



LUND UNIVERSITY

Workers, co-determination, social partners, and quality of work

Kjellberg, Anders

2021

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Kjellberg, A. (2021). *Workers, co-determination, social partners, and quality of work*. EUWIN Forum May 28th 2021, Stockholm, Sweden.

Total number of authors:

1

General rights

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

*EUWIN (European Workplace Innovation Network)
Forum May 28th 2021*

*European Approaches to Sustainable Work – Future Challenges:
Workers, co-determination, social partners, and quality of work*

Anders Kjellberg, senior professor
Department of Sociology
Lund University

Link to this presentation: [https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/publications/workers-codetermination-social-partners-and-quality-of-work\(244cc06c-0514-4a57-ab4b-14b783254b63\).html](https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/publications/workers-codetermination-social-partners-and-quality-of-work(244cc06c-0514-4a57-ab4b-14b783254b63).html)



LUND UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences

Social partners and the Nordic model (1)

- The Nordic model is distinguished by **self-regulation** in contrast to **state regulation** (dominating French industrial relations).*
- That means a **high degree of autonomy of the social partners** in setting the terms of employment by **collective agreements**.
- The model of self-regulation is most far-reaching in Denmark and Sweden as these countries have **neither statutory minimum wages, nor state extension of collective agreements**. That explains why Denmark and Sweden strongly oppose the EU directive on minimum wages unless they are conceded absolutely safe guarantees for their labour market models.
- Self-regulation does not mean that the state is completely absent. An example is the state-subsidized union unemployment funds, so-called **Ghent systems**, which still are important for the high union density in **Denmark, Finland and Sweden**.
- A current example of cooperation between the Swedish government, unions and employers is the large number of **collective agreements on short-time jobs**.

* A. Kjellberg (2017) "Self-regulation versus State Regulation in Swedish Industrial Relations". In Rönmar, M. & Julén Votinius, J. (eds.) *Festskrift till Ann Numhauser-Henning*. Lund, Juristförlaget, pp. 357-383.

Social partners and the Nordic model (2)

- The Swedish **labour legislation** on job security, co-determination, shop stewards, and working environment enacted in the 1970s has strengthened unions and safety representatives at workplace level by extended negotiation rights and the power of safety representatives to stop dangerous work.
- Nordic industrial relations are distinguished by a **combination of centralization** (basic agreements, industry/sectoral agreements) **and decentralization** (strong union presence at workplace level, so-called union clubs).
- **Centralization** (central compromises with centralized employers' associations + industry agreements) prevents a fragmentary coverage of unions. Contributory is also the **high density of employers' associations** with a co-operative approach.
- Both **one-sided centralization** (the Netherlands) and **one-sided decentralization** (for example Estonia and the UK) weaken trade unions.
- A **high union density** is a condition for **strong workplace unions** with capacity to influence the employers in creating good work.

Large variations between European states (1)

- **Five European industrial relations models*:**

- *Nordic*: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden (high union density and coverage of collective agreements, self-regulation/"voluntarism")
- *Continental*: Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland (social partnership, works councils, low union density except Belgium)
- *Anglo-Saxon*: the UK, Ireland (voluntarism, weak private sector unions)
- *Southern*: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, France (divided union movements, low union density except Italy, state extension of collective agreements in France and Spain, high mobilization capacity towards the state)
- *CEE*: the Central and Eastern European member states (low union density, decentralized bargaining where it exists)

* A. Kjellberg (2021) "The shifting role of unions in the social dialogue", *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, vol. 6 Issues 1-2, March 2021, pp. 221-224.

Large variations between European states (2)

- Within the EU does **union density** vary from four per cent in Estonia (2018) to 69 per cent in Sweden (2020).
- There has been considerable membership losses in several countries, including the Nordic countries except Norway.
- Union density does not exceed 20 per cent in 18 out of 27 EU/EES countries listed in Table 4 in “The shifting role of unions in the social dialogue” (p. 234).* These include Germany, Spain, France, Greece, Poland and Hungary.
- Also the **coverage of collective agreements** (Table 5, p. 235)* differs a lot despite extension mechanisms in several countries, but it should be noted that also in a country like Sweden does it exist some white spots.

* A. Kjellberg (2021) “The shifting role of unions in the social dialogue”, *European Journal of Workplace Innovation. Special Double Issue: European Approaches to Sustainable Work*, vol. 6 Issues 1-2, March 2021, pp. 233-234, 235.

