

Towards a sustainable future world of work in the Nordic countries

The gender perspective on the opportunities and challenges



Table of contents

Introduction	3
Background	4
About this knowledge base	4
Gender perspective on a changing world of work	6
Assumptions about technology-driven development	7
Changed governance logics	7
Supply of skills and its consequences for the education system	8
Challenges for a sustainable world of work from a gender perspective	11
Lifelong learning: Being schooled in readiness to change and employability	12
The significance of place: Consequences of more teleworking from a gender perspective	16
Discrimination and inequality in changing forms of employment	23
Discussion	31
References	33

Introduction

The Nordic Council of Ministers Action Plan for Vision 2030 describes the rapid and continuous changes in the labour markets in the Nordic countries, and how the transition to a green economy as well as digital development are imposing new demands. This knowledge base focuses on challenges that have been identified for achieving a sustainable world of work. As a cooperation body of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Information on Gender (NIKK) is to contribute to realising the Council's Vision 2030. NIKK's areas of activity all deal with one or other of the major challenges of our time and are based on the global sustainable development goals (SDGs). By communicating a gender perspective on urgent questions, NIKK strives to contribute to sustainable solutions for social development in the Nordic countries. This knowledge base was compiled and written by Susanna Young Håkansson, Jimmy Sand, Ulrika Jansson, PhD in Working Life Science, and Angelica Simonsson, PhD in Educational Work, all of whom are analysts at the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research where NIKK is located.

Background

The future of work has been high on the global agenda in recent years, with ILO, the OECD, the World Economic Forum and not least the Nordic Council of Ministers as some of the more prominent actors in this regard. Although what the future world of work is predicted to be like, and what processes of change will lead there vary, common to all analyses is that they identify complex phenomena that have to do with the whole of social development – at the global, national, regional and local levels.

Ahead of its centenary in 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO) appointed a Global Commission on the Future of Work to investigate the megatrends that are transforming labour markets around the world with a view to presenting policy proposals for a sustainable and decent future of work. The Commission identified four such megatrends: globalization, technological change, demographic shifts, and environmental and climate change (ILO, 2017, 2019). This was the starting point for the Nordic Future of Work project, which was initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers, where the world of work in the five Nordic countries was analysed in relation to these four megatrends (Dølvik & Steen, 2018; Alsos & Dølvik, 2021).

In its contribution to the discussion, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) focused on developments in information technology, robotics and artificial intelligence, rising integration through international trade, and an ageing population (OECD, 2019).

The World Economic Forum, which brings together world leaders from politics and the business community every year for a conference in Davos, has focused mainly on technological change (the Fourth Industrial Revolution) and has also highlighted the need for a reset after the COVID-19 pandemic (Leopold et al., 2016; World Economic Forum & Mercer, 2020).

In light of these identified challenges, what might a world of work that is sustainable – in human terms and in terms of its environmental impacts – look like in the future? A response to this question is formulated in the 2030 Agenda in the form of the commitment made by all the UN Member States: To work towards sustainable economic, social and environmental development (UN, 2015). The 2030 Agenda is based on the three horizontal principles of human rights, leave no one behind, and gender equality. These principles are both fundamental to and goals for sustainable development and should permeate all efforts to achieve the SDGs. The Agenda should be understood as a whole, and aims to ensure that development is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Gender analyses indicate that prevailing norms and social structures assign women and men different roles, opportunities and responsibilities – and that these norms and social structures are limiting our possibilities to transition to a sustainable society (Widegren & Sand, 2002). It is not sustainable, for example, to allow economic sustainability to negatively impact social or environmental sustainability. This knowledge base addresses examples of when this happens, and how it perpetuates inequalities based on gender, class, age and ethnicity, for example. Intersectional analyses of how different systems of power interact are key to understanding gender and sustainability.

An overarching understanding of environmental, economic and social sustainability is the starting point for Nordic Co-operation's Vision 2030: The Nordic region aims to be the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. This Vision's three strategic priorities focus on a Nordic region that is simultaneously *green, competitive and socially sustainable* (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2020). The realisation that these three are interconnected – for example, that the social dimension is a prerequisite for

economic development and competitiveness – follows from the Nordic model concerning welfare and the labour market that has emerged through collective mobilisation. This model takes the view that gender equality is based on the idea that men’s and women’s living conditions are dependent on social institutions for the organisation of the world of work and care work. This has been expressed in paid parental leave, individual taxation, and publicly funded childcare (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

The Nordic countries are consistently at the top of European and international indices on various dimensions of gender equality (UNDP, 2020; OECD, 2018), but there are major challenges that still need to be worked on. While women’s labour market participation is higher in the Nordic countries than in other parts of the world, pay gaps between women and men remain. There is considerable gender segregation in the labour market and women take a greater share of the responsibility for unpaid domestic and care work than men do (see Jansson & Sand, 2021; Simonsson, 2022).

But the Nordic countries are also highly ranked in international indices of progress in sustainability in terms of the economic and social SDGs, while significant challenges remain in relation to the environmental SDGs (Sachs et al., 2021). Since all three dimensions interact, efforts in relation to the environmental SDGs should also be pursued in the social context, where gender analyses are vital to achieving progress (cf. Lander Svendsen et al., 2022). All in all, this results in a complex picture, where there are no simple solutions to bringing about social change. Progress requires a cross-sectoral and integrated approach.

About this knowledge base

Labour markets and the world of work are facing a variety of challenges, including challenges emanating from technological change, demographic shifts and regional differences. How knowledge,

learning and education, and the logics of governance are viewed have all changed. This knowledge base describes these changes and focuses on three challenges for a sustainable world of work:

- Lifelong learning: being schooled in readiness to change
- The significance of place: teleworking and work on site
- Forms of employment and working conditions: the gig economy and entrepreneurship as examples

By identifying the challenges from a gender perspective, one can problematize assumptions about technology-driven social development that have a bearing on the world of work and the supply of skills. They are also seen in relation to policy goals for sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

What needs to be done to enable sustainable development based on human rights, gender equality and no one being left behind? It is clear that development brings opportunities, but also challenges. For each of the three challenges, we present key messages to include in future discussions.

The knowledge base concludes with a discussion of the opportunities and challenges in relation to a sustainable world of work from a gender perspective.

Gender perspectives on a changing world of work

Both the world of work and welfare systems are facing challenges related to technological change, demographic shifts, and regional differences. These include migration patterns and changes in the population structure, with an ageing population and a rising demand for health care and care of the elderly. These factors affect financing, where fewer and fewer need to support more and more, and raises questions about who will do this and under what conditions. The organisation of the labour market, supply and demand for labour, working conditions and issues related to the supply of skills are thus key aspects.

The supply of skills is also linked to what is understood as being important knowledge in the society and in the education system. How knowledge, learning and education are viewed affects individuals' opportunities and their capacity to exercise their citizenship and participate in a democratic society. In addition, there are challenges in terms of urbanisation and regionality, meaning migratory flows from rural to urban areas and local conditions that differ between regions within the Nordic countries.

This Nordic knowledge base was developed using a gender studies approach to understanding technology, governance and the supply of skills. The following chapters review these themes and how they can be understood, in order to provide starting points for further discussion.

Assumptions about technology-driven development

A common element in various descriptions of the future of work is the importance they attach to technological innovation and technological change. There is an underlying assumption that social development, the world of work included, is primarily *technology-driven* (cf. Perez, 2009). In what is described as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (OECD, 2019; WEF, 2020), digitalisation, robotics and artificial intelligence are assumed to be crucial to the future of work and what work will look like. Describing future labour markets in terms of technological development is nothing new. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has been preceded by three others, all involving different technological leaps, and all of which have had a range of effects on the labour market and the organisation of work (see, for example, Johansson et al. 2017). Technologies that dissolve the boundaries between the physical, the digital and the biological in a more fundamental way and in more sectors than ever before are indeed features of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2015).

New technologies thus provide new ways to organise and perform work. Engineering and technology are gender-labelled phenomena in various ways. Conceptions of technology interact with conceptions of men and masculinity. In the research field of gender and technology, technology is seen not only as an artefact and as technical systems, but also as part of gender and technology relationships (Wajcman, 1991; Berner, 2003). With a gender perspective on technology and technologisation, it is apparent that technology is mostly designed and used by men. It is about technology sectors as well as technical occupations being male-dominated and about technology in its various forms being traditionally strongly gender-labelled, in this case being associated with masculinity. The assumption that men are better suited to work with technology

and in technical occupations is an expression of conceptions of masculinity in combination with what a particular occupation or job requires. Ideas about women are instead expressed in their being described as too few, both in technology and engineering degree programmes and in a labour market where skills in engineering and technology are highly rated. It is assumed that women do not have the same obvious interest in technology as men, but are seen as having the potential to contribute to the high-tech world of work and the upskilling wanted for the future. This is often linked to an assumption of what kind of work is seen as productive or reproductive. The manufacturing industry is an example of a productive and traditionally male-dominated sphere, while care work, which is traditionally unpaid and done by women, is an example of reproductive work. It is a division of labour between the sexes that has existed at least since the first industrial revolution (Federici, 2014; cf. Widegren & Sand, 2021). Research into girls' and boys' interest in technology in early childhood shows both similarities and differences, but that girls' interest wanes during their school years. This is explained in various ways by researchers. For example, it is seen as a consequence of how they are taught and their teachers' enthusiasm, but also as a consequence of gender labelling and traditional understandings of what technology is or should be, and of discrimination (Jansson & Sand 2021). Ideas about gender are perpetuated through this pronounced gender labelling as well as in the gender-segregated labour market.

Changed governance logics

Linked to the view that social development is technology-driven, where technological innovations remould socio-economic structures, including ways of organising the labour market, there is also a presumption that this drives changes in the governance of economic activities. After a time during the post-war period when

there was consensus on the need for public funding for education, health and other social benefits, during the 1980s the world experienced a swing towards what can be described as neoliberal policies (cf. Widegren & Sand, 1980 2021). Neoliberalism has been described as a theory which assumes that the best way to promote people's welfare is to avoid restricting their entrepreneurial freedoms and skills by maximising commercial transactions (Harvey 2005, cf. Agenjo-Calderón & Gálvez-Muñoz, 2019). From another perspective, neoliberalism can be seen as a form of political rationality, a logic of governance and the exercise of power that extends beyond economic policy (Brown 2006, 2015).

