



The human right to work: The tension between intrinsic and instrumental values in five teachers' stories from the industrial technology programme

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Abstract

In this article, we discuss a tension between the intrinsic and instrumental value in relation to work and human life. This tension is reflected in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which regards work as an intrinsic value for a human life, as well as in the (neo-liberal) labour market, that values work and workers for their instrumental ends. In the light of this tension, we analyse how five vocational teachers' life stories express it through descriptions of their experiences, decisions and teaching. The methodological starting point of our study is based on a narrative perspective, where vocational teachers' stories are at the centre. Our analytical tools are taken from Bamberg (1997), who discusses how people position themselves in their own stories. In light of four positions as outlined by Bamberg, we discuss three tensions: 1) The right to work as universal and under conditions at the same time, 2) Work as a place for belonging under the shadow that only profit counts, and 3) Performing a good job, while balancing professional pride and the concern for oneself. In our conclusions, we suggest that vocational teachers should provide their students with wider civic knowledge about their rights as well as about possible forms of influencing structures in the labour market that vocational teachers are in part preparing their students for.

Keywords: vocational teacher, human rights in VET, life stories, intrinsic and instrumental values, industrial technology programme



Introduction

The first paragraph of Article 23 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948) declares, 'Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment' (United Nations, 1948, § 23, 1). Countries that have ratified the UN Declaration of Human Rights commit themselves to taking these specified rights into account and applying them to everybody in every circumstance, indiscriminately. At the same time, however, work and working conditions are globally structured by the rules of a (neoliberal) labour market. With the aim of the (neoliberal) labour market ultimately geared towards profit, one consequence is a demand for industrial workers to offer their abilities in exchange for low salaries and efficient productivity. The incentives built into the neoliberal market's structures may, in many ways, collide with Article 23 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

In this article, we address this tension in the form of the question of how it might be possible to balance intrinsic and instrumental values. On the one hand the right to work is meant as a human right, i.e. as a right that someone possesses because they are a human being (intrinsic value). On the other hand, we work in certain professions, with certain tasks, and earn salaries due to specific abilities that we possess and have training in (instrumental value). In a similar way, we can apply intrinsic and instrumental value to work as a practice that has value in itself (a meaningful activity) and as a conduct that leads to certain ends (production, salary, profit) (Lindman, 2015).

Through the lens of the professional life stories of three Swedish and two Finnish vocational teachers, we analyse these tensions. We focus on the process in which they changed professions, from industrial workers to vocational teachers, and discuss how the balance between intrinsic and instrumental values in human life and work enter their life stories. In our concluding remarks, we suggest vocational education as a place to address these existential questions for future professionals.

The role of work in a human life

The declaration of universal and basic human rights is based on an idea of what a human life could and should be. Philosophers within an existentialistic approach, like Buber (2002), Heidegger (1996), Lévinas (1999) and Weil (1994) approach this subject from at least two perspectives. On the one hand, we need to have a place in the world; a place that is both a geographical place where we come from and live our lives, and an emotional place of belonging and of feeling at home. On the other hand, a human life is a life together with others in a dialogical way. It is only together with others that we develop and experience our own uniqueness and can pose questions that express our thoughts on the meaning of our existence.

From here it can be argued that there is a need for a place to be, and a need for meaningful interaction with others, and that these are also central aspects concerning both a person's personal and professional life (Schaffar, 2017). The Medieval craft and trade guilds could be regarded as examples that intimately combined the home, family and work, and offered a professional, economic and social-emotional place (Benner, 1995). In such close professional relationships, the question of a person's right to work, just conditions of work, and protection against unemployment, were not posed in the same way as they are in today's industrial and post-industrial societies, where it is crucial to discuss the role of work in human life. Here, especially in Western welfare states, a fight of interests has taken place between employers and unions to guarantee human working conditions, regulations for injuries, and the possible inabilities in relation to injuries and one's ability to work. After the Second World War, the UN Declaration specified these rights in the following way:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (United Nations, 1948, § 25, 1)