Blue-collar and white collar unions cooperate and persuade Volvo Cars to transform the engine plant in Skövde for production of electric engines (1)

- There is a mutually positive relationship between **high union density** and **strong union presence at workplace level**, in the Nordic countries called **union clubs**.
- The prospects for union influence increase if the workplace clubs of blue-collar and white-collar unions **cooperate**.
- A recent Swedish example of **pro-active unions promoting new technology to secure the jobs for green production** is the success of the workplace unions at Volvo Cars' engine plant in Skövde (not far from Gothenburg in Sweden) to persuade the company to invest €70 million to transform the factory for production of electric engines.
- In the year before (the autumn 2019) had the CEO of Volvo Cars announced that Skövde was no good alternative for production of electric engines.
- The blue-collar union *IF Metall* and white-collar unions *Unionen* and the Association of Graduate Engineers in the Skövde plant cooperated closely and raised the issue in **the group union** (in Swedish “koncernfacket”). *IF Metall* was the driving union. The Association of Graduate Engineers provided *IF Metall* with factual evidence.

Blue-collar and white collar unions cooperate and persuade Volvo Cars to transform the engine plant in Skövde for production of electric engines (2)

- The union representatives in the **company board** pushed the issue. The chairman of **the group union** (Glenn Bergström in Gothenburg) was also the *IF Metall* representative in the company board.
- There was a **dialogue** between the group union, the CEO and the HR manager during “countless meetings”.* The company was open for arguments and prepared to change the preliminary decision not to produce electric engines in Skövde. The union arguments for Skövde was:
 - 1) Available space in the plant,
 - (2) Possible to use parts of existing production equipment,
 - (3) Plenty of workers with the skills required,
 - (4) The electric test laboratory in the Skövde plant cooperating with the University of Skövde.

* Interview 27 May 2021 with Marko Borg Peltonen, chairman of the *IF Metall* club at Volvo Cars in Skövde. 7

Blue-collar and white collar unions cooperate and persuade Volvo Cars to transform the engine plant in Skövde for production of electric engines (3)

- The **electrical test laboratory** in Skövde was a strategic advantage strengthening the arguments of the unions.
- An **employee consultant** produced factual evidence that supported the union's views.
- Today the Skövde plant employs about 1 200 blue-collar workers for the production of combustion engines, but for electric engines only 500 will be needed in the future. If the company succeed selling electric engines to other car manufacturers the hope of *IF Metall* is that all the 1 200 will be needed. In all are 2 000 persons employed at Volvo Car Engine Skövde.
- Press release Volvo Cars December 9 2020: “The workers are competent and committed to deliver at highest possible quality”.
- Volvo Cars are since 2010 owned by the Chinese Zhejiang Geely Holding.
- The Swedish truck manufacturer AB Volvo with 3 000 employees in Skövde has made a preliminary decision to produce electric engines in Skövde.

References to the union success at Volvo Cars in Skövde

”Volvo Cars satsar på egna elmotorer i Skövde” (Dagens Arbete 9/12 2020):

<https://da.se/2020/12/volvo-cars-satsar-pa-egna-elmotorer-i-skovde/>

”Facken på Volvo räddade hundratals jobb i Skövde ” (Kollega 5/2 2021):

<https://www.kollega.se/facken-pa-volvo-raddade-hundratals-jobb-i-skovde>

”Facken bakom Volvo Cars ja till att tillverka elmotorer i Skövde” (Ingenjören 16/2 2021):

<https://www.ingenjoren.se/2021/02/16/facken-bakom-volvo-cars-ja-till-att-tillverka-elmotorer-i-skovde/>

”Seger för facken vid Volvo i Skövde” (Ingenjören 16/2 2021):

<https://www.ingenjoren.se/2021/02/16/facken-bakom-volvo-cars-ja-till-att-tillverka-elmotorer-i-skovde/>

IF Metall: ”Facket räddade jobben i Skövde”:

<https://www.ifmetall.se/tidningen-info/arbetsliv/2021/facket-raddade-jobben-i-skovde/>

Ny Teknik 9/12 2020: ”Volvo Cars ska bygga egna elmotorer i Skövde”:

<https://www.nyteknik.se/fordon/volvo-cars-ska-bygga-egna-elmotorer-i-skovde-7006551> Volvo Cars Press release 9/12 2020

Volvo Cars Press release: ”Volvo Cars kommer tillverka elmotorer i Skövde”:

<https://www.media.volvocars.com/se/sv-se/media/pressreleases/275653/volvo-cars-kommer-tillverka-elmotorer-i-skovde>

Högskolan i Skövde 12/8 2020: ”Omställningen till elmotorer förbereds i testlabb”

<https://www.his.se/nyheter/2020/augusti/omstallningen-till-elmotorer-forbereds-i-testlabb/>

See also Anders Kjellberg (2021) *Elva dimensioner av facklig styrka: En kort presentation av rapporten "Vad är facklig styrka? Arbetsplatsfacket centralt i den svenska partsmodellen:*

https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/96708620/Elva_dimensioner_av_facklig_styrka_Anders_Kjellberg.pdf

https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/94464595/Futurion_Vad_r_facklig_styrka_Anders_Kjellberg_2021.pdf

and

The fight of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union for safe working conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic (1)