This political rationality is expressed in various ways in the Nordic countries, such as variations in market solutions in the world of work. However, all the Nordic countries, often described as 'women-friendly' welfare states (Hernes, 1987), are now being challenged by economic policies that are affecting these countries' capacities to promote gender equality and value the work and well-being of all equally (Elomäki & Koskinen Sandberg, 2020). Neoliberal labour market reforms such as privatisation and the renegotiation of working conditions have impacted the female-dominated public sector in particular. For example, in the case of the healthcare system, we can see that outsourcing public services has shifted jobs from the public sector to multinational companies as well as small businesses. The labour force of small businesses in the healthcare sector consists mainly of immigrants with insecure employment conditions (Brodin & Peterson 2020).

Women and minorities, especially minority-group women, are hardest hit by economic restructuring. Financial crises have ended up leading to a general increase in atypical forms of employment – or insecure jobs – as was the case, for example, with the crises that Finland and

Sweden experienced in the 1990s (Jonung et al., 2009). This has negatively affected different groups to different extents. Economic restructuring, combined with the technological development underlying what is termed the platform economy¹, has established the basis for the demand for *gig jobs* with insecure conditions (Hauben et al., 2020).

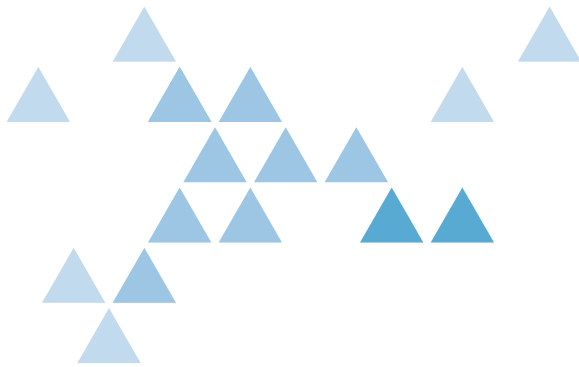
Supply of skills and its consequences for the education system

The assumption that technological development remoulds society, for example that certain jobs are assumed to disappear while demand for highly educated labour increases (Card & DiNardo, 2002; Tählin, 2019), also leads to changed ideas about the role of education for the society. Ideas about the function of education in social development influence demands for change in the task of education. Changes in the conditions under which the labour market operates and in the world of work therefore combine and interact with changes in the education system, in terms of its task, as well as its organisation and the content taught.

The school is often highlighted as one of the most important social institutions, given its role in furnishing the future society with a set of citizens who have the qualities, knowledge and skills that are seen as desirable and presumed to be needed in the future. To have the society we want in the future, we need to equip its future citizens with the necessary knowledge to make this possible. From this perspective, education has a fundamental role to play for democracy (see also Jarl & Albin Larsson, 2020; Nylund, Ledman & Rosvall, 2020).

1. The gig economy is also sometimes referred to as the sharing economy, on-demand economy or platform economy. See for example Palm (2019) for a more detailed description of how these terms are used in research.

However, the role of education in society is also essentially about providing people with the requisite knowledge and skills to be able to ultimately participate in the labour market, to support themselves, and to contribute to general prosperity. The focus today is increasingly on education systems producing pupils and students who are employable at the end of their studies. At both the community and individual levels, education plays a major role in the world of work. However, women and men are largely found in different sectors and in different positions in the world of work, which is also evident in how boys and girls are distributed within the education system. The skewed gender distribution in the workplace is therefore not just an issue that concerns the social partners, it is also an issue for education policy.





Challenges for a sustainable world of work from a gender perspective

As previously described, labour markets and the world of work have changed in a variety of ways, and in part as a consequence of technological development, deregulation and the changing role of education. Digital technology enables rationalisation, automation and flexible forms of employment and work, and this creates the conditions for businesses to increase their profitability.

However, new ways of organising work and the demand for a more flexible workforce also challenge previous norms that work is attached to a fixed place where there is a clear employer responsibility. Flexibility in relation to temporal, spatial and organisational boundaries is one of the basic tenets of what is termed ‘boundless work’. How this is expressed can be illustrated by the following example, which is at different levels.

- Lifelong learning: Being schooled in readiness to change
- The significance of place: Teleworking and work on site
- Forms of employment and working conditions: The gig economy and entrepreneurship as examples.

Boundlessness risks leading to a situation that is unsustainable in a number of ways. The examples below are just some of the issues that must be highlighted in a discussion on the future of work. Doing this from a gender perspective is crucial to achieving sustainability.

Lifelong learning: Being schooled in readiness to change and employability

The new ways of organising work, where demands for a flexible workforce are steadily rising, are interacting with changes in demands on what the education system should achieve. There are a number of problematic aspects of these changes, which will be highlighted here. In particular, the gender perspective can highlight and problematize aspects of the changed function of education, its organisation, and the view of knowledge and learning as instrumental. These are aspects which are all closely tied to the needs of the labour market and the workplace. What roles do sex and gender play for and in education when the role of education is so closely tied to the labour market's need for employable labour?

Gender-segregated education

There is strong segregation in the labour market, where men and women are largely found in different industries and positions. This segregation corresponds largely to the distribution of pupils in different specialisations within the education system. The sorting function that is integral to education systems, the differentiation, results in the population being divided up, or dividing up, into a number of almost exclusively parallel tracks based on sex (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2020; see also Jansson & Sand, 2020; Simonsson, 2022; Mellén, 2021; Imdorf, Herna and Reisel, 2015). Thus, education systems can be said to perpetuate inequalities and structures in a society, and in particular in the labour market, on the basis of sex and class among other things.

Education specialisations in the Nordic countries are highly gender-segregated. In some areas, the dominance of boys is almost total. This applies, for example, to Electricity and energy, and Building and construction. In Health and social care, the majority of students are girls, but the dominance here is not as great as the boys'

dominance in other areas. The research provides many different explanations for the fact that both education specialisations and labour market pathways are so strongly gender-segregated. It is about complex interplays of phenomena, where family, societal traditions, norms of masculinity and femininity, and relationships between identity and education, all interact. The organisation of the education system and how education is delivered also have an impact (see also Kanny, Sax and Riggers-Piehl, 2014). One example of this is Sweden's upper secondary schools, where specialisations in science and technology adapted to the labour market seem to have resulted in an even greater and perpetuated divide between girls and boys in the STEM area² (Mellén, 2021).

How education is organised into programmes and the basis for this therefore become important questions to consider in an analysis of the challenges for a sustainable future world of work. What education specialisations are established, what purposes do they serve, what is the content of the courses, and how do they steer the students based on sex? All these questions become relevant to ask from a perspective that takes into account the gender labelling, or 'gender coding' (Härenstam och Björk, 2021), that is perpetuated in the courses and their associated occupations and professions. How does the teaching, learning and knowledge focused on in the courses relate to masculinity and femininity, and what value is assigned to areas of knowledge and their occupational and professional skills? These are questions of relevance to creating sustainability in education systems.

Boundless work and boundless learning

In the last 50 years, the main features of global discourses on education have moved away from

2. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.

an emphasis on the rights perspective on education and towards a more instrumental approach to the function of education (Elfert, 2019). In the Nordic countries' education models, the rights perspective has been highly visible in the form of clear ideas that state-controlled education should help to reduce social inequalities among citizens (Imsen, Blossing & Moos, 2017). An increasingly instrumental approach to education places more importance unilaterally on the benefit of education for economic growth (Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2018). From a sustainability perspective, this can be expressed as giving priority to the economic dimension at the expense of the social dimension. Education is assigned the function of creating employable labour to benefit economic development at an overarching societal level. Individuals then become responsible for adapting themselves and their choices to the changes that occur (Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2018) in the society and in the labour market. Fundamental to this transformation is the concept of lifelong learning and the introduction of lifelong learning as a concept in education policy. The learning that occurs should be linked to the needs of the labour market and to a conception of an ever-changing future. Individuals should learn to be prepared and have the capacity to develop or adopt new attitudes, and acquire new knowledge and skills based on the needs that exist. Under the current conception of lifelong learning, knowledge thus has a strong utility value. The research shows, however, that education that focuses primarily on the utility value of knowledge risks side-lining its educational value and civic education (see, for example, Carlsson & Jacobsson, 2019).

The idea of lifelong learning is not new. Learning new things and learning continuously gives citizens greater opportunities to control their own lives and to influence social development through active citizenship. The change that has taken place instead is a shift in focus from what

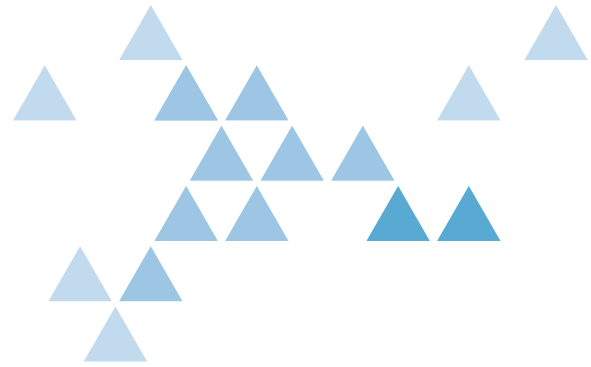
society offers and its capacity to create equal opportunities for education and training, and thus equal opportunities to access the labour market and the community, towards making the individual responsible for continuously learning new things and new skills in order to respond to the needs of the labour market. Consequently, the endeavour to equalise the structural differences in society as one of the primary tasks of education systems risks being side-lined in favour of the function of education systems being to produce employable individuals.

Sex, the individual and employability

A strong focus on employability and lifelong learning thus entails the risk that the individual's education and career pathways end up in the spotlight while structural barriers and enablers get side-lined. What is the significance of sex and gender for conceptions of employability, for example? And what is the nature of this relationship when it is linked to educational choices and the way in which education systems are organised? It is also relevant to problematize a decline in the democratic mission of education from the point of view of sex, for example. The function of education in supporting citizenship in a democracy is central to the survival and development of equal and gender-equal societies. In order to address the problems of the gender-segregated labour market, structural barriers and enablers must also be identified and changed in an appropriate direction.

