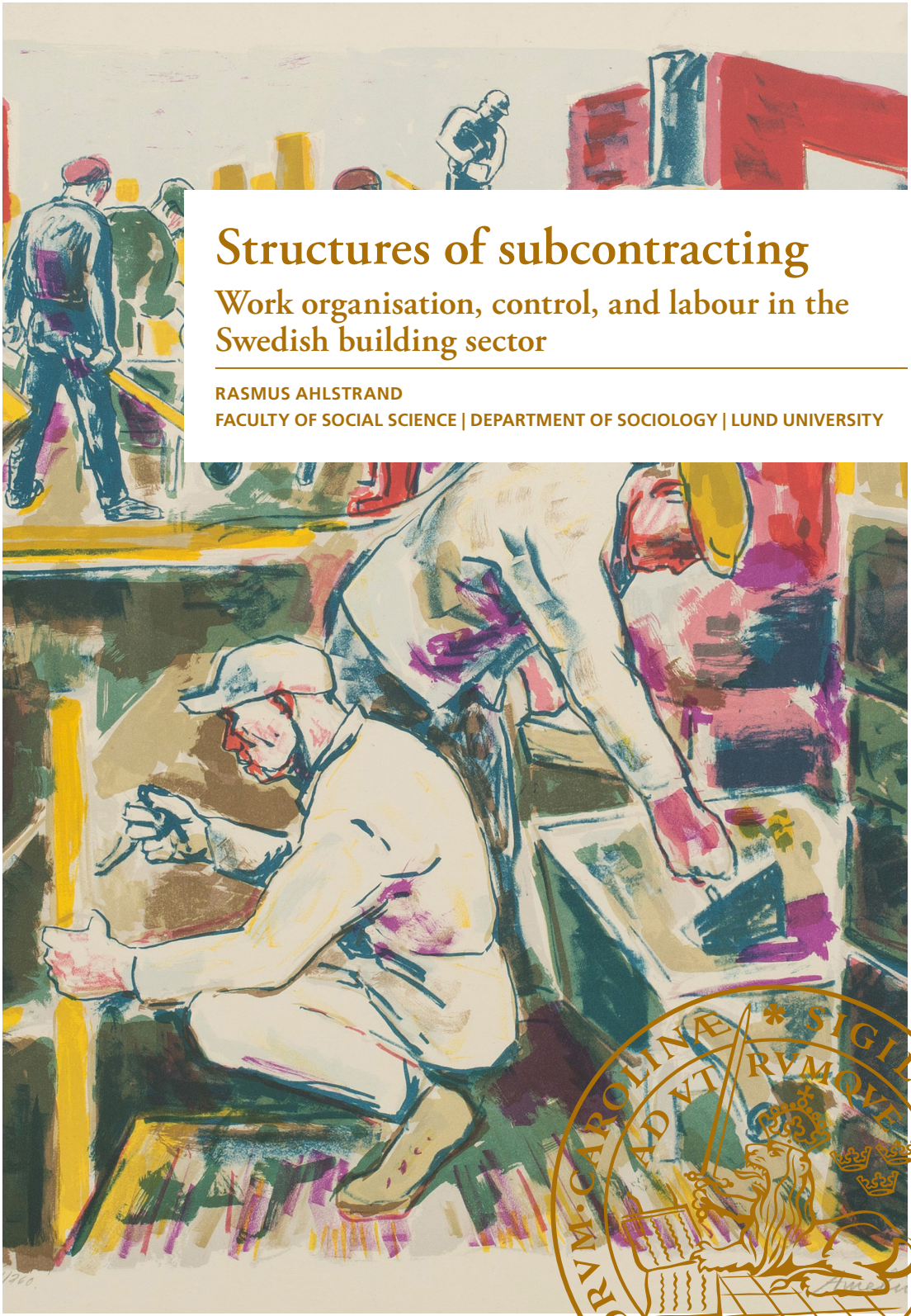
Structures of subcontracting

Work organisation, control, and labour in the Swedish building sector

Ahlstrand, Rasmus

2022

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record



Structures of subcontracting

Work organisation, control, and labour in the Swedish building sector

RASMUS AHLSTRAND
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE | DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY | LUND UNIVERSITY

Structures of subcontracting

Structures of subcontracting

Work organisation, control, and labour in the Swedish building sector

Rasmus Ahlstrand

LUND
UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

by due permission of the Faculty of Social Sciences,
Lund University, Sweden.
To be defended at Edens hörsal, 11th of February 2022 at 10.15.

Faculty opponent
Paul Stewart

Organization LUND UNIVERSITY	**Document name** Doctoral dissertation
	Date of issue 10th January 2022
Author: Rasmus Ahlstrand	Sponsoring organization

Title and subtitle: Structures of subcontracting. Work organisation, control, and labour in the Swedish building sector

The organisation of work in the Swedish building sector is changing due to increased subcontracting and the adoption of construction management. In this study, construction management refers to a specific subcontracting regime, in which contractors externalise all parts of the production process and organise work through subcontractors. Echoing global trends of cost-cutting, this externalisation between Swedish contractors and subcontractors attempts to achieve organisational flexibility by reducing the number of directly employed craftsmen. Such trends have accelerated in the past two decades as a result of the expansion of the EU-single market and the inclusion of new member states from mainly Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in 2004 and 2007.

This study builds upon theories of the sociology of work and sets out to analyse the current subcontracting regime of construction management from a labour process perspective. Based on a case study research design with interviews and visits to construction sites, the organisation of work in two building companies is analysed with the aim of exploring various manifestations of organisational change visible through dis-integrated organisational structures contingent on subcontracting. The analysis shows that contractors and subcontractors engage in a variety of contractual agreements structured around a balancing of price, quality, and acquaintance; but that the access to cheap labour in the EU-labour market incentivises firms to engage to a further extent in contractual agreements based on price than in previous practice. A key finding in this thesis is the use of *masked staffing* in the organisation of work. Masked staffing is a novel and previously unconceptualised form of subcontracting, which elaborates on how subcontracting arrangements reliant upon external business relations with trade-specialists build on principles of *staffing* rather than those of *actual subcontracting*. Rather than the externalisation of managerial control over labour, which is the case in different forms of subcontracting, direct control over labour remains with the general contractor in masked staffing. Consequently, I demonstrate that rather than subcontractors, firms contracted on principles of masked staffing act simply as *unauthorised staffing agencies* involved in the brokering of (cheap) labour.

To conclude, this thesis shows how the current subcontracting regime of construction management restructures the organisational architectonic of work in the Swedish building sector. Such restructuring is indicative of the plethora of possibilities for contractors and subcontractors alike, in terms of both shifting costs and responsibilities; moreover, it reveals tensions and contradictions in the labour process, including the changing character of contemporary construction work.

Key words: work organisation, control, subcontracting, masked staffing, labour process

Classification system and/or index terms (if any)

Supplementary bibliographical information	**Language:** English
ISSN and key title: 1102-4712 Lund Dissertations in sociology 127	**ISBN:** 978-91-8039-108-5

Recipient's notes	**Number of pages:** 272	Price
	Security classification	

Signature  Date 2022-01-10

Structures of subcontracting

Work organisation, control, and labour in the Swedish building sector

Rasmus Ahlstrand

LUND
UNIVERSITY

Cover photo by Albin Amelin, 'Murare'

Faculty of Social Science
Department of Sociology

ISBN 978-91-8039-108-5 (Print)
ISBN 978-91-8039-107-8 (Pdf)

ISSN 1102-4712

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University
Lund 2022

Media-Tryck is a Nordic Swan Ecolabel certified provider of printed material. Read more about our environmental work at www.mediatryck.lu.se

MADE IN SWEDEN

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

A dissertation project is indeed a lot of lone working, but it is by no means a one-man show. There are many people that have helped me see this project through, and I am grateful to all of you.

To my colleagues at the Department of Sociology: Thank you! Thank you for making me feel welcome when I started at the department. Thank you for interesting and thoughtful conversations in the lunchroom and corridors, and thank you also for comments and encouraging words during presentations, and in seminars. We are quite a big department here in Lund, and just as our organisation has changed over the years, people have also come and gone. You have all had a part in this dissertation project.