- During the Covid-19 pandemic the Municipal Workers' Union (*Kommunal*) and its safety representatives very actively fought to get the employers remedy the **dangerous and mentally stressful working conditions** to which many members in elderly care, home care service and of bus operators were exposed.*
- A substantial share of these workplaces is run by private companies. Among them are **employees on hourly contracts** (= “day labourers”) overrepresented. The union recruits members in both public and private sectors.
- The union considered that wearing a face shields (*visir*) together with a face mask (*not including the nose*) was insufficient and demanded access to **breathing masks** (*andningsskydd*).
- In several places, the **safety representatives used their right to stop dangerous work** but the Swedish Work Environment Authority **repealed** the stops as they had found no evidence that Covid-19 was airborne, but infected only by contagion (*droppsmitta*).

* Lisa Pelling (2020) *Att stå längst fram. En skildring av villkoren för medlemmar i Kommunal under coronakrisen våren 2020*. Stockholm: Arena Idé.

The fight of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union for safe working conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic (2)

- More than a year later, May 7 2021, when the personnel already was vaccinated, did the Work Environment Authority issue **new guidelines** as new research showed that the virus also is airborne (aerosol). Now breathing masks are required in home care service in case of Covid-19 or suspicion of the disease (“Vid arbete i någon annans hem, där personer har misstänkt, eller konstaterad covid-19, ska andningsskydd och visir användas” AMV 7/5 2021)* and in elderly care after risk assessment after taking into account the state of knowledge.
- The union was rewarded for its efforts to improve the working environment during the pandemic by a substantial **membership growth** in 2020. Most unions grew only during March and April when people were worried over what would happen with their lives when a previously unknown pandemic and a new kind of economic crisis suddenly broke out.

* <https://www.av.se/nyheter/2021/andningsskydd-kan-behovas-vid-arbete-i-nagon-annans-hem/>

The fight of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union for safe working conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic (3)

- In 2020 the number of members in the Municipal Workers' Union increased from 500 600 to 518 800, that is by **18 200 members**, of which 8 800 during the first half of the year and **9 400 during the second half of the year**.*
- To explain why the Municipal Workers' Union could recruit very large numbers of members also during the second half of 2020 it is necessary to consider **the union's intensive efforts** both at the local and the central level to improve the working conditions of its members in at least three respects:

(1) *Physical protection from infection,*

(2) *To alleviate anxiety about getting infected,*

(3) *To get rid of the frustration caused by employers and authorities not prepared to satisfy the demands of the union and the employees.*

- Many members compare the **cost of membership** with the **utility of being a member**. Unions successfully working for good and secure jobs can therefore be expected to be successful in recruiting new members.

* A. Kjellberg (2021) *Den svenska modellen 2020: pandemi och nytt huvudavtal*. Stockholm: Arena Idé.

[https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/sv/publications/den-svenska-modellen-2020-pandemi-och-nytt-huvudavtal\(bf71341d-dc03-4983-9287-4093d2a47e4c\).html](https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/sv/publications/den-svenska-modellen-2020-pandemi-och-nytt-huvudavtal(bf71341d-dc03-4983-9287-4093d2a47e4c).html) p. 51

The group union's fight for new green jobs at the Volvo Cars Skövde plant compared to the fight of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union for safe jobs in elderly care and home care service

Anxiety / mental stress:

- For secure jobs in Skövde
- For safe working environment in elderly care and home care service

Innovation:

- Transition to production of electric engines (**green, secure jobs**) in Skövde:
successful dialogue unions – company
- Transition to breathing masks in elderly care and home care service (**safe jobs**):
long struggle union – employers and authorities
- Transition from hourly contracts to regular jobs for the relatively large share of precarious care workers (remains do be done)

*What has happened with "the good work"? (1)**

- In the 1980s did the Metalworkers' Union launch **the concept of "good work"**.
- Some large manufacturing companies showed great interest in order to solve **problems of quality and high labour turnover**.
- In the 1990s, rapidly **rising unemployment** and the introduction of **new production concepts** fundamentally changed this. As a result, "simple jobs" have far from disappeared in manufacturing industry.
- Ericsson and Electrolux have **moved almost all production abroad**, but the vehicle manufacturers Scania, AB Volvo and Volvo Cars have still a significant production in Sweden, primarily based on assembly lines.