An ever-increasing focus on lifelong learning also means that there is no clear boundary for when learning ends and entry to the labour market can be declared permanent. Thus, learning can be said to be boundless and now more clearly tied to the individual's "learning career" (Webb, 2006) and continuous employability. It is paradoxical that being able to keep up with change can be seen as security in a rapidly changing labour market. The primary tool for having this attitude

is the generic skill of being able to learn new things, again and again, and thus being always prepared to make new adjustments in order to strengthen one's employability in creative ways. When the labour market and employment conditions change, the individual needs to respond to these changes by becoming a learner again and adapting themselves in order to maintain or restore their own employability. An essential part of the conceptual toolbox offered by current discourse on education is entrepreneurship as a skill. The entrepreneurship that is written about (see, for example, SOU 2008:27) is associated with conceptions of self-employment and the responsibility of the individual to carve out a place in the labour market for themselves. Willingness to take risks, independence and innovation are focused on as desirable values. But the research shows that courses in entrepreneurship feature implicit masculinity norms where women are seen as gendered, as women in particular, and also need to relate to and accept these norms (Aggestam & Wigren-Kristoferson, 2021). Attempts to make changes in the gender-segregated labour market often focus on the opportunities for individuals, especially women, to carve out their own place in different parts of the world of work, in particular through a conceptual focus on entrepreneurship, both as knowledge content in schools and as labour market measures. Where the issue of gender imbalance is seen more in terms of masculinity and femininity and how these are valued, attempts to make changes ought to focus instead on norms and values rather than placing this responsibility on individuals in the under-represented group. If, for example, the STEM area lacks women, then most projects focus on women needing to change, instead of focusing on changing the prevailing structures and workplace cultures.



KEY MESSAGES

- If learning specific knowledge is increasingly tied to specific professions, there is a risk that gender imbalances in courses will be strengthened, both in terms of which courses boys and girls choose and in terms of the knowledge content that they learn. At an overarching level, this instrumental outlook on learning and education – where the function of education is so strongly tied to the needs that have been identified by the labour market and the workplace – needs to be considered against the background of the clear gender segregation that prevails in the labour market.
- Education systems that focus primarily on individual skills and achievements risk supplanting values that are essential to the democracy project. Values associated with democratic citizenship and the community we all share, which are of the utmost importance for progressing towards a more equal and gender-equal society, risk becoming less important in such an education system – as content and as guiding principles for its organisation.
- When education increasingly focuses on the *individual's* learning for their own employability, there is a risk that structural differences between men and women such as those based on social background and immigrant background will be concealed, while at the same time generating more negative consequences for different groups in society. Structural barriers to participation by women and men in the world of work and the community risk being side-lined and therefore not addressed and rectified, and being seen instead as obstacles for individuals to overcome.
- As the boundaries between the world of work and education become increasingly blurred in the wake of lifelong learning, there is a risk that inequalities in the world of work will be strengthened. This primarily affects women because of the unequal distribution of care responsibilities in the home.
- When it is the utility value of knowledge that is given priority in education, with employability as the ultimate goal, the gender labelling of occupations and professions risks being perpetuated in an unproblematized way, and strengthening the segregation patterns of men and women in the labour market. If knowledge is more closely tied to specific education specialisations and vocational pathways, it becomes relevant to ask questions about who gets access to what kind of knowledge, and how gendered occupational identities are perpetuated, as a clear aspect of the education system's task to convey knowledge.
- There is a need to ask more questions about how a one-sided focus on employability is specifically affecting the education specialisations and working lives of adults. In particular, this should be linked to immigrant and geographical background and to those who migrate to the Nordic countries as adults for whom the way into the community in these countries is to be paved by means of adult education. It is important, for example, to ask questions about what the premises are for recently arrived immigrants' access to education in the Nordic languages.

The significance of place: Consequences of more teleworking from a gender perspective

Boundless work is defined by flexibility in relation to temporal, spatial and organisational boundaries. Teleworking has been both a rising trend and a relevant question for research on the world of work for decades, but the COVID-19 pandemic that struck the whole world in 2020 made teleworking part of everyday life for many more people and to a much greater extent than previously. For many, online meetings and home offices have become the new normal, and developments in digital technologies have been accelerated by several years as a result of the pandemic (OECD 2020). At the same time, many people, particularly in manual occupations, have never been able to work remotely because of the nature of their tasks, and will not be able to do so in the future either. In a variety of ways, this leads to greater gaps between those who can work from home and those who cannot. Gender perspectives on teleworking can highlight and problematize aspects of women more often having jobs that cannot be done from home. What are the effects of gender equality on teleworking in relation to unpaid domestic work? How are mobility and travel patterns affected, and what effects does this have on sustainability in rural and urban areas?

More teleworking creates greater gaps

Many essential services occupations in healthcare, schools, social care, service and transport will never be possible to perform remotely. Most of these sectors are strongly dominated by women, and a high proportion of people with ethnic minority backgrounds work in these occupations. Many occupations

in these sectors are lowly paid and entail insecure employment conditions. The Nordic labour market is clearly gender-segregated. To a large extent, women and men work in different sectors and occupations, and there are clear differences in employment conditions and incomes between men and women. Women have lower wages, often work part-time, and more often have temporary jobs. They are also more dependent on their pay because they have less capital (Dahlqvist, 2021). The gender-segregated labour market is, of course, a matter of gender, but also a matter of class, and the class issue has ethnic overtones to a large extent in much of the Nordic region. There are clear economic dimensions associated with whether you can work remotely or not. For those who were able to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic and had mild symptoms of the disease themselves, their work could continue as usual, without risking loss of income. For those who were unable to work from home, however, it was not possible to combine paid work with being ill or care for those who were. Days with mild symptoms of illness or sick children instead meant days of lost income.

Eight out of 10 women in manual occupations stated in the survey that they work in close contact occupations, which means occupations that require face-to-face contact with people who are not their colleagues (LO, 2021). People working in close contact occupations have also experienced more problems than others because it has not been possible to keep encounters with the people they work with safe (free from exposure to the coronavirus). This makes women more vulnerable than men when it comes to exposure to infection in the workplace.

Gender imbalances in this respect are greater in the Nordic countries than in large parts of the rest of Europe. These gender imbalances can be partially explained by the major challenge represented by the highly gender-segregated labour market in the Nordic countries, but also by research findings which show that women interact more often with clients, pupils and patients and are therefore more exposed to infection than men working in the same sector. This should be seen in light of the gender segregation that exists in a sector, where women more often have occupations where they encounter many people. Young women are more often found in occupations requiring physical contact with others and are a particularly vulnerable group (Lewandowski et al., 2021). People in close contact occupations, especially women, are highly exposed in other ways as well, such as to violence, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace (see for example Svensson, 2020).

The rise in teleworking increases the gap between those who can work from home and those who cannot. In general, this means a greater gap between salaried employees and manual workers. These increased gaps have clear economic dimensions, but also health dimensions, and the various aspects of these dimensions are gender-labelled and affect men and women differently. It should also be pointed out that some research emphasises that more teleworking can be one way of including more people in the labour market. For example, teleworking can be a way of creating better conditions for integrating functionally diverse people into the labour market, or facilitating a return to work for people who are in rehabilitation after injuries or illness (Liljeröd & Wingborg, 2022).

Better balance in life or a setback for gender equality?

According to a number of surveys, including those carried out by trade unions, teleworking is

here to stay. A majority of academics and salaried employees want to continue teleworking for several days of the working week (Liljeröd & Wingborg, 2022). Workplaces have discovered that some types of tasks are perhaps better suited to teleworking, while others are not. Few office workplaces think that they should go back to the way things were in the past. All the evidence suggests that the rapid change brought on by the pandemic broke patterns that have resulted in a major shift in the organisation of the workplace. This leads to questions such as: In what ways can more teleworking cause changes in the sharp distinction between paid and unpaid work, between the public and private spheres – a distinction strongly influenced by how gender is perceived? What are the risks associated with these new ways of organising work? For many people, more teleworking has made it easier to combine gainful employment with care work. Many people have been able to combine working while being at home with sick children, and occasionally hearing children in the background during online meetings has become commonplace for many people. When the home becomes our workplace, it becomes clear that we are not only productive beings in the world of work, but also reproductive beings, dependent on and responsible for providing care.

Previous research, as well as various Swedish trade union surveys, have shown that women like teleworking somewhat more than men do (see for example Rydell 2022; Liljeröd & Wingborg, 2022; Chung & van der Lippe, 2018). Many people feel that teleworking makes it easier to puzzle together their working life in private life. Women see teleworking as an opportunity to combine work with their private lives to a greater extent than men do, for example, because greater flexibility in how they work increases their chances of maintaining their rate of employment during the early childhood years (Liljeröd & Wingborg, 2022; Chung & van der Lippe, 2018).



Women are also over-represented in part-time work. If more teleworking allows more people to go from part-time to full-time work, and still combine full-time work with parenthood for example, it could lead to greater equality in incomes between men and women.

Women spend more time on unpaid domestic work than men do. Many studies have shown that women are more likely than men to perform domestic work during the working day, and that the time spent by women on unpaid domestic work increases when they work from home (Akavia, 2022; Chung & van der Lippe, 2018). There are also indications that those who work a lot remotely risk being adversely affected in terms of their career and pay. It is too early to say anything about how this will pan out, but among other things international studies have shown that teleworkers are often rendered ‘invisible’ and are less often promoted and get less continuing professional development than those who work more in the office (see for example Unison, 2021). If women work more from home due to care responsibilities, and if this is not taken into account, women’s careers and pay trends risk being adversely affected by this flexibility. In both an international study and a Swedish study carried out by the Akavia union, it has been found that men are more able to influence when they will work from home and when at the office (Rydell, 2022; Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018).

It should also be pointed out that the research does not provide unequivocal support for teleworking leading to a better work–life balance. One reason for this is that teleworking often leads to more hours of gainful employment – but also an increase in unpaid domestic work (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018). A number of studies have shown that teleworking leads to more jobs and that the ‘job sphere’ expands and takes up more space in the person’s private life, rather than the other way around (see for example Lott and Chung, 2016; Lott, 2018). Instead of leading to a

better balance between the world of work and private life, teleworking leads to more multitasking and boundless work over many more hours of the day than the hours we think of as office hours (Schieman and Young, 2010; Glavin and Schieman, 2012). This is in line with surveys showing that many people who have worked from home worked more than they did before (see for example Hallberg & Saar, 2020).