There is a link between the way in which a society's working life is structured and vocational education, e.g. the way the next generation of professionals will be fostered into the written and unwritten professional rules (see e.g. Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen, 1995; Vähäsantanen, Saarinen & Eteläpelto, 2009; Woods, Lievens, De Fruyt & Wille, 2013). The teaching of a profession includes what kinds of expectations a student develops for their own private and working life, the working conditions that they will face and the plans that they will be able to develop for a meaningful life. In this respect, the UN Declaration of Human Rights also stresses the right to education (United Nations, 1948, § 26, 1), i.e., an education that explicitly 'shall be directed to the full development of the human personality' (United Nations, 1948, § 26, 2). As a consequence, the Swedish and Finnish policy documents about education in general, and about vocational educational programmes in particular, are based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

The responsibility to fulfil the right to work

The Declaration of Human Rights describes high ideals for a society's working life. There are at least four actors that bear responsibility for striving towards these standards, and for fulfilling them as extensively as possible:

1) Private or public employers create and provide work tasks to be completed, and have the means to shape the conditions for meaningful work (cf. Miller & Glassner, 1997). In most countries, it is the employer's duty to protect the employees' social and economic security, and to create development opportunities

for them. The ethical dilemma between intrinsic and instrumental values for employers lies in providing work tasks that do not only use the employee as an instrument to carry out tasks, but in addition, at least in the private sector, that create value from the work that is done. It is necessary to note that private employers have not signed the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Nevertheless, they operate in political and legal realms that fall under the Declaration of Human Rights. When industrial employers move their production to countries that have less control of workers' conditions, this can be seen as a way of escaping from the responsibility of offering work and conditions that are in line with the Declaration of Human Rights.

2) The responsibility to fulfil the right to work falls on the employee, whose professional competences should undergo continuous development for the employee to stay attractive on the labour market. The notion of lifelong learning has become a key concept in this discussion over the past 40 years. While the idea of a continuous striving towards the person's fulfilment as a human being has been associated with the history of education and is hence nothing new (cf. the continental notion of *Bildung*, e.g. Benner 1995), lifelong learning is much more of an instrumental concept (Biesta, 2010). It is less about the human being herself (intrinsic), but rather about how the individual can and should adapt to the changing demands on the labour market (Bathmaker, 2001). In this respect, it becomes the individuals' responsibility to fulfil their own right to work and to maintain employment.

3) The education system is central when it comes to fulfilling the demands from the Declaration on Human Rights. Through education, students are expected to gain the appropriate tools for their professional lives, in order to be able to obtain future employment. In national and international research on vocational education, it is often assumed that vocational education should lead to employment (Fejes, 2009; Hiim, 2013; Johansson, 2009). On the surface, this can be understood as an instrumental end, but in order to become and remain employable professionals, the knowledge that vocational students need to learn includes both concrete knowledge of the profession, and knowledge of how a professional worker should behave in the workplace (Hiim, 2013; Lindberg, 2003), which can be understood as an insight into the intrinsic value of work. That is to say, vocational education should lead to prominent professional identities for the vocational students, in which they also embrace occupational norms (Hiim, 2013). The notion of an occupational identity as a professional worker, and the motivation to cope with vocational education studies are considered, for example, by Hiim (2013) and Johansson (2009) as well as Tuomi-Gröhn, Engeström, and Young (2003), to be contributing factors for the employment of vocational students after their education. Vocational teachers play a central role. They can motivate their students for vocational education by showing them an interest in the profession,

e.g. through the vocational teachers' own professional experiences of working life (Asghari, 2014; Asghari & Kilbrink, 2018).

4) The right to work and to provide security from unemployment falls in the realm of the political system. The task of governments is to structure and enable the collective life of all citizens, which involves providing economic structures that, on the one hand, enable work opportunities and, on the other hand, ensure good human working conditions. During the past 30 years, it has been argued that the political discourse has changed. While earlier, politicians claimed that governments are responsible for creating work opportunities, today's discourse expresses the government's task as enabling the citizens to become employable via more or less publicly financed education programmes (Allais, 2014).

These four actors are intimately intertwined, and the responsibility for fulfilling the human right to work, as well as for providing human working conditions and security from unemployment, is based on an ongoing discussion between these actors, where different interests pull against each other, in an attempt to influence the discourse. The latest developments show that global actors from the labour market are increasingly influencing both the national political and educational systems (Allais, 2014; Jørgensen, 2018; Wahlström, 2015).