* A. Kjellberg (2021) "The shifting role of unions in the social dialogue", *European Journal of Workplace Innovation. Special Double Issue: European Approaches to Sustainable Work*, vol. 6 Issues 1-2, March 2021, pp. 226-228

What has happened with "the good work"? (2)

- According to surveys 1994-2013 among the *IF Metall* workplace clubs, the **cycle times have successively been shortened**. The most negative development occurred along assembly lines and in the largest companies.
- A **dual picture** emerged. In some workplaces, all blue-collar workers were covered by development at work. In others, primarily skilled workers got the opportunity to develop in their work, while other workers were not included at all, or experienced a negative development.
- Some blue-collar workers perform work which is **similar to that of white-collar workers**. The *IF Metall* president thinks that the union in the future will merge with the white-collar *Unionen* (Sweden's largest union)
- The strategy of *IF Metall* is to **make the best of lean production** and as far as possible combine it with good work.
- *IF Metall* renamed *good work* to *developing work* and later to *sustainable work*.

What has happened with "the good work"? (3)

Why has the employers' interest in creating good jobs declined?

- Much *higher unemployment* than in the 1970s and 1980s.
- The hiring of personnel from *staffing companies*.
- *Intensified international competition*.
- Much production has *moved abroad*. In 1980 42% of the employees in the 80 largest Swedish-owned manufacturing groups were employed abroad. In 2018 this share was 84%.*
- It is easier to move production abroad or hire personnel if the work is fragmented and standardized with short cycle times.**
- The introduction of new production concepts like *lean production*.

* A. Kjellberg (2021) "The shifting role of unions in the social dialogue", *European Journal of Workplace Innovation. Special Double Issue: European Approaches to Sustainable Work*, vol. 6 Issues 1-2, pp. 226-229.

** A. Kjellberg (2019) "Den svenska partsmodellen – facket, arbetsgivarna och lönebildningen". In Sandberg, 16 Å. (ed.) *Arbete & Välfärd. Ledning, personal och organisationsmodeller i Sverige*, pp. 144-146.

A selection of publications by Anders Kjellberg (1)

A. Kjellberg (2021) “The shifting role of unions in the social dialogue”, *European Journal of Workplace Innovation. Special Double Issue: European Approaches to Sustainable Work*, vol. 6 Issues 1-2, March 2021, pp. 220-244.

https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/94935911/Unions_in_social_dialogue_Kjellberg_Workplace_Innovation.pdf

A. Kjellberg (2021) *Den svenska modellen 2020: pandemi och nytt huvudavtal*. Stockholm: Arena Idé. [https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/sv/publications/den-svenska-modellen-2020-pandemi-och-nytt-huvudavtal\(bf71341d-dc03-4983-9287-4093d2a47e4c\).html](https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/sv/publications/den-svenska-modellen-2020-pandemi-och-nytt-huvudavtal(bf71341d-dc03-4983-9287-4093d2a47e4c).html)

A. Kjellberg (2021) *Elva dimensioner av facklig styrka: En kort presentation av rapporten "Vad är facklig styrka?"*

https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/96708620/Elva_dimensioner_av_facklig_styrka_Anders_Kjellberg.pdf

A. Kjellberg (2021) *Vad är facklig styrka? Arbetsplatsfacket centralt i den svenska partsmodellen*. Stockholm: Futurion.

https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/94464595/Futurion_Vad_är_facklig_styrka_Anders_Kjellberg_2021.pdf

A selection of publications by Anders Kjellberg (2)

A. Kjellberg (2019) ”Den svenska partsmodellen – facket, arbetsgivarna och lönebildningen”. In Sandberg, Å. (ed.) *Arbete & Välfärd. Ledning, personal och organisationsmodeller i Sverige*. Lund, Studentlitteratur, pp. 119-147.

A. Kjellberg (2019) ”Sweden: collective bargaining under the industry norm”. In Müller, T. & Vandaele, K. & Waddington, J. (2019) *Collective bargaining in Europe: towards an endgame*. Brussels: European trade union institute, Volume III, pp. 583-604.

[https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/sv/publications/sweden-collective-bargaining-under-the-industry-norm\(11510a6d-057c-4a81-b69b-a82670685caa\).html](https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/sv/publications/sweden-collective-bargaining-under-the-industry-norm(11510a6d-057c-4a81-b69b-a82670685caa).html)

A. Kjellberg (2017) ”Self-regulation versus State Regulation in Swedish Industrial Relations”. In Rönmar, M. & Julén Votinius, J. (eds.) *Festskrift till Ann Numhauser-Henning*. Lund, Juristförlaget, pp. 357-383.

http://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/23904978/Kjellberg_FSNumhauserHenning_Self_Regulation_State_Regulation.pdf

Contact information

Anders Kjellberg, senior professor

Department of Sociology

P.O. Box 114

SE-221 00 Lund

Sweden

Phone: +46 46 222 88 47

E-mail: anders.kjellberg@soc.lu.se

Site: <http://www.soc.lu.se/anders-kjellberg>

Short site in English: <https://www.soc.lu.se/en/anders-kjellberg>



LUND UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences