways of being a man – affects attitudes and practices related to risk and safety.

Terms such as 'The Tarzan- and John Wayne syndrome' are often used to refer to certain forms of masculinity associated with boldness, courage, physical strength and 'hardness'. These forms of masculinity are often described as 'traditional'. In this article, we ask how such traditional forms of masculinity may affect men's working environment through gender specific attitudes to safety and risk-taking? We also ask: How widespread such traditional ideals are, and whether they are challenged today by alternative ways of being a man? Finally, we ask: How are these alternative ideals expressed in the workplace culture?

Empirically, the article is based on two studies: Firstly, a quantitative survey among EMT's and slaughterhouse workers, which measures the prevalence of traditional masculinity ideals among men in the two sectors as well as the impact of these ideals on the men's safety behavior. Secondly, a qualitative analysis based on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with male EMTs in two major departments in Denmark. This part explores how EMTs construct new and alternative masculinities which allow them to work safely without jeopardizing their masculinity.

Based on these analyses, the article concludes by discussing the relationship between masculinity and safety practices as well as perspectives for future research in the field.

Learning environments, strategies for competence development and approaches to competence in care work

Maria Bennich

This article examines what learning environments and strategies for competence development look like in four specific areas of elder care, and analyses whether these factors influence the care staff's perceptions of competence. The analysis is based on theories related to care skills (in the form of factual, relationship and change competence), learning environments and strategies for competence development. That which differentiated the activities was the way of working with competence development. In the two studied activities in Linköping – a care home and a home-help unit – competence development work was based on a traditional view of how care staff could develop their competence. In the tra-

ditional view of competence development, the emphasis is on formal learning activities, i.e. internal or external courses as and when economic resources are available. In Haninge, the care home and the home-help unit had organised competence development training for care staff with the ambition of developing an integrated learning strategy, i.e. by combining formal and informal learning activities. The results of the study show that the conditions for learning environments differ depending on the type of work carried out. In the case of home-help services, the support and involvement of management was more central for skills development that in the care homes. At the same time, the results show that where there was a more developed learning environment and an integrated strategy for competence development, ideas about competence were much more advanced. Here the focus was on developing competence as well as changing the way of working. What was common to both activities was the ideas that care staff needs to develop relations with the users.

Front-line work in the delivery of Danish activation policies – and how governance, organizational and occupational contexts shape this
Dorte Caswell & Flemming Larsen

The nature of front-line work plays a crucial role for understanding what activation, welfare-to-work, work-first or social disciplining policies practically mean and how they affect the citizens subject to these policies. Front-line workers are simultaneously the ones implementing policy (agent of the state), transforming policies into practice (mediator of policies) as well as the ones having an important impact on the political nature of the services actually delivered (mediators of politics) (Brodkin 2013). This means that frontline work has to be interpreted in the interrelation with policy, governance, organizational and occupational contexts. This article analyses the development and current state of frontline work in Denmark where the active welfare state paradigm (or activation) has been incorporated in the employment and social policies. Firstly we give a historical account of the development of activation policies in Denmark and how governance, organizational and occupational contexts have both shaped and been shaped by this development. Secondly we focus on the nature of the frontline delivery of activation policies in Denmark using existing case study material. We present empirical examples of the nature of front-line work with a specific focus on the use of sanctions, exemplifying how frontline work is interrelated with governance, organization and occupational background. Finally we conclude with a short account of recent developments to trace whether a new development of frontline work is under way.

A triumph of the active man? An analysis of the changing ways of categorising social assistance recipients in Denmark
Mathias Herup Nielsen

This article analyses the *system of categorisation* currently used for describing and labelling social assistance recipients in Denmark as either qualified or not qualified for work. Rather than studying concrete situations, where 'clients' meet 'system', the article offers instead an analysis of how the classification system itself has profoundly changed its logic through the past decades. The 'old' categorisation system described the various problems and weaknesses of the unem-

ployed, whereas the 'new' system – deemed to be more "positive" and "optimistic" – is blind to such issues and describes only the various strengths and readiness of the unemployed. Thereby, the system of categorisation plays an important role in the public legitimisation of harsh new activation policy programs with politicians claiming that we ought to meet the able-bodied unemployed with strict demands.

Empirically the article describes this transformation of the categorisation system by drawing on an archive of relevant governance documents – first and foremost documents from Ministries directed at front workers and imposing them to categorise the unemployed according to certain logics. Theoretically the article is inspired by concepts from newer French pragmatic sociology. Of special importance is the concept of *the institution* as developed by Luc Boltanski. The concept makes visible how the categorisation system turns the unemployed individuals into a reality of manageable groups that can be grasped and handled by the political system.

Are assumptions in the Danish sickness benefit legislation supported by evidence?
Stella Mia Sieling-Monas & Thomas Bredgaard

Over the past decade public policy programs for citizens on sickness benefits has been expanded and intensified. The legislation now demands that municipalities initiate active, early and interdisciplinary unemployment programs aimed at enabling sickness benefit receivers to (re) enter the labor market. But to what extent are these legislative assumptions supported by research evidence? In the article we address that question by identifying the program theory assumptions in the legislation and by reviewing current Danish and international literature on the subject. We still lack systematic empirical evidence on what works for whom in active employment interventions for people on sickness benefits, although there are indications that early and company-based interventions has positive effects on employment and return to work.