Purpose and research question

Considering both the high ideal of the Declaration of Human Rights, and these different responsibilities and interests to fulfil them, our question is how vocational teachers act in this field of force. To answer this question, we analyse life story interviews with vocational teachers. A life consists of many stories (Pérez Prieto, 2006), and our focus in this article is on the professional experiences expressed by those interviewed, as industrial workers and as vocational teachers.

In our sample, we chose five stories according to the following characteristics: The vocational teacher left their industrial profession and chose an alternative career as a vocational teacher. It was important for us that the change of career was experienced as the solution to a professional crisis. The teachers might be satisfied with their occupational situation now, but being a teacher was not their initial work/life-choice. This focus in our sample enables us to analyse the tension between intrinsic and instrumental values in work and in human beings, as their professional experiences can be understood as a part of the reality of working life, where industrial workers, due to occupational injuries and working conditions, are forced to change their professional career. Our research is based on questions on how ambitious professionals experience the dilemma of not being able to work with tasks that give meaning to their life on one hand, and how they, as teachers, aim to transfer their knowledge to the next generation of professionals who risk experiencing the same crisis throughout their professional career. To this end, our research questions are:

1. What positions are prominent in the vocational teachers' stories on vocational education, working life and vocational teaching?
2. How does the tension between intrinsic and instrumental values emerge in the teachers' life stories and their positioning?

Methodological framework

Our study is based on a narrative perspective in which the vocational teachers' stories are at the centre (cf. Mishler, 1999). The Swedish teachers have been called Henry, Leif and Anna, and the Finnish teachers have been called Kent and Ulf in this study. The vocational teachers' stories can be understood as both a theoretical framework, and a methodological framework. The theoretical framework concerns the understanding of what the vocational teachers express during their interviews. Based on a social constructionist perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), we mean that vocational teachers, through narrative, and in interaction with the interviewer, create meaningful perceptions of themselves and their own world (cf. Mishler, 1999). The teachers highlight, throughout the interviews, what they consider relevant for the interviewer and/or what they think that the interviewer wants to hear (ibid.). When vocational teachers talk about vocational education, working life and vocational teaching, they look back on the life they have already lived, and on the occasions that they met and taught their students (cf. Bruner, 1986). In the narrative, they reflect on their experiences (cf. Freeman, 2010), and during their interactions with the interviewer, they construct their stories based on the interview situation (Asghari, 2014; Pérez Prieto, 2006).

The methodological framework (in the article, and the basis for our research) is a narrative approach. Anna, Henry and Leif have been part of a larger study on vocational teachers' life stories, including experiences from their professional careers, concerning teaching between 2009 and 2014 in Sweden (Asghari, 2014). All the interviews with the Swedish vocational teachers were conducted at the vocational teachers' schools, where they were recorded with a dictaphone, and the interviews were transcribed immediately after the sessions. Kent and Ulf belong to the Swedish-speaking population of Finland. They were Schaffar's students in 2016 and wrote about their previous life experiences in narrative form. Kent's and Ulf's written stories, as well as Henry's, Leif's and Anna's transcribed interviews, were analysed based on Bamberg's (1997) three levels of positioning, as described below.

Analysis of the vocational teachers' stories

According to Bamberg (1997), there are three different levels of positioning: 1) narrators positioning themselves in relation to other individuals and/or characters in the events described during the conversation, 2) narrators positioning

themselves in relation to the audience in the interview situation where the conversation takes place, and 3) narrators positioning themselves in relation to themselves. This means the conversation is used to claim truths about the interviewees that go beyond the interview situation. In our case, we use Bamberg's analytical tool to study the relationship between the characters, to see what intrigue it causes. More specifically, we use Bamberg's first level of positioning to study how vocational teachers position themselves in relation to other individuals and/or characters in the events described during the conversation. Based on Perrino (2015), we assume that when the teachers position themselves in relation to other individuals and/or characters, it means that they also position themselves in different times and spaces in their stories. The vocational teachers draw upon their experiences of past times, relate them to the present, and with what can happen in the future. In this way, they create relationships between different events in different times and spaces and construct their stories (cf. Ricoeur, 1991). Our analysis focuses on how the tension between intrinsic and instrumental values in work and human life is incorporated in the teachers' stories and positions, and how this might shape different professional ethical dilemmas.