The boundaries of place between working hours and leisure time become blurred, which is also reinforced by technological development and ‘always-on’ connectivity. Excessive workloads, miscalculations, lack of support and other things can be compensated for by additional hours put in outside of normal working hours. One relevant concern to raise in relation to this is that time for recovery is in danger of being squeezed out. Many of the research findings also highlight the risks of *techno-stress*, meaning stress associated with the increased utilisation of technological solutions (Christiansen et al., 2021). Inadequate time for recovery and increased stress can lead to mental and physical ill-health and, ultimately, to sick leave.

There are therefore several risks associated with the blurred boundaries that are a feature of teleworking. Although it is a great economic advantage to be able to work from home despite having cold symptoms, the flip side of this coin is that there is a risk that teleworkers never feel so ill that are not able to turn on their computer and work, even when they are ill it ought to be resting. Teleworking *can* be a pathway to greater gender equality and a better work–life balance. However, traditional gender norms, and the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work between men and women, mean there is a risk of teleworking cementing traditional gender roles in the home and the world of work, thereby instead constituting a setback for gender equality.

All the evidence suggests that more teleworking

means a new era in the world of work for many salaried employees and academics. Traditional, gendered norms concerning who performs what tasks and who gets to decide where the work is to be done will become part of, and be expressed in, teleworking in various ways unless we actively identify these gender-unequal patterns and how they can be countered. This needs to be done at a range of levels so that more teleworking can ensure greater gender equality and a better balance in life, rather than the other way round. A gender perspective at all levels is needed in order to develop effective policies related to crisis preparedness, health and the world of work.

New ways to work, new ways to travel and live

Greater opportunities to telework are affecting migration patterns and travel patterns. Teleworking entails both opportunities and challenges for urban as well as rural areas. Many employees who have jobs that can be done from home today live in the metropolitan areas, because there is a higher proportion of office-based occupations in these areas than in smaller towns and sparsely populated areas. With more teleworking comes the possibility of living in a place other than where one's job is located, temporarily or permanently, full-time or part-time. During the pandemic, many of those who were able to work from their summer cottages, and the demand for houses outside the metropolitan areas rose considerably. During the 2020 pandemic year, for example, Stockholm County had Sweden's largest net emigration, that is, more people moved from there than to there (SCB, 2020). More opportunities for teleworking could also increase opportunities for people living outside the metropolitan areas to remain living there, and still be able to take a job that would otherwise have required relocating to a major city. There are also many initiatives from cities and regions in rural areas throughout the Nordic countries that in various ways aim to attract teleworkers. These initiatives are intended to help

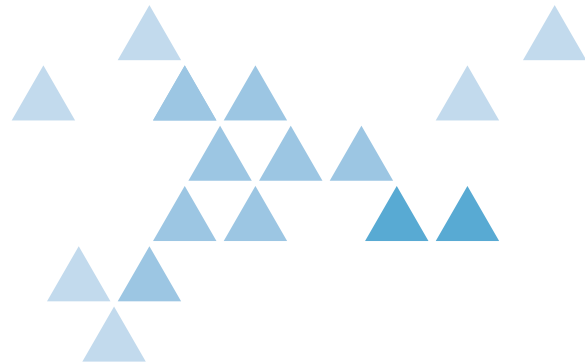
strengthen local communities (Futurion & The Remote Lab, 2021). Can more teleworking breathe new life into rural areas with previously high rates of emigration?

Most surveys in fact suggest that few people want to work remotely the entire time; most want to come into an office from time to time. This could instead mean that people will move outside the big cities, but not so far away from them that it is difficult to get to the office sometimes – and that commuting distances will therefore increase instead. Research has already shown that the pressure on increased mobility has meant that people have spent more and more hours of their daily lives on commuting to work (Gil Solá, 2013). It is important to look into the distance travelled and who is expected to commute from a gender perspective. Statistically, men travel more and further to get to work. On average, women live closer to their workplaces and take a greater share of the responsibility for unpaid care work, such as dropping off and picking up children from pre-school and school. Dahl et al. (2003) also showed that men's pay increases faster in a growing labour market in a region, and consequently so do pay gaps between men and women. Therefore, the trend towards regional expansion in many cases leads to greater gender inequality (Grip, 2020). More commuting means in many cases more car travel, which has negative consequences for the climate and the environment and a negative factor for sustainability and the green transition. But it is also possible that more teleworking might reverse this trend by reducing the number of commuting trips, which could have positive consequences for the environmental dimension of sustainability.

There are hopes that more teleworking will contribute to the development of rural areas, as is already happening in several places. In the Nordic countries, there are several examples of municipalities and their initiatives which are using teleworking to attract talent in the competition

for skills. There is talk of *co-living labs* and *co-working labs* and a ‘new green wave’ as part of the solution to demographic problems, but these rarely include a gender perspective. More men than women have occupations where they can work from home, and as has been described previously, most in manual occupations cannot work from home. When people talk about digital nomads, meaning those who take their jobs with them when they move to new places, and other potential ‘nomads’, they primarily mean highly educated middle- and high-income people without families. The ideal picture of the digital nomad is a young man with a good income, often in the tech industry or in a creative profession, and without a family. Digital nomads who are women have different demands on their destinations than many digital nomads who are men, such as the question of whether a destination seems safe to visit or not as a single woman. The child perspective is rarely present. So that migration trends develop in a sustainable way, it is important to consider how projects and places can be developed in ways that make them attractive for families with children. This makes issues of welfare such as childcare and schools absolutely central.

More teleworking can be advantageous for both the climate and health as people commute less to their jobs, thus reducing the climate impact of commuting. But it could also have the opposite effect – depending on how frequent and how long commuting trips are. It is also conceivable that occupational groups with lower pay scales, often those who are unable to work from home and who find it difficult to compete in the housing markets of big cities, will move out of cities if job opportunities were to increase away from the big cities. However, concern has also been expressed about reverse patterns in the housing market: that house prices in rural areas will be pushed up when cashed-up teleworkers from the housing market in big cities move in.



KEY MESSAGES

- The rise in teleworking increases the gap between those who can work from home and those who cannot. In general, this means a greater gap between salaried employees and manual workers. These increased gaps have clear economic dimensions, but also health dimensions, and these different aspects are gender-labelled and affect men and women differently. Some research emphasises that more teleworking can be one way of including more people in the labour market.
- Many essential services occupations in healthcare, schools, social care, services and transport will never be possible to perform remotely. Most of these industries are strongly female-dominated and many occupations within them feature low pay and insecure employment conditions. The gender-segregated labour market is about gender, but also about class, and the class issue has ethnic overtones to a large extent. We need more knowledge and concrete measures to prevent inequality increasing when the conditions for where work is to be performed are changing – but not for everyone.
- Many more women than men come into contact with other people in their jobs and, as a result, have been more exposed to infection than men. Young women are particularly exposed. This can be linked to the gender-segregated labour market, where men and women are found in different sectors. Women in close contact occupations are also more often exposed to violence and sexual harassment.
- More teleworking means a new era in the world of work for many salaried employees and academics. Traditional, gendered norms concerning who performs what tasks and who gets to decide where the work is done will become part of and be expressed in teleworking in various ways. Gender-unequal patterns need to be identified and countered, so that more teleworking can mean greater gender equality and a better balance in life, rather than the other way round.
- Unequivocal support for teleworking leading to a better work–life balance is lacking. One reason for this is that teleworking often leads to more gainful employment – but also an increase in unpaid domestic work, where the ‘job sphere’ expands and takes up more space in the person’s private life. Instead of leading to a better balance, teleworking often leads to more multitasking and boundless work over many more hours of the day than the hours we think of as office hours.
- It is anticipated that greater opportunities to telework will affect migration patterns and travel patterns. This can entail both opportunities and challenges, especially for rural areas. To date, initiatives aimed at attracting teleworkers to sparsely populated areas have often not included either the gender or child perspectives. They are also often based on the idea of the teleworker as a young man without a family. For this kind of development to be sustainable, these perspectives need to be taken into account.
- In the different regions in the Nordic countries, access to post-secondary education is more or less closely tied to the specific industries and companies established in that region. This provides opportunities to break gender-based patterns of education choices, but also entails risks of perpetuating these patterns.

Discrimination and inequality in changing forms of employment

New ways of organising work entail new forms of employment and changes in working conditions. Work that is flexible in terms of time, space and organisational boundaries also creates a demand for highly flexible labour. Across the board, atypical forms of employment – or insecure jobs – have increased in the Nordic countries. There is no accepted definition of ‘insecure job’ and furthermore, different forms of employment are embraced by different actors. One way of describing insecure jobs is to compare them with the characteristics of safe or secure jobs. Work-related security is expressed through a number of factors: labour market security, employment security, job security, work security, skill reproduction security, income security and representation security (Standing, 2013). On the other hand, insecure jobs, or precarious jobs, are characterised by poor conditions in many of these respects – and these jobs have increased in a world of work marked by digital tools of work and a high degree of flexibility. The use of digital platforms by global companies is the most important factor transforming work and employment conditions in ways that differ from previous ways of organising work (Johansson et al., 2017). Workers are subject to high demands in terms of flexibility, self-management and skill reproduction. Often, the employee’s work is measured on the basis of completed tasks and results, or outputs, rather than working hours. A clear example of how these changes have led to new and changed forms of employment and working conditions is the growing gig economy, where short-term jobs or gigs are negotiated via digital platforms. In the gig economy, these forms of employment are characterised by a high degree of flexibility and

insecurity, and the work itself is characterised by a high degree of control by means of digital tools. Another example is conceptions of entrepreneurship and self-employment as being drivers for more and new openings and jobs. Without entrepreneurs, there would be no development (Tesfahuney & Dahlstedt 2008). The idea is to create more jobs through self-employment and entrepreneurship and thus generate higher economic growth, but also provide an opportunity for people to work according to their own preferences and in flexible ways.

Both the gig worker and the entrepreneur as economic subjects are marked by conceptions of gender, but also other systems of power. In this report, we highlight new and changed forms of employment and working conditions from the gender perspective, with gig work and entrepreneurship as examples.

Insecure working conditions and a high degree of control in the gig economy

The gig economy and gig work are a growing part of the Nordic labour market and can be seen as an effect of the weakening of labour law among other things. Gigs are temporary jobs negotiated by digital platforms, generally an app. In contrast to the regular labour market, where employers and employees are the two parties to the contract, there are three parties involved in the contract in the gig economy. There are those who perform the tasks, customers and a digital platform where gigs are negotiated. However, there is rarely an employer per se; the gig worker in most cases is seen as self-employed and an independent contractor. It also means that the gig worker themselves is responsible for providing the equipment and any on-the-job training that the work requires. Gig jobs exist today in a

large – and growing – number of sectors. Often gigs are divided into different categories according to where the work is carried out and how skilled it is. A common and important division is distinguishing between work performed online and offline (Palm, 2019; Dølvik & Jesnes, 2017). Skilled work negotiated via a digital platform and performed digitally/online includes translation, programming and graphic design. Unskilled work performed online is called microwork, often involving monotonous click work, such as entering data or sorting images (Palm, 2019). Gigs negotiated online via a digital platform but carried out offline include services performed in the home such as domestic services and trades services, as well as transport, such as the delivery of goods and taxi services. We will focus here on the latter category, which in recent years has become a rapidly growing part of the Nordic labour market, principally in urban environments.

Gig work is promoted as very flexible, and this is an aspect that the platform companies themselves highlight in particular as attractive. The gig worker is their own boss and decides their own working hours. But the research shows that gigs and the working conditions of gig workers are marked by great uncertainty, insecurity and vulnerability (see for example Weidenstedt et al. 2020, Broughton et al. 2017; Petriglieri et al. 2019; Stewart & Stanford 2017). Gigs have no job security, nor regulated working hours nor to a large extent any social insurance. Nor are gig workers able to make their voices heard (Weidenstedt et al. 2020). A number of studies have shown that the degree of external control and control of the work is generally great, far greater than how the platform companies themselves describe it. The platform companies use a variety of mechanisms and algorithmic management to control when and how much gig workers can work (see for example Berg, 2016; Jamil & Noiseux, 2018; Lehdonvirta, 2018). Gig workers

performing physical work offline generally have the least control over what tasks they can take on and the income they can get for them, because this is determined by algorithms. According to several studies, many gig workers state that it is difficult to find enough gigs, and that searching for paid work takes a lot of unpaid time. In addition, many state that the risk of non-payment, should the customer not be satisfied with the service, is a stress factor (Drahokoupil & Piasna, 2017; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017).

Discrimination and gender segregation in the gig economy

There are relevant points to highlight from the gender perspective, especially in relation to discrimination and gender segregation. Many studies show that women and female-dominated sectors in the gig economy have lower pay (Barzilay & Ben-David, 2017; Foong, Vincent, Hecht, & Gerber, 2018) and that the norm of the ideal gig worker as a man, flexible, without disabilities, and without any care responsibilities is particularly strong in the gig economy (Webster & Zhang, 2020). Many studies show that the labour market in the gig economy is highly gender-segregated and that a gender-stereotypical divide is perpetuated in terms of who works with what, for example when it comes to gig cleaning jobs, transport services, trades jobs, but also within IT (Palm, 2019; Leung & Koppman, 2018; Schor, 2017; Ticona & Mateescu, 2018).

Most of the people who work in the gig economy are men. According to a 2016 survey, twice as many men as women applied for gigs via digital platforms in Sweden, most of them were 16–24 years old, and the majority were foreign-born (SOU 2017:24). According to an international survey by the ILO, about two-thirds of all gig workers are men (Berg et al.) 2018). In two of the largest sectors in the gig economy, taxi and courier services (such as the delivery of food and goods), more than 90 per cent of the gig workers

were men (ILO, 2021). In the Nordic countries, most gig economy platforms are those that post gigs in lowly paid sectors such as cleaning, transport, babysitting and domestic services, where high competition for jobs increases the risk of wage dumping. Many of the gig workers in these occupational categories have an immigrant background and are in more vulnerable situations than those with more skilled occupations (Jesnes & Dølvik, 2017).

Research also shows that vulnerability due to gender, race, ethnicity and immigrant status is widespread in the gig economy (Qiu, 2018; van Doorn, 2017). Rosenblat (2018) shows how gendered and racialised norms are a feature of how the gig economy is marketed, while platform companies can profit from gig workers' vulnerability and insecure living situations. One study examined what the world of work looks like for immigrant women who get work via a cooking app in Sweden (Webster & Zhang, 2020). The app is a food service that acts as an intermediary for contact between home-based cooks and customers. The study concluded that a number of macro-level trends are interacting: the gig economy is growing rapidly, many recently arrived immigrants find it difficult to get a job, and integration policies are increasingly focusing on the immigrant getting their 'first job in Sweden' as indicative of integration. Using an intersectional perspective, the study showed how gender, immigrant status and other social categories are strongly interconnected with economic and political processes. The study also showed how gig work blurs the boundaries between home and work, between the personal and work spheres. Boundless work is expressed in specific ways in the gig economy, but the trends are the same as in the world of work in general.

Another factor that should be highlighted in relation to discrimination is the ratings that are a key aspect of most gig apps, where the buyer of a

service rates the performer of the service in the app. This is a factor that many gig workers experience as stressful, because one's rating is the basis of continuing to get job offers. In addition, several studies show how conscious and unconscious norms and values concerning ethnicity and gender risk facilitating discrimination through these ratings (Bajwa et al., 2018; Blackham, 2018; Kullman, 2018a; Palm, 2019; Rosenblat et al., 2017). A study also shows that it is not only in these ratings, but also in the algorithms of the apps, that systems of power such as gender, ethnicity and other categories are at risk of being perpetuated (Kullman, 2018a). This can happen both consciously and unconsciously. Consciously because the algorithms are based on human-made calculations and ideas, where unproblematized conceptions can be built in. It can also happen unconsciously when the app's artificial intelligence is based on an incomplete picture of an individual. Because this kind of 'built-in discrimination' through ratings and algorithms is about the customers' ratings and about complex technical systems, they often fall outside the laws to protect workers from discrimination.

Most of the people who work in the gig economy are young, foreign-born men. The gig economy is often claimed to contribute to lowering the threshold to labour markets and is highlighted as a way for groups who are experiencing difficulty getting into the labour market, such as young people and immigrants, to gain entry to it. Gig jobs are described as 'entry-level jobs', which can be a 'springboard' to the world of work and more secure forms of employment, as is also claimed for other types of temporary work and temporary forms of employment. However, research on temporary employment in the regular labour market shows that the employer's incentives for flexibility affect the worker's possibilities of obtaining a secure form of employment (Gash, 2008). There is a greater risk of getting stuck in

temporary employment for those with ‘flexibility-driven temporary employment’ – driven by the employer’s need for a flexible workforce – compared to temporary employment with a view to determining whether a person is suitable for a specific position (Berglund et al., 2017). Gigs belong to the first category, where flexible, self-employed workers work on demand. There is therefore a risk that gig work instead contributes to segmentation and increases inequality through individuals becoming stuck in unattractive, low-paid jobs with insecure working conditions (Palm, 2019).

In a Swedish study, Adermon and Hensvik (2020) examined how experience of gig work is valued and whether such work can function as an entry-level job, where the authors sent out fictitious applications to 10,000 job advertisements for ‘basic jobs’. In the applications, they claimed to be young men with either Swedish or Arabic-sounding names. The study compared the proportion of responses from employers to applications that included experience from gig work, regular jobs, or unemployment. The results showed that gig economy experience is valued higher than unemployment and lower than experience from regular jobs, but only for applicants with Swedish-sounding names. For people with Arabic-sounding names, there were no visible effects of having any form of work experience at all. The study thus found no support for the hypothesis that gig work acts as a door opener to the labour market for minority groups. The study also noted a high degree of ethnic discrimination in general: for applications that used Arabic-sounding names, the share of positive responses was 10.6 per cent for those without any work experience, while the corresponding figure for applications that used Swedish-sounding names was almost double this. This is in line with previous research. The incidence of ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labour market is well documented (see for

example Ahmed, 2005; Bursell, 2007; Carlsson and Rooth, 2007) and applies equally to first- and second-generation immigrants (Carlsson, 2010).

More knowledge and concrete measures are needed to protect workers in the gig economy. It is also important to continue to examine the impact of gig work on those who perform it, especially those who belong to already marginalised groups and therefore are more at the mercy of the growing gig economy.

Entrepreneurship from a gender perspective

In a description of the labour market and world of work of the future in the Nordic countries, it is not possible to ignore conceptions about entrepreneurship in self-employment as being drivers for more and new openings and jobs. Entrepreneurship and self-employment have long been prioritised areas of policy, and are often described as a patent solution in a range of policy areas – as a prime mover (Teshahuney & Dahlstedt 2008). The idea is to create more jobs through self-employment and entrepreneurship and thus generate higher economic growth, but also provide an opportunity for people to work according to their own preferences and in flexible ways. The 2030 Agenda highlights innovation and enterprise as particularly beneficial for sustainable economic growth that is inclusive for entire communities. It is not only industry and the finance world that are assumed to benefit from entrepreneurship. Large sections of the community can be described as fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and skills. In particular schools. As previously described, ideas about entrepreneurial learning have had a great impact in education contexts in the Nordic countries and beyond, and are part of the timetable at all levels of the education system. Among other things, this is about adolescents and young adults being persuaded to perceive self-employment as being as natural as being employed – that they themselves can carve out their own place in the labour



market. In summary, the idea of the ‘entrepreneur’ has replaced the idea of the ‘citizen’. The citizen, in the sense of someone who is guaranteed full political and social rights regardless of how ‘active’ they are in the society, is contrasted with the entrepreneur, who is willing to take risks, is independent and constantly pushing the boundaries of accepted norms.

Empirically, entrepreneurship and self-employment in the Nordic countries follow the same trends as the segregated and hierarchical labour market in general. In other words, self-employment is divided into traditional ‘gender-typical’ areas, where women and men start and run businesses/entrepreneurship in different industries and sectors.

Traditional research on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs is conducted in a wide range of disciplines and is addressed broadly. Studies deal with the community level as well as the organisational and individual levels, but often take entrepreneurial ideals for granted. Studies with more critical starting points, on the other hand, make it apparent that entrepreneurs are assumed to be the obvious, rightful and important change-makers both in the labour market and in the broader community (Harvey 2005, Styrhe 2005). With the gender perspective, assumptions about the entrepreneur as a genderless and gender-neutral individual have been revealed and critically analysed. Ogbor (2000) describes conceptions of entrepreneurship as discriminating, gendered, ethnocentric and ideologically controlled. Research shows that male-coded industries and men’s entrepreneurship/self-employment are the yardstick for women’s entrepreneurship/self-employment, which renders women’s entrepreneurship/self-employment invisible while stipulating its conditions (see for example Holmquist & Sundin 2002, Berglund 2007, Ahl 2002). Women are assumed to be different – another type of entrepreneur. For example, Holmquist (2005:66:234) describes how

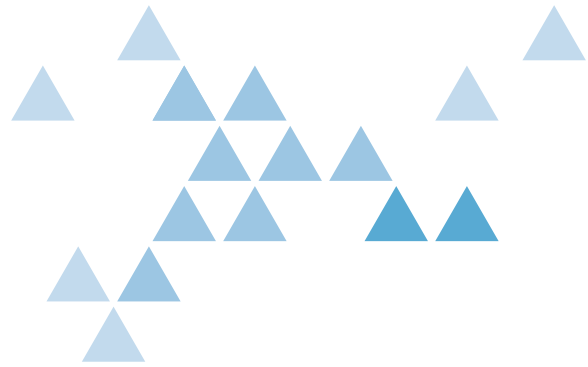
men are expected to “develop new big companies based on technological innovations, generate growth, create new job opportunities” but that women are assumed to become entrepreneurs and start businesses to “save sparsely populated areas, and employ themselves and other under-privileged groups”. Women are also assumed not to have entrepreneurial traits to the same extent as men, such as courage and a willingness to take risks. Bruni et al. (2004) discusses three commonly accepted obstacles to women’s entrepreneurship are discussed. The first concerns women’s responsibilities for the home and the family, the second is that they are assumed not to have access to networks and contacts, and the third concerns having capital at their disposal and access to it. All in all, these conceptions mean that women are believed to suffer from a lack of the resources that are considered to be the most essential in entrepreneurship. But these are not just conceptualisations. It is a reality that the situation in which many women find themselves – with high levels of care responsibilities and a lack of financial resources – means that being self-employed does not work well for them (Ahl & Marlow, 2021).

Empirically, entrepreneurship and self-employment in the Nordic countries follow the same trends as the segregated and hierarchical labour market in general. Women start up fewer businesses than men, at least those types of businesses that are large-scale and are based on innovations in engineering and technology industries (Grünfeld et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship and self-employment can have many faces and many different motivations. Since entrepreneurship is defined in so many different ways, it is difficult to compare data from the different Nordic countries. Whatever form it takes, self-employment is often divided into traditional ‘gender-typical’ areas – women and men start and run businesses/entrepreneurship in different industries and sectors.

It is not just gender-based norms that play a role in entrepreneurship. Within an intersectional perspective, how racialised norms stipulate the conditions for entrepreneurship can be revealed. A study of immigrant women who work via a cooking app was described above (Webster & Zhang, 2020). This is work that can be described as a form of entrepreneurship, or small enterprise, at the intersection with home-based work. According to Webster & Zhang (2020), women, especially immigrant women, often take as their starting point unpaid family and care work when they start small-scale businesses. However, the fact that their entrepreneurship is pursued in the home often leaves them outside support and policy systems. In relation to traditional business ideals, the entrepreneurship of these women is not really counted.

In summary, structural, gendered and racialised constraints and conditions need to be taken into account, given the prominent position of entrepreneurship in both the world of work and education. In university courses in economics, where entrepreneurship is taught, norms that emphasise and privilege men as the primary entrepreneurial actors prevail. Women thereby risk ending up in outsider positions (Aggestam & Wigren-Kristoferson, 2021).

The norm of the ideal entrepreneur as a man is strong. Flexible, without care responsibilities, with large contact networks and access to much higher levels of venture capital, male entrepreneurship is what counts. This then also becomes the yardstick for women's entrepreneurship. It is not only problematic expectations about the goals and meanings of entrepreneurship that differ. There are also conceptions that women and men are essentially different and therefore run different types of businesses. These expectations and perceptions both produce and reproduce entrepreneurship in ways that uphold the norm.



KEY MESSAGES

- Discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity and immigrant status is widespread in the gig economy.
- There are clear gender norms in the gig economy. A number of studies show that the gig labour market is highly gender-segregated and that a gender-stereotyped divide is perpetuated in relation to who works with what. Women and female-dominated gig sectors have lower pay than those that are male-dominated, and their work is often done in the home – their own or the homes of others – while gigs in male-dominated sectors are often performed in the public arena.
- The norm for the ideal worker as a man, flexible, without disabilities and without any care responsibilities is particularly strong in the gig economy. Boundless work is particularly evident in the gig economy, but the trends are the same as in the world of work in general.
- Norms concerning gender, immigrant status and other social categories are strongly linked to economic and political processes. A number of macro-level trends are interacting: the gig economy is growing rapidly, many recently arrived immigrants find it difficult to get jobs, and integration policies focus a great deal on the immigrant getting their ‘first job in the new country’ as indicative of integration.
- Platform companies can profit from workers’ vulnerability and insecure living situations through precarious working conditions. It is not certain whether work experience from gig jobs helps individuals to enter the regular labour market, especially for those who are subject to ethnic discrimination. There is instead a risk that gig work contributes to segmentation and increases inequality through individuals getting stuck in unattractive, low-paid jobs with insecure working conditions.
- Digital control through algorithms, ratings and other technical systems is another factor worth illuminating in relation to the gig economy, but also other forms of employment in a growing number of sectors. In the rating systems used in the gig economy, conscious and unconscious norms and values concerning ethnicity and gender risk contributing to discrimination through these ratings. Even in the apps’ algorithms, conceptions of gender, ethnicity and other categories are at risk of being perpetuated. This type of ‘built-in discrimination’ through ratings and complex technical systems often falls outside the laws intended to protect workers from discrimination.
- The norm of the ideal entrepreneur as a man is strong. Flexible and without care responsibilities, with large contact networks and access to much higher levels of venture capital, male entrepreneurship is what counts and becomes the yardstick for women’s entrepreneurship. It is not only problematic expectations about the goals and meanings of entrepreneurship that differ. There are also conceptions that women and men are essentially different and therefore run different types of businesses, which both produce and reproduce entrepreneurship in ways that maintain the norm.

Discussion

How can we create a sustainable world of work? Labour markets and the world of work are facing a variety of challenges, including challenges emanating from technological change, demographic shifts and regional differences. How knowledge, learning and education, and the logics of governance are viewed have all changed. Assumptions about technology-driven social development that have a bearing on the world of work and the supply of skills have been problematized, and in this report are positioned in relation to policy objectives for economic, social and environmental sustainable development. What needs to be done to enable sustainable development based on human rights, gender equality and no one being left behind?

Gender analyses indicate that prevailing norms and social structures assign women and men different roles, opportunities and responsibilities, and that this is an obstacle to the transition to a sustainable society. Economic interests and thus economic sustainability are often given priority over social and environmental sustainability. This goes against the Nordic model for the world of work and welfare, which has traditionally been based on an understanding that the social dimension is fundamental to economic development. The labour force is not some abstract entity, but flesh and blood people who exist in a social context and depend on what the reproductive sphere provides in the form of social care. Women still take a greater share of the responsibility for care work, which includes both unpaid work in the home and caring for others in the extended family, as well as paid work in the formal labour market. This norm has consequences in the form of gender segregation for example, where some occupations – particularly technology-oriented occupations – become gender-labelled as

masculine, while others – particularly care-oriented occupations – become gender-labelled as feminine. When climate policy is focused on promoting technology sectors as key to the green transition, and on making households better at consuming organically produced food and goods and sorting their waste, it risks strengthening this gender divide. Green jobs go to male-dominated industries, and women's responsibilities for unpaid domestic work become even more burdensome. The three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – need to be integrated if initiatives for change are going to be sustainable.

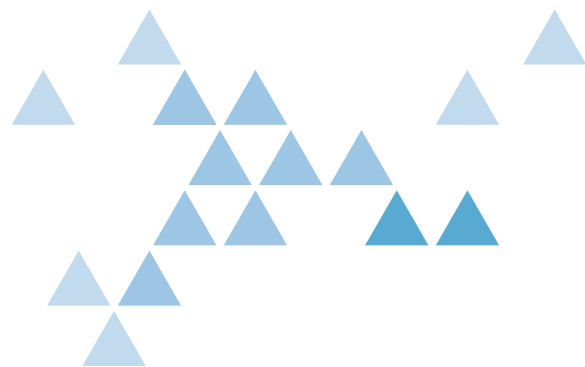
Gender norms concerning labour, which see individuals in an abstract way outside of any social context, are also expressed in ideas about skills and education. Individuals are meant to be equipped for employability in order to promote economic development in a rapidly changing world of work. The social dimension of sustainability has to take a back seat. Instead of developing into consummate citizens and responsible employees through education, both at work and beyond, the labour force is being stratified into a world of work that is segregated based on gender, ethnicity, class and other systems of power. This is apparent in particular in relation to who can work from home, who might be able to move to a rural area where they can enjoy the natural environment between their online meetings, and who has to go to a workplace to do their work, for example those working in healthcare, in retail shops, or as cleaners. This is also apparent in gigs in the gig economy, which is marketed as an opportunity to make money while anyway taking a bike ride for example. Gigs which are in fact lowly paid, with insecure employment conditions, and a high degree of external control.

The aspects of changes in the world of work that have been highlighted in this report are often focused on in various ways. However, the importance of gender perspectives on these issues is seldom emphasised, even though a number of studies show that it is highly relevant. There are not many years left before the sustainable development goals set out in the 2030 Agenda should be met. It is therefore of the utmost importance that efforts in the Nordic countries take this knowledge into account.

This knowledge base raises some important issues concerning changes in the world of work from a gender perspective using intersectional approaches. From this knowledge base, it is clear that development brings opportunities, but also challenges. Changes in the organisation of work and education are leading to greater gaps - economic as well as in terms of health and other living conditions, and then being able to determine where work is done. This is leading to increased segregation between groups and this segregation being perpetuated by education systems and labour markets that are perpetuating inequalities and structural injustices based on gender, class, ethnicity and other systems of power.

There are many opportunities to make the world of work in the future more sustainable, but for this to happen, power relationships must be taken into account. Power relationships do not automatically change as a consequence of technological or economic changes; they simply find new forms of expression, sometimes additional forms of expression. Resources and negotiating positions – and thus opportunities – are unevenly distributed. Utopias are not realised by themselves, and injustices do not simply disappear because society changes, and nor do they simply change with time. There is inequality in our communities and, in order not to perpetuate it, it is essential that changes are considered on the basis of this fact.

This knowledge base does not claim to be comprehensive. There are many more aspects and areas that are relevant to highlight from a gender perspective. The world is changing, and in all certainty the changes of the future will also require new knowledge that considers power relationships from an intersectional gender perspective. This is essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda and its sustainable development goals, and for creating a sustainable world of work, where no one is left behind.



References

- Adermon, A., & Hensvik, L. (2020). *Gig-jobs: Stepping stones or dead ends?* (2020:23; Working Paper). IFAU - Institutet för arbetsmarknads- och utbildningspolitisk utvärdering.
- Agenjo-Calderón, A., & Gálvez-Muñoz, L. (2019). Feminist Economics: Theoretical and Political Dimensions. *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 78(1), 137–166. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12264>
- Aggestam, M., & Wigren-Kristoferson, C. (2021). Entrepreneurship education and gender: The man-made entrepreneur. *International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business*, 12(1), 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGSB.2021.113837>
- Ahl, H. J. (2002). *The making of the female entrepreneur: A discourse analysis of research texts on women's entrepreneurship* [diss.]. Jönköping University.
- Ahl, H., & Marlow, S. (2021). Exploring the false promise of entrepreneurship through a postfeminist critique of the enterprise policy discourse in Sweden and the UK. *Human Relations*, 74(1), 41–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726719848480>
- Ahmed, A. M. (2005). *Essays on the Behavioral Economics of Discrimination* [diss.]. Växjö University. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:vxu:diva-4655>
- Alsos, K., & Dølvik, J. E. (2021). *The Future of Work in the Nordic Countries: Opportunities and Challenges for the Nordic Working Life Models*. Nordic Council of Ministers.
- Barzilayj, A. R., & Ben-David, A. (2017). Platform Inequality: Gender in the Gig-Economy. *Seton Hall Law Review*, 47(2), 393–432.
- Berg, J. (2016). Income security in the on-demand economy: Findings and policy lessons from a survey of crowdworkers. *Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal*, 37(3), 543–576.
- Berglund, K. (2007). *Jakten på entreprenörer: Om öppningar och låsningar i entreprenörskapsdiskursen* [diss.]. Mälardalen University <http://mdh.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:120598/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Berglund, T., Håkansson, K., Isidorsson, T., & Alfonsson, J. (2017). Temporary Employment and the Future Labor Market Status. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 7(2), 27–48. <https://doi.org/10.18291/njwls.v7i2.81593>
- Bergold, J., Blomqvist, N., & Larsson, L. (2021). *Vi som inte jobbade hemma: Hur covid-19 pandemin påverkat arbetsmarknad och villkoren i arbetet för kvinnor och män i arbetaryrken*. Landsorganisationen i Sverige.
- Berner, B. (2003). *Vem tillhör tekniken?: Kunskap och kön i teknikens värld*. Arkiv.
- Blackham, A. (2018). 'We are All Entrepreneurs Now': Options and New Approaches for Adapting Equality Law for the 'Gig Economy'. *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, 34(4), 413–434.

- Brodin, H., & Peterson, E. (2020). Equal Opportunities? Gendering and Racialising the Politics of Entrepreneurship in Swedish Eldercare. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 28(2), 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2019.1698653>
- Broughton, A., Gloster, R., Marvell, R., Green, M., Langley, J., & Martin, A. (2018). *The experiences of individuals in the gig economy*. Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/679987/171107_The_experiences_of_those_in_the_gig_economy.pdf
- Brown, W. (2003). Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy. *Theory & Event*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.2003.0020>
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Zone Books.
- Bruni, A., Gherardi, S., & Poggio, B. (2004). Entrepreneur-mentality, gender and the study of women entrepreneurs. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17(3), 256–268. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810410538315>
- Bursell, M. (2007). *What's in a name? A field experiment test for the existence of ethnic discrimination in the hiring process* (2007:7). The Stockholm University Linnaeus Center for Integration Studies (SUL-CIS).
- Card, J., & DiNardo, J. E. (2002). Skill-Biased Technological Change and Rising Wage Inequality: Some Problems and Puzzles. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 20(4), 733–783.
- Carlsson, M. (2010). Experimental Evidence of Discrimination in the Hiring of First- and Second-generation Immigrants: Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring. *LABOUR*, 24(3), 263–278. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9914.2010.00482.x>
- Carlsson, M., & Jacobsson, B. (2018). Om spänningar i en marknadsorienterad SFI-utbildning. I M. Dahlstedt & A. Fejes (Red.), *Skolan, marknaden och framtiden*. Studentlitteratur.
- Carlsson, M., & Rooth, D.-O. (2007). Evidence of ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labor market using experimental data. *Labour Economics*, 14(4), 716–729. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2007.05.001>
- Christensen, J. O., Bakke Finne, L., & Kristiansen, J. (2021). *The future of the Nordic psychosocial work environment: Implications for occupational health* (2021:507; NordPub). Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://doi.org/10.6027/temanord2021-507>
- Chung, H., & van der Lippe, T. (2020). Flexible Working, Work–Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction. *Social Indicators Research*, 151(2), 365–381. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2025-x>
- Criscuolo, C., Nicoletti, G., Gal, P., & Leidecker, T. (2020). *Productivity gains from teleworking in the post COVID-19 era: How can public policies make it happen?* (OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19)). OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/a5d52e99-en>
- Dahl, Å., Einarsson, H., & Strömquist, U. (2003). *Effekter av framtida regionförstoring i Stockholm-Mälarenregionen*. Länsstyrelsen i Västmanlands län.

- Dahlqvist, A. (2021) *Gender equality effects of COVID-19 – Knowledge and initiatives in the Nordic countries*. NIKK – Nordic Information on Gender. <https://nikk.no/en/publikationer/gender-equality-effects-of-covid-19-knowledge-and-initiatives-in-the-nordic-countries/>
- Drahokoupil, J., & Piasna, A. (2017). Work in the Platform Economy: Beyond Lower Transaction Costs. *Intereconomics*, 52(6), 335–340. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-017-0700-9>
- Dølvik, J. E., & Jesnes, K. (2017). *Nordic labour markets and the sharing economy—Report from a pilot project* (2017:508; TemaNord). Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://doi.org/10.6027/TN2017-508>
- Dølvik, J. E., & Steen, J. R. (2018). *The Nordic future of work: Drivers, institutions, and politics*. Nordic Council of Ministers.
- Elfert, M. (2019). Lifelong learning in Sustainable Development Goal 4: What does it mean for UNESCO’s rights-based approach to adult learning and education? *International Review of Education*, 65(4), 537–556. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-019-09788-z>
- Elomäki, A., & Koskinen Sandberg, P. (2020). Feminist Perspectives on the Economy within Transforming Nordic Welfare States. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 28(2), 81–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2020.1747248>
- Federici, S. (2014). From Commoning to Debt: Financialization, Microcredit, and the Changing Architecture of Capital Accumulation. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 113(2), 231–244. <https://doi.org/10/gk4wk3>
- Fejes, A., & Dahlstedt, M. (2018). Den entreprenörskapande skolan. I M. Dahlstedt & A. Fejes (Ed.), *Skolan, marknaden och framtiden*. Studentlitteratur.
- Foong, E., Vincent, N., Hecht, B., & Gerber, E. M. (2018). Women (Still) Ask For Less: Gender Differences in Hourly Rate in an Online Labor Marketplace. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 2(CSCW), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3274322>
- Futurion, & The Remote Lab. (2021). *Flyttmönster i ett förändrat arbetsliv: Signalerna som visar hur vi ser på att bo och jobba i framtiden*. Futurion. <https://futurion.se/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/futurion-flyttmonster74.pdf>
- Gash, V. (2008). Bridge or Trap? Temporary Workers’ Transitions to Unemployment and to the Standard Employment Contract. *European Sociological Review*, 24(5), 651–668. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcn027>
- Gil Solá, A. (2013). *På väg mot jämställda arbetsresor: Vardagens mobilitet i förändring och förhandling* [Diss.]. Göteborgs universitet.
- Glavin, P., & Schieman, S. (2012). Work–Family Role Blurring and Work–Family Conflict: The Moderating Influence of Job Resources and Job Demands. *Work and Occupations*, 39(1), 71–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888411406295>
- Grip, L. (2020). *Genusperspektiv på regionala utmaningar, regionalpolitik och demografisk utveckling i en nordisk kontext: En kunskapsöversikt*. NIKK - Nordisk information för kunskap om kön.

- Grünfeld, L., Hernes, S. M., & Karttinen, E. (2020). *Female Entrepreneurship in the Nordics 2020—A comparative study*. Nordic Innovation. <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1438362/FULLTEXT02.pdf>
- Hallberg, B., & Saar, M. (2020). *Jobba hemifrån—Är distansarbete här för att stanna?* Fackförbundet ST. https://st.org/sites/default/files/attachment/st_rapport_-_distansarbete.pdf
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Hauben, H., Lenaerts, K., & Waeyaert, W. (2020). *The platform economy and precarious work*. Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament.
- Hernes, H. M. (1987). *Welfare state and woman power: Essays in state feminism*. Norwegian Univ. Press.
- Holmquist, C., & Sundin, E. (Red.). (2002). *Företagarskan: Om kvinnor och entreprenörskap*. SNS förl.
- Härenstam, A., & Björk, L. (2021). *Källor till förståelse av skillnader i psykisk ohälsa: Styrning, organisering och värdering av arbete på en segregerad arbetsmarknad (2021:7)*. Jämställdhetsmyndigheten.
- ILO. (2017). *Inception Report for the Global Commission on the Future of Work*. International Labour Organization (ILO).
- ILO. (2019). *Work for a brighter future: ILO Global Commission Report on the Future of Work*. International Labour Organization (ILO).
- ILO. (2021). *World employment and social outlook 2021: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work (ILO Flagship Report)*. International Labour Office.
- Imdorf, C., Reisel, L., & Hegna, K. (Red.). (2015). *Gender segregation in vocational education*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Imsen, G., Blossing, U., & Moos, L. (2017). Reshaping the Nordic education model in an era of efficiency. Changes in the comprehensive school project in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden since the millennium. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 61(6), 754–754. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2016.1194602>
- Jamil, R., & Noiseux, Y. (2018). Shake That Moneymaker: Insights from Montreal’s Uber Drivers. *Interventions Économiques*, 60. <https://doi.org/10.4000/interventionseconomiques.4139>
- Jansson, U., & Sand, J. (2021). *Genusperspektiv på framtidens högteknologiska arbetsliv: En nordisk forskningsöversikt om utbildningsval inom STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) (2021:518; TemaNord)*. Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://pub.norden.org/temanord2021-518/temanord2021-518.pdf>
- Jarl, M., & Larsson, H. A. (Red.). (2020). *Utbildningens organisation och villkor, demokratins grunder*. Natur & Kultur.
- Johansson, J., Abrahamsson, L., Kåreborn, B. B., Fältholm, Y., Grane, C., & Wykowska, A. (2017). Work and organization in a digital industrial context. *Management Revue*, 28(3), 281–297. <https://doi.org/10/gcjqj>

- Jonung, L., Kiander, J., & Vartia, P. (2009). *The Great Financial Crisis in Finland and Sweden*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849802130>
- Kanny, M. A., Sax, L. J., & Riggers-Piehl, T. A. (2014). Investigating forty years of STEM research: How explanations for the gender gap have evolved over time. *Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering*, 20(2), 127–148. <https://doi.org/10.1615/JWomenMinorScienEng.2014007246>
- Kuhn, K. M., & Maleki, A. (2017). Micro-entrepreneurs, Dependent Contractors, and Instaserfs: Understanding Online Labor Platform Workforces. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 31(3), 183–200. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2015.0111>
- Kullmann, M. (2018). Platform Work, Algorithmic Decision-Making, and EU Gender Equality Law. *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, 34(1), 1–21.
- Lander Svendsen, N., Weber, K., Factor, G., Winther Engelsbak, L., & Fischer-Bogason, R. (2022). *How climate policies impact gender and vice versa in the Nordic countries* (2022:507; TemaNord). Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://pub.norden.org/temanord2022-507/temanord2022-507.pdf>
- Lehdonvirta, V. (2018). Flexibility in the gig economy: Managing time on three online piecework platforms. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 33(1), 13–29. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12102>
- Leopold, A., Ratcheva, V., & Zahidi, S. (2016). *The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (Global Challenge Insight Report). World Economic Forum. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf
- Leung, M. D., & Koppman, S. (2018). Taking a Pass: How Proportional Prejudice and Decisions Not to Hire Reproduce Gender Segregation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 124(3), 762–813. <https://doi.org/10.1086/700677>
- Lewandowski, P., Lipowska, K., & Magda, I. (2021). The Gender Dimension of Occupational Exposure to Contagion in Europe. *Feminist Economics*, 27(1–2), 48–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2021.1880016>
- Liljeröd, E., & Wingborg, M. (2022). *Distansarbetet efter Corona: Tolv förslag för ett bättre arbetsliv*. Arena Idé. <https://arenaide.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/01/arena-ide-distansarbete-webb-2022.pdf>
- Lott, Y. (2020). Does Flexibility Help Employees Switch Off from Work? Flexible Working-Time Arrangements and Cognitive Work-to-Home Spillover for Women and Men in Germany. *Social Indicators Research*, 151(2), 471–494. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2031-z>
- Lott, Y., & Chung, H. (2016). Gender Discrepancies in the Outcomes of Schedule Control on Overtime Hours and Income in Germany. *European Sociological Review*, 32(6), 752–765. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcw032>
- Mellén, J. (2021). *Stability and Change: Exploring policy formations, options and choice in Swedish upper secondary education* [Diss.]. Göteborgs universitet. <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/67352>
- Nordic Council of Ministers. (2019). *The Nordic Gender Effect at Work: Nordic experiences on parental leave, childcare, flexible work arrangements, leadership and equal opportunities at work*. Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://doi.org/10.6027/NO2019-058>

- Nordic Council of Ministers. (2020). *Så blir Norden världens mest hållbara och integrerade region: Handlingsplan 2021-2024*. Nordic Council of Ministers. <http://doi.org/10.6027/politknord2020-707>
- Nylund, M., Ledman, K., & Rosvall, P.-Å. (2020). Historiska perspektiv på yrkesutbildning och demokrati. I P.-Å. Rosvall, K. Ledman, M. Nylund, & M. Rönnlund (Red.), *Yrkesämnen och skolans demokratiuppdrag*. Gleerups.
- OECD. (2018). *Is the Last Mile the Longest? Economic Gains from Gender Equality in Nordic Countries*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264300040-en>
- OECD. (2019). *OECD Employment Outlook 2019: The Future of Work*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9ee00155-en>
- Ogbor, J. O. (2000). Mythicizing and Reification in Entrepreneurial Discourse: Ideology-Critique of Entrepreneurial Studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(5), 605–635. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00196>
- Palm, J. (2019). *Arbetsvillkor och arbetsförhållanden inom gigekonomin: En kunskapsöversikt*. Forte – Forskningsrådet för hälsa, arbetsliv och välfärd.
- Perez, C. (2009). *Technological revolutions and techno-economic paradigms* (Nr 20; Working Papers in Technology Governance and Economic Dynamics). Tallinn University of Technology.
- Petriglieri, G., Ashford, S. J., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2019). Agony and Ecstasy in the Gig Economy: Cultivating Holding Environments for Precarious and Personalized Work Identities. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 64(1), 124–170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839218759646>
- Qiu, J. L. (2018). China's digital working class and circuits of labor. *Communication and the Public*, 3(1), 5–18.
- Rosenblat, A. (2018). *Uberland: How algorithms are rewriting the rules of work*. University of California Press.
- Rydell, B. (2021). *Flexibla arbetslivet - en kvinnofälla? Så ser Akavias medlemmar på det nya arbetslivet, stress och hushållsarbete*. Akavia. <https://www.akavia.se/siteassets/01-gemensamt/trycksaker-och-broschyrer/flexibla-arbetslivet--en-kvinnofalla.pdf>
- Sachs, J., Traub-Schmidt, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., & Fuller, G. (2021). *The sustainable development goals and Covid-19: Includes the SDG index and dashboards*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108992241>
- SCB. (2022). *Medellivslängden åter i nivå med 2019*. Statistiska Centralbyrån. [http://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/statistiknyhet/befolkningsstatistik-helaret-2021/](http://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/statistiknyhet/befolkningsstatistik-helaret-2021/)
- Schieman, S., & Young, M. (2010). Is There a Downside to Schedule Control for the Work-Family Interface? *Journal of Family Issues*, 31(10), 1391–1414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10361866>
- Schor, J. B. (2017). Does the sharing economy increase inequality within the eighty percent?: Findings from a qualitative study of platform providers. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 10(2), 263–279. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjres/tsw047>

- Schwab, K. (2015, december 12). The Fourth Industrial Revolution: What it means and how to respond. *Foreign Affairs*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>
- Simonsson, A. (2022). *Vocational education and training in the Nordic countries – Knowledge and interventions to combat gender segregation* (2022:503; TemaNord). Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://nikk.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/temanord2022-521-print-en.pdf>
- Skolverket. (2020). *Uppföljning av gymnasieskolan 2020* (2020:4). Statens skolverk.
- SOU 2005:66. (2005). *Makt att forma samhället och sitt eget liv—Jämställdhetspolitiken mot nya mål: Slutbetänkande från Jämställdhetspolitiska utredningen*. Statens offentliga utredningar. <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2005/08/sou-200566>
- SOU 2008:27. (2008). *Framtidsvägen—En reformerad gymnasieskola: Betänkande av Gymnasieutredningen*. Statens offentliga utredningar. <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/10/15/87/e19ae344.pdf>
- SOU 2017:24. (2017). *Ett arbetsliv i förändring—Hur påverkas ansvaret för arbetsmiljön? Betänkande av Utredningen om arbetsmiljöregler för ett modernt arbetsliv*. Statens offentliga utredningar.
- Standing, G. (2013). *Prekariatet: Den nya farliga klassen* (J. Nordqvist, Övers.; orig. 2011). Daidalos.
- Stewart, A., & Stanford, J. (2017). Regulating work in the gig economy: What are the options? *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 28(3), 420–437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304617722461>
- Styhre, A. (2005). Ideology and the subjectification of the entrepreneurial self. *International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy*, 1(2), 168. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMCP.2005.007929>
- Svensson, M. (2020). *Sexually harassed at work: An overview of the research in the Nordic countries* (2020:511; TemaNord). Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://nikk.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Sexually-harassed-at-work-nordic-2020.pdf>
- Tesfahuney, M., & Dahlstedt, M. (Ed.). (2008). *Den bästa av världar? Beträktelser över en postpolitisk samtid*. Tankekraft.
- Ticona, J., & Mateescu, A. (2018). Trusted strangers: Carework platforms' cultural entrepreneurship in the on-demand economy. *New Media & Society*, 20(11), 4384–4404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818773727>
- Tählin, M. (2019). *Polariseringsmyten: Försvinner verkligen de medelkvalificerade jobben?* Arena Idé. <https://arenaide.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/rap-polariseringsmyt-final-webb2.pdf>
- UN. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations.
- UNDP (Red.). (2020). *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*. United Nations Development Programme.
- Unison. (2021). *Working from home and hybrid working: Bargaining guide*. Unison. <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2021/08/Working-from-home-and-hybrid-working-bargaining-guide-and-model-policy-v6.pdf>

Labour markets and the world of work are facing a variety of challenges, including challenges emanating from technological change, demographic shifts and regional differences. How knowledge, learning and education, and the logics of governance are viewed have all changed. This knowledge base describes these changes and focuses on three challenges for a sustainable world of work:

- ▶ Lifelong learning: being schooled in readiness to change
- ▶ The significance of place: teleworking and work on site
- ▶ Forms of employment and working conditions: the gig economy and entrepreneurship as examples

By identifying the challenges from a gender perspective, one can problematize assumptions about technology-driven social development that have a bearing on the world of work and the supply of skills. They are also seen in relation to policy goals for sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

What needs to be done to enable sustainable development based on human rights, gender equality and no one being left behind? In this knowledge base, opportunities and challenges are discussed.

Towards a sustainable future world of work in the Nordic countries – The gender perspective on the opportunities and challenges

This publication is produced by NIKK, Nordic Information on Gender, a Nordic cooperative body commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Text: Susanna Young Håkansson, Jimmy Sand, Ulrika Jansson and Angelica Simonsson.

Photo: Johnér, Unsplash.

Gothenburg, 2022

nikk.no, norden.org