Vocational teachers, their stories and positions

In our analysis, and in response to the first research question, we found four positions that we will present together with the five teachers' life stories. The teachers position themselves as 1) a dejected worker in relation to uncomfortable workshop work, 2) a good worker in relation to other friendly, helpful and loyal workshop workers, 3) an underestimated worker in relation to unsympathetic employer relations, and 4) a loyal industry worker in relation to a creditable industrial technical education.

A dejected worker in relation to uncomfortable workshop work

Henry is a 55-year-old Swedish industrial teacher who moved from an English-speaking country to Sweden when he was 26 years old. Henry was trained as a welder through a labour market educational programme in Sweden, before beginning work as a welder in a small industrial company in a big city in Sweden. Henry explains that for the 18 years he worked at the company, they were between 10 and 15 welders and 3 to 5 officials. In addition, there were 2 managers who owned the company. Henry says that all workshop workers in the company also worked with other work tasks, such as turning, milling and assembly if needed.

It was a varied work and it wasn't always bad, but as the years went by I thought I couldn't handle it, it was heavy work. I was then 44 years old and thought; I can handle the workload for a few more years, but then what? There was nothing that I could possibly do after the age of 50. I had started to feel pain in my body, and

what really kept me at work was my welder friends. We had very good contact with each other and we met outside of work, but the problem was the employer. The employer didn't have anything else to offer, and then I started thinking about changing jobs because there were no other options.

A similar positioning and change in life emerge from Kent's story. Kent is a middle-aged man who belongs to the Swedish-speaking population of Finland. He is a vocational teacher at the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning programme (HVAC) who has a technical education and work experience as a plumber for over 20 years. Kent says that he worked in a few different companies before he stepped into the teaching profession in Finland. In relation to his workplace, Kent says:

I worked as a plumber at a sailboat factory in 2000 and worked there for four years, but because of a knee injury that I have had since 1997, I stopped working at the factory. It was very tough on the knees on the boats, even though they are large, 30–40 meters long boats, they are still cramped inside. Later, I changed my job to a 'regular' company in the plumbing industry. [...] Unfortunately, the accident occurred again in 2008, and I had a series of knee operations and rehabilitation and retraining to become the group leader in the company.

Even Anna, a 37-year-old Swedish vocational teacher, who now teaches at the Electricity and Energy programme, had to leave her profession due to an injury that was caused by her work tasks. She worked as an electrician at an international installation company, with expertise in electricity, heating and sanitation, ventilation and automation, for 10 years, before she moved to the teaching profession. Anna says:

When I worked as an electrician, I was very comfortable with that profession, but I started to experience problems with my hands, I had a high workload, but tried to cope, but then I had muscle inflammation, my arms were inflamed. I worked as a cable carrier and I always kept my arms up, it was monotonous. It started to hurt and become a problem. [...] I felt pain in my arms. I sought medical treatment, and then the doctor told me that I had to change the work tasks and not to have my arms up, but when I told my boss what the doctor said, my boss answered; No, unfortunately, I only have this work, I can't help you.

Unlike Henry, Kent and Ann, the fourth and fifth teachers in our study, Ulf and Leif, mention several structural problems and changes in their companies that finally led to their decision to leave their profession. Ulf, a middle-aged tinsmith and welding teacher from the Swedish-speaking population of Finland, says he had various welding and metal work at various companies in Finland before he stepped into the teaching profession.

I led and organised Finnish and Swedish vocational workers during economic bad times. After 2004 when the new factory was completed, it was very challenging with mass dismissals, new approaches, a new payroll system and a new maintenance programme that would be put into use. The dismissals caused the morale to sink. The workers' absence increased and we were worried, what would happen to those of us who had to keep working? The new payroll system required you to be competent in several areas, and to handle several different tasks in order to have

top wages. The new data maintenance programme required several days of training per person.

Finally, Leif, a 53-year-old Swedish lathe teacher, worked until the age of 33 as a lathe worker for a multinational industrial company that produced industrial tools and equipment, and positions himself as a dejected worker in relation to uncomfortable workshop work. The heavy lathe work caused Leif bodily pain. But he also emphasised that the whole work situation was tiresome, which led to Leif changing jobs from lathe work to lathe teaching. He says that:

... the working hours weren't suitable for those of us who had families and young children at home. The wages weren't that high compared to other industries. There weren't many career opportunities either.

A good worker in relation to other friendly, helpful and loyal workshop workers

Henry positions himself as part of a strong and family-like working community. He describes how he, despite his pain, continued to work a little longer, due to the good relationships he had formed with his welder friends. Likewise, Leif highlights the importance of the good relationships he and his colleagues had in their company:

We, workshop workers at the company, we had a friendship relationship, a good way to communicate with each other. We helped each other. We didn't wait until someone said; you, come and help me. It was just good manners to help out. I help you, you help me. We were a team and everything was teamwork.

Despite his critique of the working conditions at his company, Leif emphasises the workers' joint commitment to each other and to the company.

We had a bigger perspective, we wanted a job to go to tomorrow. It was important to be a good lathe worker, and it was important to be able to produce right from the start. Focus was always on producing right, producing right and producing right. We did our best to do well for the company.

An underestimated worker in relation to unsympathetic employer relations

In the relation to their companies and employers, some of the teachers in our study position themselves as underestimated, while the employer is described as unsympathetic. Anna, for example, says that she 'was very comfortable' with her profession, but that she had a high workload that she tried to cope with. However, when she got muscle inflammation in her hands and wanted to change work tasks, in line with the doctor's recommendation, the employer told her that they had no other tasks and could not help her. Henry expressed a similar experience concerning his employer, who could not offer other working tasks when he was not able to conduct his ordinary duties due to the pain his work caused him.

Anna mentions that there were also other problems concerning the company and the employer's relation to the staff.

The company made a loss and they [employer] thought we [the staff] were the problem, that we had high salaries. They wanted to move the company from Sweden to cheaper countries, and then I began to think about what jobs are available for me, what I can work with, but still related to electricity and electronics. Then I thought; but teaching is probably not a bad idea, and it was good that I did it because a year later, they moved the company to Poland.

In a similar way, Leif says that he and other workshop workers did their best for the industrial company. However, in Leif's experience the employer did not listen to the workshop workers when they made suggestions on how to improve their tiresome work situations.

A loyal industry worker in relation to a creditable industrial technical education

Finally, the teachers in our study tell how they became interested in the opportunity to teach. Here, they position themselves as loyal industry workers in relation to a creditable industrial technical education.

Henry e.g. tells that he saw an advertisement in the newspaper one day that an upper secondary school needed a welding teacher. He applied for the job and he got it. Henry has been working as a welding teacher for 11 years at the time of the interview, and teaches all the welding courses at the Industrial Technology programme in Sweden. He emphasises that his goal is to be there for his students, because:

It is very important for me that my students will become employable, and that is also the goal of vocational education. They choose a vocational education to get jobs after the education, but at the same time, it is a fact that work in the industry goes up and down, sometimes there's plenty of work and then they hire people, sometimes not, and then they fire people. Then it is important that our students have such a good welding knowledge that they can get work elsewhere, even internationally, if the industry in Sweden goes down and they are dismissed.

Kent has been working as an HVAC teacher for five years now and enrolled in the teacher training programme a year before the interview. He says that he was contacted in 2012 by a local HVAC teacher who asked him if he wanted to become a vocational teacher at a vocational school. He accepted the offer, and describes what he considers important in his teaching:

Interaction with the industry is one of the things that is rewarding and interesting. [...] Students will learn heating systems, water systems, ventilation systems and drainage systems. All these systems should be linked to all the different points in a property. [...] Now, customer service has also come to play a greater role for the customer. [...] For example, a customer calls because of water damage in his house, the kitchen, the living room and a bedroom is damaged. Professionals come to the house from different professional sectors. They are damage reviewers from the insurance company, moisture meter professionals, electricians, builders, plumbers, Building Drying companies, planners. All these professionals have a meeting for

an hour in the house, and then they rush to the next job. [...] There is a lot of work to do there. I myself have been one of those professionals. I came into contact with customers who made me open my eyes for the customers' needs and the customers' questions. I usually address this problem with the students and we discuss the phenomenon.

Anna says that it is very important for her that companies are satisfied with the students who she has trained.

I want them to say yes, they are Anna's students who work with us and they are very good, take responsibility, and do their best. [...]. I want a really good education for them [my students]. I want a quality education, so I require a lot [of the students]. Every Thursday I also meet the programme council [representatives from the companies that have contact with the school], and then we discuss what the students should learn and what skills the companies need.

In Leif's story, the importance of employability, both for himself and for his students, emerges. Leif says he trained as a lathe worker because he wanted a job. Likewise, his goal is now to help his students become employable.

That is why much of my aim is about teaching my students code of conduct. For example, I say to them; If I've said I'm coming in, then I'll come in. Because the boss expects these products to be delivered to the customers. If I fail to show up at work and don't inform the boss, he doesn't know it. Then he can never put another guy in my place either. So, there is a responsibility for everyone to communicate. That is why I want them to understand the importance of honesty and tangibility if they want to become employable.

Having good relations with both students and the industry is important for Ulf, too. He has been working as a teacher since 2012 and says:

I'm an organised person. I want things to be in order, especially in the workshop and also at home. [...] I have studied metal at a vocational school, worked as a tinsmith, installer, and group leader and now as a teacher, so I think I know how it feels to be in this industry. [...] With over 30 years of experiences in the metal industry, I feel confident about it; materials science, welding, tinsmithing, machining, occupational safety, hot work, reading plans; and I'm good at catching up with the students who need some extra help from me.

With these life-stories, structured along four narrative positions, we then turn to answering our second research question, analysing the tension between intrinsic and instrumental values in respect to three aspects in the teachers' respective experiences.

Three tensions between intrinsic and instrumental values

In our analysis, we discuss three conflicting aspects of the teachers' life stories. 1) There is a tension involved in stating the right to work as a universal right, as stated in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the insight that this right only applies under the condition that a person owns specific abilities and competences. 2) Work is a place for meaningful relationships in a person's life, yet these

relationships are overshadowed by the realisation that it is not these relationships, but the company's profit, that the company is concerned with in the end. 3) And finally, the aim of performing a good job as an expression of a professional's dedication and the insight that the professional must be responsible for their own wellbeing, too.

The right to work as universal and under conditions at the same time

As quoted above, the UN Declaration of Human Rights declares in § 23 that 'Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.' This right applies to every person because of their own value as a human being. Still, as we have shown through the narratives of our five interviewees, not everybody is able to perform every profession – or able to continue to perform a profession one was once able to – and that several working tasks should not be performed by just anybody, as special training is required. The result is that the right to work pertains to every person as a universal right (intrinsic value of human beings), although it applies under restrictive conditions (instrumental value). In order to hold a job, or to be allowed to perform certain tasks, an individual is required to undergo professional training in which they have to give proof of being competent for the working-tasks in question. Also, they must be physically able to continue their working tasks after training. It is not the human being as such, but the employable human being that the labour market demands.

Although this point seems obvious, the teachers' stories show that this insight can be experienced as a crisis in an individual's life. The teachers in our study were all well-trained, dedicated and appreciated professionals in their industries. Based on their stories, it was important for them to have employment, a cooperative and friendly workplace, and meaningful tasks. In Leif's story, his loyalty to the industrial company he worked in shines through; he wanted to have 'a job to go to tomorrow'. But over the years, when the heavy work affected Leif's, Henry's, Anna's and Kent's health, and their bodies began to suffer from pains and injuries, the management of the industrial companies could not offer them other duties. If Henry, Leif, Anna and Kent had continued to work as workshop workers, it would have been likely that they eventually had been on long-term sick leave, through serious, potentially lifelong, bodily damage. In Ulf's case, it was rather the work situation in relation to the threat/risk of dismissals that caused reduced workplace morale and uncertain future employment possibilities for him and his colleagues in the industry.

In these stories, the industrial workers were faced with the risk of unemployment, although they were perceived to be competent and successful to begin with. Their bodily limitations in the continuously tiresome work situation and the economic stagnation in the industry, respectively, brought the tension between intrinsic and instrumental values to the surface. As human beings, they

should be treated as having value in themselves, but instead, they came to see their own value as instrumental, due to their abilities. It is what the person can do for the company, not the person as a human being, that is valued by the employer. What we can see from the stories that we have focused on is that the teachers express, in part, strong disappointment concerning the companies that they were working for. Still, the teachers do not expect the companies to act in a different way. The crisis is not experienced as a betrayal, as would be the case when someone is ignoring and neglecting a person's intrinsic value. The teachers accepted their situations when they developed health problems, and they started considering unemployment, and possible ways to avoid it.

From the stories that the five teachers in this study told, we see that, as employees, they ultimately took responsibility in maintaining their employability, and thus engaged in new careers when their current careers were no longer feasible. This is obvious in the light of mutual political agreement between employers and employees in the Nordic welfare countries. The social security and labour systems balance the costs of unemployment, and of further adult education, via taxes (Arbetsmarknadsekonomiska rådet, 2018). Both the companies and employees can rely on the public educational system in Finland and Sweden to provide employees at risk of unemployment with an adequate educational opportunity to regain employability at a low expense, in the cases presented here, as re-education as teachers. In the Nordic countries, it can be seen that the responsibility to fulfil the human right to work is still balanced between the four actors that we presented above: 1) employees, 2) employers, 3) the political system, and 4) the educational system. Still, faced with increasing pressure from private employers to lower public system taxes, while at the same time gaining from the public social and educational system, it can be seen that the costs and profits are less and less shared equally, and are in favour of private sectors (cf. Jørgensen, 2018).

Work as a place for belonging under the shadow that only profit counts

Above, we described work as an existential part of a meaningful human life. The life stories of the five teachers bear witness to this, too. Their work in the industry has been an important part, not only for the instrumental ends of work (e.g. a regular income), but also as part of their private life. Both Henry's and Leif's work has been a central part in their own and their families' social relations, and for Henry, it was hard to realise that he had to choose between his health, and the friendships that he experienced at his work. Based on the vocational teachers' positioning as a good worker in relation to other friendly, helpful and loyal workshop workers, we see that good relationships between workshop workers is central to a satisfactory working life. Likewise, in the stories of Anna, Ulf and Leif, it is apparent that straining relations between the staff and the management, as well

as between colleagues, can lead to exhausting working conditions that can eventually cause one to decide to change jobs. Another factor that can affect employees' working conditions is for example if a company decides to move their production abroad, as in Anna's case.

The tension that we want to highlight here is not only the individual tragedy that is implied when important relationships end due to different external problems (injuries, economic decisions, conflicts etc.). Rather, a friendly atmosphere at the workplace is necessary for delivering results of good quality. Leif's disappointment with his former workplace expresses not only a sadness over the fact that he risks losing the friendship with his colleagues, but also an irritation directed towards the management. He contrasts the statement that 'we did our best to do well for the company' with his critique that 'there were many managers, and above all, they didn't listen to us workers'. These statements express an asymmetry in how good relations at the workplaces are valued. While it is considered a key condition for a company's performance to value good relationships in their working environment, these relationships are still only seen as having an instrumental value for the companies, at least as it was experienced by the industrial workers in our study. Yet for the workers in the company, it is clear that some of the relations have intrinsic value in their lives. In Leif's and partly in Anna's case, the team even made suggestions to the management, for how to improve the performance of the company. These suggestions were based on their high level of collegial cooperation, but in their cases, due to reasons that we do not have data about in our study, the management was not able – or was unwilling – to consider these suggestions. The company in Anna's case was moved to another country, and Leif quit his job. While good working relations between colleagues are central for a company's performance, ultimately, only measurable (instrumental) values are seen as important when considering decisions relating to the continuity of a team of workers.

Performing a good job, while balancing professional pride and the concern for oneself

Finally, we argue that our analysis sheds light on a tension in the teachers' stories that was not addressed by them directly. They all found a meaningful professional alternative to their (bodily) exhausting or non-profitable work in a career as a vocational teacher. As teachers, they stress the importance of passing on the pride and dignity of their profession as it is seen from the position of loyal industrial workers in relation to a creditable industrial technical education.

The vocational students' employability is most important for the teachers in our study. Their aim is to try to create opportunities for their students to gain employment after their vocational education. For Henry e.g., good welding knowledge can create opportunities for students in terms of national and international employment. But most important for the teachers is to pass on good

manners, responsibility for each other in the team, responsibility for the quality of their products, and a high code of conduct, as it can be seen in Leif's, Anna's, Ulf's and Kent's cases. Their teaching aims to provide an as good as possible education that is tailored to the industry's competency needs.

The tension that we want to address is the question how to pass on the values in the professional practice (intrinsic), while taking into account that, on the one hand, the body may suffer from the ambition of delivering good quality, or on the other hand, that striving for and cherishing professional pride will not protect someone from unemployment. Becoming a teacher might be interpreted as a welcome alternative for those who cherishes their own professional knowledge, and who cannot not use their knowledge in the industry in person anymore. Being a teacher and passing on the knowledge to a next generation equals a possibility to still serve the profession. Still, the teachers in our study experienced (bodily and from a management position) limitations to this intrinsic value of the professional knowledge, which could have consequences for the results of their teaching ambition. Their own life stories tell their students about possible risks in the profession. If not addressed openly and honestly, these work-related risks may influence a student's ambition towards a particular profession negatively, and may cause the student to ask: Why should I aim for an outstanding performance if the consequence is an early sick leave due to bodily injury, or unemployment due to outsourcing of labour? And why should anyone perform as good as possible if increasing quantities are valued more than quality? (cf. Schaffar, 2017). Here, the teachers have to address the difference between striving for the values of a practice (instrumental values like profit, results, concrete products) and the value in a practice (intrinsic value of a good performance and the dedication to one's profession) (cf. Higgins, 2010).

Concluding remarks

In this article, we began with a focus on a section of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone has the right to work, and then contrasted this with the instrumental value that work has in the (neoliberal) labour market. In the light of this tension, we analysed the life stories of five vocational teachers and discussed how this tension is expressed through their own experience, decisions to ultimately leave their professions and turn to re-education as teachers.

As teachers, they viewed it as their responsibility to educate the next generation in accordance with the industry's demands; and in return, they relied on the political and educational systems to provide possibilities that could help when they were in need of a change of career. The importance they express with regards to their teaching in relation to their students becoming successful employees shows that they basically neither question nor demand the companies and employers to be more active in engaging in the employee's health and alternative

career developments. We interpret this as both an expression for the trust in the Nordic welfare system and as a lack of knowledge and educational competence to address these questions more openly with their students. Their focus in teaching can be summarised by saying that they want their students to learn how to navigate in these given structures. Their positive experience as employees and entrepreneurs in the labour market is used as an example, and as learning content, but their adverse experience of their own bodily limitations, and the instrumental, solely profit-oriented economic systems and decisions that lead to the outsourcing of work and the risk of the loss of one's job, seem to be left aside.

Our analysis suggests that teachers should be more aware of their duty to educate students even in participating in (global and national) political decisions about their future working life and give a realistic picture of the given structures of work they once did.

The Declaration of Human Rights demands that society is engaged as much as possible in trying to fulfil them. In our context, this could mean that teachers could be more engaged in bringing up questions on just and healthy working conditions as a task for everyone in society to strive for. That would include e.g. critically analysing the working conditions of the companies in the local region and to engage together with the companies – both managers and employees – in developing better conditions in those cases where this is necessary.

Of course, given the industry's orientation towards a more neoliberal and competitive labour market, industrial teachers face different occupational ethical dilemmas in order to implement the UN Declaration of Human Rights in education. These dilemmas will essentially be about addressing and balancing the intrinsic and instrumental values in work and in human beings. Vocational teachers need to ask themselves e.g. how they can address the need to speak openly and honestly with their students about their future plans, the chances of employability for students in the neoliberal labour market, and the working conditions of industrial companies (Schaffar, 2017). This in turn would involve rethinking both vocational education and training as well as vocational teacher training in relation to a much broader curriculum. This would include political engagement in one's own and the company's working conditions, and the communities' duty to engage in everybody's health and avoidance of unemployment (cf. Rönnerberg, Lindgren & Lundahl, 2019). This is not only a realistic and possible way of organising vocational education; it is a necessary (and desirable) consequence of our obligation towards the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Still, the global trend in vocational education and training is developing in the opposite direction, towards an increased focus on technical skills and narrow competencies (cf. Allais, 2014; Jørgensen, 2018).

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