I also want to mention a few people in person. Anders Hylmö, Colm Flaherty, Elton Chan, Erik Hannerz, and Jaleh Taheri—thanks for being such good friends. You have all been a massive support in different periods during these six years.

Sara Eldén has been my supervisor and guided me through this from start to end. Sara, you have been there whenever I needed your assistance. Your thorough readings, comments, expertise and academic knowledge have helped me so much. I have also appreciated your big heart, warmth, and kindness. Your door was open from day one, and I feel as if there is not much that we have not talked about during supervision, over coffee, lunch, long-walks, at conferences or over 'after-work' drinks. I am lucky to have had you as supervisor!

In addition, Christofer Edling and Christopher Mathieu shared one half each of this PhD-journey as co-supervisors. Christofer, you got the ungrateful part of the journey, with a newly enrolled, confused, and somewhat overwhelmed PhD-student with big ambitions but no direct goal. Thank you for steering me in the right direction! And Chris, I am happy that you joined this project for the last couple of years. Your experience and sociological knowledge have done much to help me in my goals. Your wide academic network also helped me extend my own, and your ability to quickly and ruthlessly identify both contradictory and misplaced concepts in different drafts, has been ever so helpful. Thank you!

I am forever grateful also to associate professor Jens Arnholtz at the Department of Sociology at Copenhagen University, who took on the big task of reading a nascent manuscript for the final seminar. Your expertise on work and industrial relations provided me with priceless insights into what decisions I needed to make, depending on what direction I wanted the study to take. I hope you find the now published manuscript satisfying and that you see your imprint shining through.

There are also a few others that deserve attention for reading the manuscript and parts of it in different versions along the journey. Charalambos Demetriou worked through the manuscript for the final seminar. I appreciate your comments Chares, as well as our discussions on sociology in general. Thanks also to both Joke Esseveld and Chris Swader for commenting on the mid-term seminar manuscript—it has developed exponentially since then! I want to extend an extra thanks to Joke for taking interest in the early days of the study and not least for introducing me to the works of Burawoy. Furthermore, I want to thank Anders Kjellberg, Antoinette Hetzler, David Wästerfors, Lisa Eklund, and Olle Frödin for reading different drafts of the manuscript. Also, the warmest thanks go to Åsa Lundqvist for both reading and commenting on the manuscript, and also offering encouragement and support during the final stages of this dissertation.

Finally, my family deserves a mention. My parents, Gunilla and Roland, have always supported and encouraged me, and are always there for me when I need them. My father deserves extra mention for all the long conversations, the tireless listening, and his ideas and advice on the various works of sociology. And, Meriel, thanks for being you. I dedicate this to you—for your support, comfort, encouragement, and patience; especially during the final year, when you allowed me to take my time with the manuscript.

Rasmus Ahlstrand,
Malmö, January 2022

1 Organisation of work in the Swedish building sector

During the course of this research (2015-2021) the Swedish economy experienced a building boom. Tied to the housing crisis as a result of an undersupply in the urban regions of Sweden, there has since the 1990's been a constant demand for newly constructed residential buildings. As the economy recovered after the global financial crisis in 2008, the production of residential housing gradually surged, and peaked in 2018, with the highest figures of newly constructed houses since the early 1990's (SCB, 2019).

Consequently, construction sites are a common sight in the urban environment, and in some areas, it feels as if there is a new housing complex under construction on almost every corner. At first glance, the construction sites look as they have always done, with scaffolding, building materials and builders climbing, hammering and shouting to each other. Yet, things have invariably changed. The shouts are no longer only just in Swedish but also in Polish, Latvian, Romanian and other languages. The composition of the workforce has changed and there is an increased number of subcontractors involved across all levels of the industry, visible through the myriad of different logos, signboards, and banners on construction sites. Both contractors and subcontractors have to a great extent made use of temporary labour, and the demand for flexible and innovative labour market solutions has increased, acting as a driving force behind the recent trends in the externalisation of labour, and the purchase of services.

In the early summer of 2018, the builders' trade union *Byggnads,* revealed that *NCC Montage,* later renamed *Safida Montage*, had withheld

payment of at least 3,300,000 SEK[1] to groups of Polish workers employed at construction sites in the south of Sweden. According to Byggnads, this had been done systematically and was seen as a way of avoiding the honouring of contractual benefits, despite the workers being covered by collective agreements. Its implementation had been possible by keeping the Polish workers in the dark about their contractual entitlements to add-ons as a result of both overtime and weekend work. Furthermore, Byggnads argued that the monthly fee which was deducted from the workers' salary for accommodation was against the collective agreement. Around 50 Polish workers from four construction sites over the course of two years had been affected, and the workers told the trade union that they felt as if they were exploited because they were Polish, and not Swedish (Borg, 2018c).

The Polish workers had started to feel discomfort when they were asked by a Swedish colleague how much they earned and found out that their 172 kronor an hour was barely half of what their Swedish colleague earned—at the same project site. Also, they had initially been afraid of contacting the union, because colleagues who had previously done so had been sent home after the project ended and subsequently had to wait for up to a month to start on a new one, despite their permanent contracts (Borg, 2018a, 2018c). Safida Montage admitted that there had been mistakes at a local level, but that they had been corrected after discussions and negotiations with the trade union. The assertion that this was carried out systematically was rejected by the management of Safida Montage, who also argued that they followed the collective agreement on costs for accommodation (Borg, 2018b).

Safida Montage is a staffing agency based in Warsaw, Poland. It is part of one of Sweden's largest building companies, *NCC*—and its wider business structure—and serves as the mother company's subcontractor. Established in 2015, Safida Montage was started with the ambition of creating a safer and more sustainable approach in the recruitment of foreign labour, while also strengthening the company's wider competitiveness in the market (NCC, 2018). Replacing previous externally contracted labour from other staffing agencies, NCC would,

[1] Equivalent to around 330'000 EUR.

through their own company, also ensure that the Polish workers employed on NCC's project sites in Sweden were covered by collective agreements. The company started as a pilot-project in autumn 2015, grew rapidly, and in early 2018 employed around 300 Polish workers, placed on 25 different project sites, which were mainly in Sweden, but also to a more limited extent in Denmark and Norway. In the company's own words, with the mother company enjoying a good reputation in Poland, the head office has had little trouble finding skilled workers for the Scandinavian market. From its office in Warsaw, Safida Montage arranges transport and helps workers with both accommodation and registration with the relevant authorities. The (economic) boom in the building sector between the years 2015 and 2018 highlighted also potential labour shortages in the Swedish building sector. The dependence on foreign labour was specifically emphasised as a means of meeting the objectives for newly constructed houses up to 2025 (Bengtsson, 2018).

However, in January 2021 NCC announced that they had decided to dismantle Safida Montage. According to NCC, there had been little demand for staffing services in the Swedish construction industry as a result of the increased use of subcontractors (NCC, 2021).

The shifting events and developments provided by the example of NCC and Safida Montage illustrates the phenomenon that this dissertation sets out to analyse and discuss: The new strategic operational decisions taken by management, the alternative ways to organise work these represent, and the restructuring of work that this change implies. However, this dissertation is not simply about NCC or Safida Montage, and as a point of fact neither of these companies occur in the data collection. Rather, through a detailed study of the organisation of work of two other building companies, which I have named *Building Group* and *Green Constructions*,[2] and by situating the findings in the broader context of the Swedish building sector, this dissertation argues that organisational change is made manifest through the increased levels of subcontracting, and "construction management" (Harris & McCaffer, 2013). In this dissertation, I refer to construction management as a specific *subcontracting regime*, in which

[2] I use fictive names for all companies and respondents that are part of the empirical data in this study. This is further elaborated in Chapter 4.

building companies organise their production through subcontractors, and externalise all parts of the production process.

Consequently, this study departs from the identified research problem of increased levels of subcontracting in the Swedish building sector. With the conceptualisation of construction management as a specific subcontracting regime, I contextualise recent developments and identify three conditioning factors: technology, product markets, and institutional arrangements in the labour market, which structure and stimulate Building Group's and Green Constructions' strategies in the organisation of work.

1.1 Aim of the research and research questions

The aim of this study is to analyse the antecedents and effects of the recent trends of construction management as a subcontracting regime in the Swedish building sector. Based on interviews and visits at project sites, I analyse the organisation of work in two building companies from a labour process perspective, with the aim of investigating how organisational change manifests through dis-integrated organisational structures, which are contingent on subcontracting. I situate the analysis in the broader field of the Swedish building sector and explore the effects of the restructuring of work practices also amongst the various subcontractors involved in this study.

The overarching research question for this study is:

- Why and in what way are Building Group and Green Constructions subcontracting work in accordance with the regime of construction management?

This is followed by a set of sub-questions that correspond to the three empirical chapters—Chapter 5, 6, and 7 respectively:

- How is organisational flexibility manifested in Building Group's and Green Constructions' work organisations?
- How and with what strategies do companies, (including both general contractors and subcontractors), handle risks and uncertainties that follow from construction management? What do such strategies look like?
- What are the effects of tensions and concerns with relation to work caused by dis-integrated organisational structures for subcontractors in construction management?

In the current subcontracting regime of construction management, the move from an integrated work organisation towards a work organisation contingent on dis-integrated organisational structures involves a shift of the control over production from the general contractor towards the subcontractor. In other words, the externalisation of work involves the relocation of the mechanisms that govern production, from hierarchical intra-organisational structures, to inter-organisational relations, such as contract relationships (MacKenzie, 2002). This mirrors a global trend, as building companies attempt to achieve organisational flexibility by reducing the number of directly employed craftsmen, and thus reduce labour costs. Regarding organisational flexibility, I draw on Streeck's (1987) definition which defines it as a "general capacity of enterprises to reorganize in close response to fluctuations in their environment" (Streeck, 1987, p. 290).

Of the two cases in this study, both Building Group and Green Constructions are representative of construction management in terms of the organisation of work and dis-integrated organisational structures. That is, both companies externalised all parts of production to subcontractors at the project sites I visited for this study, and neither Building Group nor Green Constructions had any directly employed craftsmen involved in the work on site, apart from their own site management.

However, construction management is a fairly recent phenomena in the Swedish building sector. Building Group had just recently started to organise work in accordance with construction management when I initiated the study in 2015. They therefore still had a large group of craftsmen directly employed across the country (but not on the project site

that I visited for this study). Green Constructions on the other hand, has followed the principle of construction management since the early 2010's. This is explained by Green Constructions being a smaller company than Building Group from the outset, with fewer craftsmen employed. Construction management has thus been a way for Green Constructions to increase its organisational capacity. Hence, even though they grow as a company, the expansion of their own organisation takes place mainly in relation to management, in the hiring of white-collar workers.

Moreover, the two cases show that although it is desirable to achieve organisational flexibility, subcontracting also involves uncertainties. It is therefore not only the lowest price that is decisive for which subcontractors are contracted. Rather, in this study I show that Building Group and Green Constructions also make use of extensive networks of contacts that include firms they have previously worked with, or know of from before. In other words, trust works as a social control mechanism to inter-organisational relationships such as subcontracting (Bachmann, 2001, p. 338).

Nonetheless, even though trust absorbs uncertainty, it still produces risks (Bachmann, 2001, pp. 342-343). In terms of subcontracting, this means that even though there are contractual arrangements that aim to absorb uncertainties that the externalisation of production involves, the subcontracting is based on calculated risks in relation to a subcontractors' perceived ability to deliver a quality end-product, both in time and on budget. Hence, different subcontracting arrangements are based on a combination of variables, which are both price and acquaintance.

In this study, I identify four different forms of subcontracting arrangements. Three of them—capacity, specialisation, and supplier subcontracting—build on previous conceptualisations and are all external forms of subcontracting (Neo, 2010, p. 1014); while the fourth—*masked staffing*—is my own conceptualisation and which I argue is characterised by internal subcontracting.

External subcontracting refers to a business relationship where a company contracts an external company for a specific part of the production process (Purcell & Purcell, 1998). The three forms of external subcontracting in this study are separated partly by the extent to which the control over production remains with the general contractor (Neo, 2010,

p. 1014), but as I show in this study, partly also by the subcontractors' work organisation. Internal subcontracting on the other hand, merely brings workers and manpower into the organisation on principles of "labour contracting, or employment disguised as business relations" (Neo, 2010, p. 1015).

A key finding in this study is that Green Constructions makes use also of that which I refer to as masked staffing. I argue that masked staffing is a novel theorisation that conceptualises a form of capacity subcontracting; but rather than proper subcontracting that builds on an external business relation, masked staffing involves the subcontracting of trade specialists based upon the principles of staffing. It is thus a form of capacity subcontracting that is characterised by internal subcontracting, rather than the external subcontracting as conceptualised by Neo (2010).

Consequently, masked staffing highlights how mechanisms that govern production are kept intact and based on hierarchical intra-organisational structures. That is, rather than becoming externalised, the *control over production* stays with Green Constructions; and consequently, they themselves manage the workers on a day-to-day basis. In principle therefore, the subcontractors are actually not subcontractors, but merely brokers of labour—just as in the case with traditional staffing agencies. However, in contrast to staffing agencies, subcontractors are not allowed to only supply labour (SFS, 2012:854) and the relationship between Green Constructions and the subcontractor is thus characterised by an *unregulated* broker relationship.

Dependent on the form of subcontracting arrangement, there is a varying degree of risk-taking for the companies involved. There are therefore also different control mechanisms tied to each form of subcontracting. In this study, I identify three ways that trustworthiness is manifested in both the Building Group's, and Green Constructions' subcontracting arrangements. Namely, through opportunity control, incentive control, and benevolence. Opportunity control refers to formal control mechanisms through contract enforcement, while incentive control refers to relational specific investments that potentially leads to future contracts. Lastly, benevolence denotes the additional roles of norms, empathy, and identification in the formation of contractual relationships (MacKenzie, 2008, p. 870).

Furthermore, also subcontractors make use of external solutions to increase their organisational flexibility and in turn contract other subcontractors. I show that the subcontractors' work organisation is differently structured, depending on the respective subcontractor's competitive advantage; that is, whether they are contracted by Building Group and Green Constructions primarily because they are *cheap*, or because of the *quality of their end product.*

In this thesis I demonstrate that even when subcontractors are contracted primarily because of their inherent quality, they are to an increasing extent pressured to make additional use of external solutions in order to remain competitive. This involves not only more risks, but also the possible degradation of work quality. As a result of industrialisation, increased tempo, dynamic market competition, and the use of posted workers, the autonomy and independence of traditional craftsmanship becomes marginalised. This phenomenon is particularly manifested in relation to self-employed craftsmen in the building sector.

1.2 Previous research

This section provides an overview of research on the construction industry of interest for this study. I delve further into this in the background chapter (Chapter 2), however, briefly, research of particular interest for this study concerns not least the tradition of subcontracting, and the complex inter-organisational structure in the construction industry. Most recently, researchers have focused on transnational subcontracting and the use of posted work in the EU (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020b; Belman, Druker, & White, 2021; Lillie, 2010, 2012; Wagner & Lillie, 2014). Of interest are also different forms of employment in the construction industry such as temporary and non-standard employment, but also various forms of self-employment—oftentimes tied to migration and precarity (Berntsen, 2016; Buckley, 2012, 2014; Rainwater, 2021; Thörnquist, 2011, 2013, 2015). Studies on the occupational culture and the independent labour process that result from de-centralised management systems, and the tradition of working in task teams, are also of significance for this study

(Applebaum, 1999; Haakestad & Friberg, 2017; Styhre, 2011; Thiel, 2007, 2013).

With reference to the occupational culture, previous studies neighbours also social class and masculinity (Ness, 2012). Social class and masculinity are prevalent also in this study, and in relation to this, existing research has analysed women's traditionally marginalised positions in construction work, their strategies to enhance career development in management positions, as well as their tactics for dealing with and responses to sexual harassment and misconduct on project sites (Denissen, 2010; Wall, 2015; Watts, 2007, 2009).

In regards to transnational subcontracting and intra-EU labour migration, there is an extensive base of research that analyses the EU-enlargements in 2004 and 2007 and the effect of the free movement of labour on industrial relations and national labour markets in the EU (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021; Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a; Black, Engbersen, & Okólski, 2010; Dølvik & Eldring, 2017; Friberg, Arnholtz, Eldring, Hansen, & Thorarins, 2014).

This is analysed also from a Swedish perspective, in which most research focuses on the *supply* of migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and argues that it poses challenges to both the welfare state and the labour market, as a 'race to the bottom'. Such 'race to the bottom' research is relevant to this study because it highlights fears among trade unionists and politicians about deteriorating labour rights and collective agreements, as migrant workers are prepared to do the same job for far less compensation (Bengtsson, 2016; Woolfson, Fudge, & Thörnqvist, 2014; Woolfson & Sommers, 2006). Also, it highlights the traditionally ambiguous relationship between trade unions and migrant workers, where ideas of international solidarity are confronted with the need to protect existing members and domestic workers (Mešić, 2017; Neergaard, 2015).

Most of the 'race to the bottom'- research is done in relation to the post-Lex Laval period, which refers to the case with a Latvian company, *Laval un Partneri,* who had Latvian builders posted on several construction sites across the Stockholm area, working for Latvian salaries. The builders' trade union initiated a blockade and as a result, Laval took the case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), where the court ruled in favour of the company, referring to the freedom of providing services as defined by the

European Community (EC) treaty (Thörnqvist & Woolfson, 2011, pp. 12-14). The Laval-ruling resulted in extensive opportunities for contractors to externalise work, and have made it possible to make use of posted workers (Cremers, Dølvik, & Bosch, 2007; Lillie & Wagner, 2015). Also, comparisons have been made with previous systems of labour migration, contrasting the current model of intra-EU free movement of labour with earlier state-led programmes from the post-World War II era, in both Sweden and other EU countries (Frank, 2005; Penninx, 2018; Van Mol & de Valk, 2016).

With reference to the tradition of subcontracting and the complex inter-organisational structures in the construction industry, there is extensive research in economics departing from transaction costs analysis (Williamson, 1975, 1981, 1991). For example, Bygballe, Håkansson, and Jahre (2013) argue that particularly building companies have developed a specific economic logic that relies extensively on theories of transaction cost analysis (Bygballe et al., 2013). From a sociological perspective, subcontracting has been associated with new forms of organisation based on decentralisation; for example, the network enterprise (Castells, 2011). However, as demonstrated by MacKenzie (2008), the externalisation of production does not necessarily involve the removal of centralised hierarchical structures (MacKenzie, 2008, pp. 874-875).

In addition, and of particular significance for this study, research on outsourcing shows how the externalisation of work through labour market intermediaries has become a core staffing strategy for employers (Holst, Nachtwey, & Dörre, 2010; Purcell, Purcell, & Tailby, 2004; Purcell & Purcell, 1998). In a Swedish context, such research have focused on the rapid expansion, establishment and legitimisation of staffing agencies through the Swedish model of industrial relations and collective agreements (Bergström, Håkansson, Isidorsson, & Walter, 2007; Coe, Johns, & Ward, 2009). Also, research on the staffing industry and the regulatory context in which they are embedded argues that staffing agencies ought to be understood as active agents of labour market restructuring. Through measures of legitimisation, such as becoming a part of the Swedish model of industrial relations, the staffing industry reveals itself also as a competitive force—introducing itself in the labour market while securing future access to market growth (Peck & Theodore,

2002). These arguments are part of the wider literature on the internationalisation of the staffing industry in general, and the professionalisation of recruiting migrant workers in particular, sometimes referred to as migrant flexiwork (McDowell, Batnitzky, & Dyer, 2008; Pijpers, 2010; Ward, 2004).

Research on staffing agencies and temporary labour in relation to construction work has historically emphasised how temporary work fits the occupational structure in the building sector well—with the production process divided into a number of activities, carried out sequentially and requiring specialised labour (Bresnen et al., 1985; Eccles, 1981; Winch, 1994). Additionally, other studies demonstrate how subcontracting has become the principal tool with which companies seek to minimise financial risks (Belman et al., 2021; Bosch & Philips, 2003).

The objective of companies to minimise financial risks through the reduction of labour costs is a central aspect of studies on the disconnected capitalism thesis and financialized capitalism (Thompson, 2003, 2013). This, in turn, is of significance for this study because it highlights new forms of capital accumulation based on financialization and its impact on the overall labour process (Cushen & Thompson, 2016).

In regards to this, labour process theory has a strong tradition in the sociology of work and organisation (Thompson & McHugh, 2002; Thompson & Smith, 2010b, 2017). It departs from the debate initiated by Braverman (1974) on managerial control strategies, and focuses primarily on dynamics of workplace relations and the connections with the wider social system (Thompson & Smith, 2010a, p. 12). It emphasises the structured antagonism between capital and labour, and departs from the point of production to show how capital needs to control labour according to a logic of accumulation that persistently cultivates developments in technology and administration (Jaros, 2010, p. 71).

In regards to the various forms of employment in the construction industry, research on self-employment has identified a widening 'grey' area between dependent employment relationships and self-employment (Pedersini & Coletto, 2009; Pernicka, 2006). More specifically, dependent- and that which is sometimes referred to as economically dependent self-employment (Böheim & Mühlberger, 2009; Perulli, 2003) is increasingly significant in construction work (Druker, White, &

Belman, 2021, p. 3). In a Swedish context, this is pre-dominantly analysed through the conceptualisation of false or bogus self-employment (Thörnquist, 2011, 2013, 2015), which refers to practices where workers (and most often migrant workers) are registered as self-employed although they work as subordinate employees, as a means for employers to avoid social responsibilities and tax.

Finally—and in relation to false self-employment—non-standard forms of work and employment are prevalent in construction work (Belman et al., 2021; Cremers, 2016) where precarious work situations are widespread and social entitlements as well as job security is limited.

1.3 Contributions and demarcations

In this section, I position the study within the field of research on the construction industry. The construction industry is a large and complex industry referring to a variety of activities. It ranges from civil construction and infrastructure, to industrial as well as residential and commercial construction (ILO, 2015). Construction work includes also a diverse mix of skill-sets and occupations such as managerial, technical and manual jobs, which include engineers, architects, project managers, carpenters, electricians, steel workers and general building personnel (Bosch & Philips, 2003; Buckley, Zendel, Biggar, Frederiksen, & Wells, 2016). Additionally, companies differ in firm size from multinationals involved in constructions across the globe to nation-wide contractors, regional and local companies, as well as self-employed workers (Buckley et al., 2016, p. 3). However, this study focuses on the Swedish building sector, referring to residential construction and particularly apartment buildings.

Up until now, research on the Swedish building sector has analysed processes of industrialisation (Karlsson, 1982), even though this more recently has been analysed mainly from a technical and engineering point of view (Apleberger, Jonsson, & Åhman, 2007; Lessing, Stehn, & Ekholm, 2015). Research from an engineering perspective analyses also the role of trust and institutions in project organisations and partnering relations; but mostly from a project-management perspective (Kadefors, 1995, 2002, 2004; Kadefors & Badenfelt, 2009). More recently, research on project

organisations in the extant project-management literature has highlighted also contradictions between companies' high-level strategies and their practical implementation from a strategy-as-practice perspective (Löwstedt, Räisänen, & Leiringer, 2018).

There have also been studies on the political dimensions of access to residential housing, conceptualised through both social segmentation and ethnic segregation (Lindberg & Lindén, 1989; Lindén, 1990; Molina, 1997). In addition, studies have shown that in contrast to previous conceptualisations, stakeholders in the production of residential housing embrace more innovative and flexible approaches in the production process (Ericson & Johansson, 1994).

Furthermore, research shows how changes in the vocational education training (VET) for Swedish construction workers risk both segmenting and limiting construction workers' opportunities in the labour market (Berglund, 2009). With regards to VET, Arnholtz and Ibsen (2021) emphasise its importance for maintaining a Swedish building sector with high-quality production, which is characterised by high-productivity. Their argument builds on the role of apprenticeships as key in the transition from education into the labour market (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, pp. 190-191).

Work environment is another relevant aspect of construction work, and a research overview ordered by the *Swedish Work and Environment Authority* demonstrates that construction work is overrepresented when it comes to fatal and non-fatal accidents, irrespective of national contexts (Berglund et al., 2017). In regards to this, Vänje (2019) and others accentuates how the hazardous work environment is intimately bound to a masculine culture that is premised upon notions of proving yourself strong and worthy – both physically and socially (Vänje, 2019, p. 6). Other studies also stress the fact that the high prevalence of accidents is a consequence of the fragmented architectonic of the industry, particularly with regards to the many levels of subcontractors and the consequent reluctance to take responsibility amongst the variously involved companies (Simu, 2020, p. 105). In connection to this, there is also a substantial amount of research about the experiences of foreign workers involved in the Swedish construction industry, and what effects these have on Swedish industrial relations (Woolfson, Thörnqvist, & Sommers, 2010).

On the other hand, this study is located in the sociology of work and organisation and contributes to a growing body of research on the Swedish construction industry (see for example Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021; Frank, 2013). Through its qualitative analysis, which is based on empirical data from three project sites, it brings to the fore the complex organisational structures that results from the current subcontracting regime of construction management. Through both the respondents' and the author's reasoning and observations, this study demonstrates and assesses the nuances, strategies and calculated risks that various subcontracting arrangements entail. Furthermore, it also highlights the subjectivity of the participants in this study, and make visible factors such as the considerations, tactics, and concerns that both management and workers are faced with on a daily basis in the Swedish building sector.

1.4 The outline of the study

This dissertation consists of eight chapters. In Chapter 2, I contextualise the study, and provide a background to construction work in general—and the Swedish building sector in particular. In addition, the chapter includes an introduction to the Swedish model of industrial relations and illustrates its changing character over time. I emphasise that this transformation takes place on two fronts; on the one hand, through the increasing importance of notions of workfare tied to the changed meaning of active labour market policies, and on the other, through the emergent role of *EU-legislation* in the Swedish labour market. More specifically, there are competing legal principles between EU-directives on the free movement of labour, and the freedom of providing goods, services and capital in the EU that employers take advantage of in their search for cheap labour.

In Chapter 3 I develop the theoretical framework for this study. Firstly, I conceptualise construction management as a subcontracting regime and argue that there are three conditioning factors of specific importance: technology, product markets, and institutional arrangements. Secondly, I examine the inter-organisational relations that subcontracting implies and emphasise the role of trust in identifying three forms of control

mechanisms: opportunity control, incentive control, and benevolence. I argue that these indicate how contractual relations are shaped on the one hand by institutional and industrial peculiarities and on the other through social relations and networks.

In addition, through a critical theorisation of management systems I identify the conflict between labour and capital as key to an analysis of new forms of work organisation. That is, to analyse also intra-organisational changes, I argue that principles of financialization influence strategical decisions, and encourage increased subcontracting as a result of companies' reluctance to invest in human resources, machines, and building materials.

The fourth chapter presents the methods and methodological considerations of the study. I set out from the concept of sociological imagination and argue that sociology provides the tools to explain the interplay between individuals and society. In relation to a sociology of work, I emphasise reflexivity as key in critically assessing the rationality of an organisation. Moreover, I argue for a case study research design, because an in-depth analysis of the organisation of work makes it possible to identify important generative mechanisms that explain the varying practices of subcontracting. Subsequently, I account for the process of data production as well as the various research techniques—sampling, interviews, and observations—through visits to project sites. I end the chapter with a discussion on troublesome aspects of data collection.

The three chapters that follow are analytical chapters in which I draw on the empirical data gathered for this study. In Chapter 5 I introduce the two cases and demonstrate why both Building Group and Green Constructions see advantages with the externalisation of work. I demonstrate also how other, alternative strategies in the organisation of work such as staffing are marginalised as a result of increased subcontracting, despite the uncertainty and loss of control of the labour process that subcontracting involves.

In Chapter 6 I demonstrate that Building Group and Green Constructions subcontract work according to different arrangements, and I show that the work is organised in specific ways dependent on a combination of price, trustworthiness, and the work organisation of the respective companies. Because of the implied loss of control of the labour

process through the externalisation of work, I argue that all forms of subcontracting involve calculated risks. Nonetheless, the various arrangements imply different levels of risk-taking and are therefore tied to different control mechanisms.

I show how one of these arrangements is distinguished from the others in that it builds on *principles of staffing* rather than the externalisation of work. I demonstrate that this develops as a consequence of the absence of correct site management by subcontractors and highlights how such flaws result in inadequate communication between the general contractor and the subcontractor, which in turn generates uncertainty and potential conflict. To compensate for the lack of top-down management, the management team of the general contractors steps in and lead the day-to-day work.

Chapter 7 illustrates how industrialisation and rationalisation, together with increased competitiveness due to labour market regulation and EU-legislation, pressures *both* general contractors *and* subcontractors to externalise work. I show how there are financial incentives for companies to renegotiate the trade-off between the two contrasting objectives of quality versus profit, and in a situation where profit gets the upper hand on quality, the trustworthiness of a subcontractor's work organisation also becomes secondary, which in turn stimulates further use of subcontractors. Subsequently, I argue that the competitive advantage that cheap labour implies, marginalises companies that compete on the quality of their work and thereby relies principally on integrated work organisations. I end the chapter by arguing that there is a negative impact upon craftsmanship in the sector, which is caused by the trade-off between quality and price. I specifically argue that self-employed craftsmen in the current subcontracting precis are exposed to conditions that lead to the degradation of work.

Finally, in Chapter 8 I conclude and expand the empirical findings of the study into an overarching analytical discussion. I argue that organisational restructuring and the adoption of new forms of work organisation based on the externalisation of work results from reluctances among companies to invest in human resources, machines, and building materials. That is, I show that the structural transformation of the Swedish building sector needs to be contextualised in the era of financialized

capitalism, where strategic decisions of how to organise work are based on a specifically rationalised logic of profit maximisation. More specifically, this profit maximisation includes the notion that companies treat labour strictly in terms of expenditure and unnecessary costs, rather than simply as an investment.

I end the study by drawing on current debates in relation to the Swedish building sector. I display how the contribution of this study is to centralise the excess of subcontracting possibilities and explore the wider structural transformations that any new restructuring implies. In this way I attempt to identify tensions, conflicts, and contradictions as a means to stimulate further research interest into new forms of work organisation in the Swedish building sector.

2 Setting the scene

In this chapter, I introduce the reader to construction work in general, and to the Swedish building sector in particular. I emphasise the institutional context in which the organisation of work takes place and acquaint the reader with the Swedish model of industrial relations. I also emphasise the increased importance of EU-legislation for the Swedish building sector.

The discussion initially centres on the characteristics of construction work, the key role of construction work in generating employment as well as recent developments in the industry. As a means to engage with the overall aim of the research, with increased subcontracting in the building sector, a discussion on institutional regulation and labour market transformations thereafter set the scene for the structural developments that shape social relations in the building sector.

2.1 Characteristics of construction work

Construction work has a central role in modern society. Although organised in a variety of ways across the globe, it shares a similar set of characteristics. It is an industry of continuous economic importance in the sense of the never-ending demand for either house constructions, renovations, or infrastructural projects (ILO, 2015). Just like other industries, the way it is organised often reflects the different developments of political and economic systems. In countries with large informal economies and weak institutional environments, construction work tends to be less regulated, with low wages and hazardous working conditions for the people involved on construction sites. In countries with more regulations and often stronger institutional environments (as in many western European countries), such risks are minimised and salaries are

controlled through systems of minimum wages or collective agreements. Relatively well-paid and well protected, with lots of pride in the workforce, builders in western Europe and Scandinavia have traditionally enjoyed both worker autonomy, control over their work environment, and a renowned culture of teamwork and companionship stemming from occupational prestige (Bosch & Philips, 2003, p. 3; ILO, 2001, p. 14).

Yet, independent of the institutional environment, geographical location, or implementation of regulations, construction workers often face both unsafe and unfavourable working conditions (Berglund et al., 2017). The dangerous nature of construction work is manifested not least through the high number of fatal and non-fatal workplace accidents. For example, injuries sustained from tools and machinery, falls from scaffold, collapsing pillars or other such structures and material, and physical strains due to long periods of heavy work, are all common hazards (Byggnads, 2021b). Between 2007-2017, the Swedish construction industry was the industry with most fatal accidents of all in Sweden (Vänje & Ottosson, 2020, p. 71). The statistics are similar at an EU level, where for instance, construction work represented the highest incidence of non-fatal and fatal accidents at work in 2017 (Eurostat, 2019). Unfortunately, the trend is persistent, and in the first six months of 2020 half of all fatal work place accidents in the Swedish labour market was related to construction work (Ternby, 2020).

It is also an industry that entails a wide range of skill-levels, from highly specialised handicrafts developed across generations, to more generic tasks of installation and demolition. For most economies, it is key in generating employment opportunities and economic growth (Druker et al., 2021, p. 1). The Swedish construction sector is no exception, in 2014 it accounted for around six percent of total employment and economic output nationally (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, p. 184). Its ties to economic cycles as well as the seasonal and often project-based nature of construction work has traditionally also attracted surplus labour from rural areas, and rapid urbanisation makes millions of people migrate to cities across the globe every year to look for employment in construction (ILO, 2001, p. 11).

Migratory patterns correlated with the search for employment in construction work is also a transnational phenomenon, where predominantly men migrate to other countries to work in construction.

Recruitment of foreign workers due to shortages in domestic labour tends to be an attractive alternative for employers, because of the low production costs in times of economic boom. Plus, when the economy cools down, it is far easier to lay off foreign construction migrants (Buckley, 2012, p. 251). Considering also the tendency of construction work to absorb otherwise excluded groups of workers and provide them with employment, it is an entry point for other migrants and also refugees into the labour market—whether the pattern of migration is legal or not (Buckley, 2014, pp. 339-340; ILO, 2001, pp. 11-12; Neergaard, 2015, pp. 145-147).

Significantly, construction is a highly gendered industry (ILO, 2015; Norberg & Johansson, 2021; Watts, 2007); moreover, as noted by Thiel (2007, 2013); Vänje (2019) and others, the collective identity of builders is tied to the masculine body, its strength, and skill in manual labour. In a Swedish context, even though construction work has always been dominated by men, women have been historically present at construction sites as carriers and helpers—something that changed with industrialisation and the removal of certain roles at project sites (Bursell, 1984; Olofsson, 2000). These days, women are predominantly present in administrative and managerial positions (Vänje & Ottosson, 2020, p. 70), despite efforts from both employers and trade unions to encourage more women take up construction work (Byggnads, 2021c; Vänje, 2019).

Hence, the modern construction industry is heavily dominated by men, and similarly to the arguments made by Willis (2003) in his study on working-class boys and their own prospects in working life, construction work represents a specific working-class masculinity. It is suggested that this acts as a main obstacle for the inclusion of women in the building trades (Norberg & Johansson, 2021, p. 3), which together with the physical and dangerous working conditions form a strong *occupational culture* as well as a form of reaction towards other societal (and arguably middle-class values), in which construction work tends to be downgraded and socially stigmatised (Ness, 2012, p. 662; Thiel, 2013, p. 76).

The embodiment of the craft-centred principles that the collective identity and occupational culture build on, also fosters a relative autonomy and occupational pride (Applebaum, 1999). That is, construction workers typically identify more with the craftsmanship of being a construction

worker and their respective trade, rather than with the company they work for (Löwstedt & Räisänen, 2014, p. 1101). Styhre (2011) argues that this tradition of craftsmanship has nurtured a de-centralisation of management control towards work teams, and that managerial control to a large extent builds on occupational norms of what constitutes good work. Rather than the rigid control associated with factories and assembly lines, "construction workers subscribe to, and guard, professional norms and standards that reinforce their role, position, and status in their field" (Styhre, 2011, p. 200).

This is also what Stinchcombe (1959) refers to as a specific craft administration, which he argues is distinguished from bureaucratic administrations in the manufacturing industry that rest on the separation of mental and manual labour (Stinchcombe, 1959, pp. 170-171). Rather, in construction work, the labour process is to a high degree controlled by the builders themselves and the conception and execution of manual work is not as tangible as in other sectors.

More, craft-administration and de-centralised management control in the Swedish construction industry is epitomised not least by the tradition of piece-rate wage systems[3]. As noted by Haakestad and Friberg (2017) in discussing the Norwegian construction industry, the piece-rate wage system "is a partly production-based wage system, where a flexible wage component based on fixed prices for specific pieces come on top of normal hourly wages" (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017, p. 8). Just as in Norway, the piece-rate wage system was established in the Swedish construction industry following a class compromise in accordance with the Swedish model of industrial relations[4]. That is, employers wanted to restrict rapid wage-increases by implementing a 'wage-ceiling' that followed from labour shortages and the advantageous bargaining position of trade unions. At the same time, trade unions in turn wanted their members to access a share of the production surplus and to set a 'wage-floor' to avoid underbidding (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017, p. 8). The builders' trade union, Byggnads, is still one of the most prominent advocates for the piece-rate wage system in the Swedish labour market. According to them, the piece-rate wage

[3] Ackordlön in Swedish.

[4] For more on the Swedish model see section 2.3 in this chapter.

system is a way to maintain workers' influence in the labour process since it relies on, and requires everyone in the work team's involvement (Byggnads, 2021a).

Such norm-based control generates credibility and reputation. In other words, credibility in construction work indicates that 'you have what it takes' and that you can deliver quality work in accordance to the expectations and established norms in the occupational community. It is also this that makes credibility an important part of the collective identity of being a construction worker (Styhre, 2011, p. 200).

Thiel (2013) suggests that there are similarities between the tradition of de-centralised management control through work teams and occupational norms in construction work, and the management system that Gouldner (1954) identified as the 'indulgency pattern' in his work on miners. Among both builders and miners, managers and foremen tend to be indulgent and accept that workers are in control of the labour process (Thiel, 2013, p. 43). Yet, it does not mean that workers are in a decision-making position or that there are no hierarchies. By adhering to the informal culture among workers, managers can appreciate the trust-relationship that is built, and not least its importance for the production. If managers do not indulge the collective culture, allowing workers to feel that they are treated with respect, there is risk of conflict and of jeopardising the timetable. In addition, considering the high demand for skilled labour in times of economic boom, there is a tangible risk of losing certain segments of the workforce, as workers enjoy the possibility of leaving a contractor and can easily take up employment elsewhere. This reflects the tradition of mobility and temporariness within construction work, with builders not staying too long at the same site, and moving on after finalising a project (Thiel, 2013, pp. 48-49).

Yet, functioning reciprocally, the workers' reputation is also at stake. Being slow, sloppy, or not good enough not only impacts managers' impressions of the worker, but it also generates a reputation among colleagues of not having 'what it takes', reflecting the physical, hard and masculine values inherent to the stereotype of being a construction worker. And further, as emphasised by Thiel (2013), a correct understanding of the indulgency pattern needs to bear in mind the importance of market mechanisms and dynamics involved in employment, with workers having

to sell their labour power as well as facing the risk of dismissal (Thiel, 2013, pp. 42-43).

The tradition of subcontracting and dis-integrated organisational structures

As touched upon already, the industry relies heavily on the economic situation, both nationally with regards to the health of the local economy, as well as the condition of global financial markets. This has fostered a reluctance among building companies to sustain long-term investments (Bosch & Philips, 2003, p. 3). Rather, systems of dis-integrated organisational structures and flexibility have become core ingredients. This development is taking place on two parallel, yet interrelated fronts: through increased levels of industrialisation, with the streamlining of production, and through the restructuring of the organisation of work.

First, increased industrialisation through technological advancements have constantly streamlined production. Even though it is sometimes argued that construction work is the least affected of the major industries by technological innovation, work is constantly changing (Ness, 2012, p. 663). Off-site production, or prefabrication, is an example of what is nowadays a standard aspect of construction work, which in turn affects also the organisation of work (ILO, 2015, pp. 13-14).

In this case, it reflects a shift of employment opportunities from construction to manufacturing. Yet, it does not mean that it has an impact on overall employment opportunities. Off-site production does not necessarily mean less work, only different types of work. Rather than *built* on site, the goods are *installed* on site. Consequently, prefabrication is a time-saving process for the contractor as installations on site generally takes less time than building from scratch. At the same time, it still secures production and employment to the specific geographical location where the house, factory or infrastructural project is being built. This rigid composition of the construction industry thus prevents contractors from moving their production abroad, and therefore also helps to maintain a relatively stable demand for employment within construction over a longer period of time (Bosch & Philips, 2003, p. 7).

Unlike other industries that have moved production abroad, the construction industry's dependence on specific geographical locations, has developed a tradition of organising work through systems of subcontracting (Cremers, 2011). It has for a long time been argued that subcontracting fits the occupational culture well, where the control of the labour process signals a relatively high degree of autonomy and freedom on construction sites (Bresnen et al., 1985, pp. 109-110; Winch, 1994). It is also an important part of the building process, especially in building construction, where the production is divided into a number of activities, carried out sequentially, and which requires specialised labour (Eccles, 1981; ILO, 2001, p. 15). Plus, this also denotes the specific economic logic that has developed in the construction industry and which reflects the economising process in which both contractors and subcontractors seek to fulfil their tasks while spending as little as possible (Bygballe et al., 2013, p. 104).

Secondly, the general trend in the labour market to externalise work is also a result of a globalised economy and concomitant changes in regulatory frameworks. More specifically, as argued by Lillie (2012), the accelerated possibilities for building companies to make use of transnational subcontracting in the EU-labour market, portrays outsourcing rather as a strategy based on reduced labour costs than anything else (Lillie, 2012, p. 150). In addition, as pointed out by Grimshaw, Willmott, and Rubery (2005), subcontracting is potentially also a strategy for companies to undermine the mobilisation of workers and workers' resistance (Grimshaw et al., 2005, p. 40). For example, rather than an integrated work organisation with mutual employee and employer responsibility, building companies subcontract work to avoid *employer* responsibilities, and thus make it possible to evade eventual dissatisfaction and complaints among workers.

Factors intrinsic to the tradition of subcontracting hence appear two-folded. On the one hand, there are those specific to construction work and the nature of the building process. On the other, there are also factors that relate to the institutional framework and the financial situation of companies. Even though intertwined, the global trend of managing financial risks (Thompson, 2003, 2013) and the incentive to reduce labour costs, indicates that dis-integrated organisational structures have increased

significantly, and this has now become the norm (Buckley et al., 2016; Druker et al., 2021). This phenomena has manifested not least through companies' unwillingness to have too many workers tied to their own workforce (Bosch & Philips, 2003, pp. 10-11); therefore, subcontracting functions as a form of flexibility in the recruitment of labour. In other words, as noted by Thiel (2013) , "subcontracting is not, therefore, simply a result of the specificities of building product markets, but is tied up with national political economies" (Thiel, 2013, p. 13).

It is also important to note that the demand for flexibility among firms and contractors is not exclusively tied to the recruitment of labour. It is also connected to the *management and control* of labour. To outsource employment responsibilities involves a shift in responsibilities and risks from the general contractor to the subcontractor, and it is this shift that is the base for the complex discussions that consequently arise regarding the responsibility to comply with regulations, and the liability for accidents and other employment-related issues (Kalleberg, 2000). As I will show in this thesis, this is of particular relevance to the building sector, due to the potentially long chain of subcontractors.

The outsourcing of responsibilities tends to occur on all levels, with subcontractors in turn subcontracting other subcontractors and smaller firms (Druker et al., 2021, p. 3). These firms in turn often consist of self-employed workers, running their own businesses, who are responsible for their own insurances, pensions and other social security contributions. As noted by Thiel (2007); Thörnquist (2011, 2013, 2015) and others, self-employment has been traditionally widespread among skilled craftsmen, and the self-employed have generally held a position where they owned their means of production and worked independently. This resulted on the one hand from the legacy of craftsmanship and the guild system, where craftsmen sold products in the product market and therefore controlled both the product and the work process. In other words, as a craftsman you were in control of your own work (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, p. 51).

On the other hand, there has historically also been an increase in self-employment in times of economic recession, as employers have been prone to shift risks and responsibilities towards self-employed workers by making them redundant. Under such conditions, self-employment is a form of exploitation tied to new forms of capital accumulation (Thörnquist, 2011,

p. 104). This does not exclude the conceptualisation that it may also be perceived as a strategy of both survival and coping amongst workers in times of economic hardship. However, it is important to note that under such conditions dependent self-employment is more clearly seen as a reflection of the power-imbalance in the labour market, and changing market conditions, rather than as genuine *self*-employment (Thörnquist, 2011, pp. 104-105).

Since the 1980's, self-employment has increased in Sweden and other parts of Western Europe. According to Pedersini and Coletto (2009), this development has resulted from a rapid integration of the global economy, driven by a liberalisation of trade and capital flows, as well as by the globalisation of production networks and technological change (Pedersini & Coletto, 2009, pp. 13-14). Yet, importantly, the traditional group of genuinely self-employed workers, such as craftsmen, have decreased. Thus, the increase of self-employed workers in the Swedish labour market consists primarily of *own-account workers* such as consultants involved in the IT- or service sector (Thörnquist, 2015, p. 415).

Consequently, the core group of self-employed workers has also diversified, and in construction work specifically, the number of dependent self-employed workers—and those in precarious situations, who are often dependent on their former employer for continuous contracts – have increased (Thörnquist, 2015, p. 416). To a certain extent, this development has been actively encouraged through labour market policies that aim to establish small enterprises through tax relief and start-up grants. As I argue below[5], this is part of the notion of *workfare* that characterises the Swedish labour market today, and which focuses on the 'creation of jobs' and reducing 'subsidy-dependence'. Of particular importance to self-employment is the liberalisation of the F-tax certificate[6] in 2009 that made it easier to be registered as self-employed. As Thörnquist (2015) notes, amongst other things, it implied that the self-employed may have only one client—even if the client is their former employer (Thörnquist, 2015, pp. 416-417).

[5] See 2.3 and the section on activation policies for more on this.

[6] F-tax is a form of tax approved by the Swedish Tax Agency that is paid by those involved in economic activities classified as self-employed.

Additionally, the boundaries between independent self-employment and subordinate forms of employment have been even further blurred by that which is referred to as false—or sometimes even bogus—self-employment (Thörnquist, 2011; Vershinina, Rodgers, Ram, Theodorakopoulos, & Rodionova, 2018). This refers to the increased practices among employers to outsource employment responsibilities as a way to circumvent collective agreements and social protection for workers. It is referred to as false self-employment if it is for example done as a means to conceal an employment relationship and to avoid paying taxes, even though the worker's situation might be identical to that of a subordinate employee, who is equally under the authority and control of an employer or company that would usually provide them with tools, material and transport (Thörnquist, 2011, p. 102)

2.2 The Swedish building sector

From an international perspective, the Swedish building sector is characterised with that which Arnholtz and Ibsen (2021, p. 183) refer to as "the Nordic 'high road' of coordinated market economies". This signifies a combination of high educational levels, high-quality production, high-wage levels, and high productivity, even though the latter has dropped considerably since 2006 due to changes in VET systems, a change of power balance between labour market parties, and subsequent new forms of work organisation (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, p. 185).

While drawing on the notion of 'beneficial constraint' (Sorge & Streeck, 1988; Streeck, 1991), Arnholtz and Ibsen argue that such 'high-road' coordination results from regulatory constraints in the labour market—in turn a consequence of the Swedish model of industrial relations and the tradition of collective bargaining. That is, regulatory constraints imply increased costs because companies need to improve productivity rates in order to be profitable. Hence, such balancing acts imply constant negotiations between the social partners in the labour market with regards to issues such as flexibility, skill levels, and the standards of employment (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, p. 183).

In the Swedish building sector, there are a few large companies and a higher concentration of smaller firms. Peab, Skanska, NCC, Veidekke, and JM are what are usually referred to as the top five big companies. These operate both nationally and internationally. Previously, there had not been any major international presence in the Swedish building sector, apart from Norwegian Veidekke that was established in Sweden in the late 1990's. This has changed during recent years and several foreign building companies are now increasingly advancing into the Swedish market, most noteworthy AF Gruppen, another Norwegian company, but also the Austrian construction company Strabag (Byggföretagen, 2020a).

Among the top ten construction firms in Sweden, all but three have 1700 employees or more, and operate more or less nationwide. Among the following ten companies, all but three have between 200-800 employees. Not all of the top 20 largest firms are established across the country, but rather, a number of firms are limited to one or a few regions. Additionally, there are thousands of small local firms, with only a few employees (Byggföretagen, 2020a).

Trade contractors, specialised in electricity, plumbing and such, also feature in the Swedish building sector as a result of technological advancements, and an increased demand for specialised knowledge. Trade contractors often act as subcontractors in the building sector, with their own specialised and specific expertise, which includes their own ambitions and objectives (Simu, 2020, p. 99).

A sequentialist production process like this is tied also to changes in the method of project delivery and procurement. In the traditional and simplest form of a project delivery method, building companies were contracted only to build, that is, to follow the design and instructions given by the client. In this method, the client hires several contractors, each responsible for their own part of the production. This is unusual in today's building sector, and most projects are based on a design-and build contract, in which the building company acts as the general contractor with full responsibility for both the design, the coordination, and the production of the project (Ericson & Johansson, 1994, p. 335).

The trend of the design-and build contract is a result of the aforementioned increased industrialisation, since it has developed the building process to the point where the production to a larger extent takes

place in the manufacturing industry. However, there are also other forms of delivery method such as partnering (for an overview of partnering see for example Bygballe, Jahre, & Swärd, 2010); even though this is predominant in the construction of more complex building projects and infrastructural strategies, rather than residential building jobs.

In connection to the project delivery method, Thörnqvist and Woolfson (2012), emphasise that tendering regimes need to include social aspects, considering their potential impact on working conditions within project sites. The rigidity in a tendering regime is governed by 'cost flexibility', that is, the process in which a client purchases a service from a company based on the best possible offer in the market. However, this risks strengthening the *downward pressure* on wages and working conditions, since such social considerations—including also the quality of the products purchased—are secondary in tendering regimes governed by market principles (Thörnqvist & Woolfson, 2012, p. 528).

Similarly, Olander, Aulin, and Landin (2020) emphasise the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in procurement processes (Olander et al., 2020, pp. 148-150). They argue, while drawing on international studies (Loosemore & Lim, 2017; Loosemore & Lim, 2018) that the main barrier to 'social procurement' is the industry itself. According to them, these barriers become manifest through the resistance of building companies to committing too much to social aspects due to fears of being competitively disadvantaged (Olander et al., 2020).

However, the issue has been raised also by the industry itself. For example, in a debate article in one of Sweden's leading newspapers, representatives for building companies, trade unions, and staffing agencies argued that the main responsibility for social considerations ought to be with the client (Bengtsson, Hoffmann, Karlsson, Lindholm, & Löfström, 2018).

Between the years 2015-2018, an average of 45,000 apartments were built on an annual basis in Sweden, and in 2018 alone over 54,000 apartments were constructed. This is compared with steady figures of around 20,000 annually during the previous two decades (SCB, 2019). In 2019 there was a slight downturn, with only 38,000 apartments built; and as the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in early 2020 there were initial fears of an economic downturn. Nonetheless, the pandemic has had little

financial impact on the Swedish building sector and it has come out of the pandemic in a stronger position than the years preceding it, with an estimated building rate of 45,500 in 2021 and 47,000 for 2022 (Byggföretagen, 2021).

Around 364,000 people are employed in construction work in Sweden, with 95% of these working in the private sector. Women constitute 9% of the total workforce, although only 2% of the workforce involved in craft trades are women. In fact, and as previously mentioned, the highest share of women employed in the Swedish construction industry are found in administrative tasks (Byggföretagen, 2020b; Vänje & Ottosson, 2020, p. 70).

In addition, there is also a large share of posted workers in the Swedish construction industry. Posted work refers to employers sending workers to another country to work for a limited period of time (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a), and since 2013, posted workers in the Swedish labour market need to be registered with the Swedish Work Environment Authority (Nyström, 2020, p. 26). On average, 4850 posted workers were registered every month during 2017 in the Swedish construction industry. In 2018, these figures almost doubled to approximately 9,700 workers, and in 2019 the number of posted workers in the Swedish construction industry were on average 12,900 a month (Bennewitz, 2019; Byggföretagen, 2020c). As a result of the absence of a noticeable impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the building sector, the number of officially registered posted workers was even higher in 2020 than compared with previous years (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2021b).

However, this is far from the total number of foreign workers that are believed to be taking part in Swedish construction work. Estimations of unregistered workers vary between 20,000 in research reports, to at least 50,000 according to trade union reports (Nandorf, 2018; Petersson, 2012, p. 12; Wadensjö, 2015, p. 49); and in interviews with trade unionists I was told that the real number could be well above 100,000. Many are unregistered following illegal migration, or deceived by unscrupulous employers, who mean to avoid paying tax; and the exact number is therefore unclear (Nandorf, 2018).

Foreign workers, vulnerability, and working-life criminality

Foreign workers tend to be exposed more than others to vulnerable work-life situations (Buckley, 2014) and they are often used by unscrupulous and even criminal agents, who take advantage of the supply of cheap labour arriving to Sweden in search for work (Fyrk, 2019). There has been a number of disclosures in media during recent years of undocumented labour migrants fleeing construction sites during inspections by authorities (Olsson, 2017), of thousands of non-EU citizens working in a parallel labour market, tied to contracts of more or less bonded labour (Torp, 2018), and foreign workers earning as little as 30 kronor an hour (Spängs, 2014).

In June 2019, the builder's trade union newspaper, *Byggnadsarbetaren*, published an article series that revealed how criminal networks involved in the selling of drugs and weapons systematically provided informal and unregistered workers from the Baltics to the Swedish construction industry, with annual revenues of 100 million SEK (Fyrk, 2019). Such working-life criminality has in the last couple of years received increased attention from a variety of actors—including politicians, trade unions, the employers' association, and various staffing agencies involved in construction work (Byggföretagen, 2020d; Esbati & Weidby, 2019; Spruch, Eriksson, Mattsson, & Qwick, 2021) and the government has since 2018 launched a targeted effort in which a number of national authorities have started to work together with regular workplace controls and unannounced inspections[7].

A major reason for the accelerating numbers of foreign labour in the industry, was the enlargement of the EU in 2004/07, which made it possible for primarily Central and Eastern European (CEE) workers to

[7] In 2018 the government instructed eight national authorities including the Public Employment Service, the Swedish Work Environment Authority, the Swedish Economic Crime Authority, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the Swedish Migration Agency, the Swedish Police, and the Swedish Tax Agency, to develop methods and strategies to challenge criminal activity in the labour market. This was recently extended over 2021 and so far 4500 controls and inspections have been made at workplaces in different sectors of the labour market (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2021a)

search for employment in the rest of the EU[8]. This is not to say that CEE-workers are new to the Swedish labour market: there has for a long time been workers migrating informally and illegally to Western Europe in search for work, and the Guest Worker System (GWS) in the post-World War II era also enabled citizens of other parts of Europe to move legally to Sweden for work (Frank, 2005, 2009, 2013).

However, with regards to the building sector though, Frank (2013) demonstrates how changing practices in the recruitment of labour was initiated already in the 1990's, through new forms of work organisation based on unauthorised and illegal staffing of foreign workers (Frank, 2013, p. 19). That is, through small staffing agencies, predominantly established by first- and second generation Polish immigrants with networks both in Poland and in the Swedish building sector, Polish workers were recruited initially by smaller firms, and later also by bigger companies. Frank (2013) shows how the growth of such recruitment steadily changed the norms and practices of legitimate forms of work organisation in the Swedish building sector, and argues that foreign workers were exploited explicitly due to lower wage demands (Frank, 2013, pp. 20-21). Hence, rather than a new phenomenon, working-life criminality in the Swedish building-sector has its origin the 1990s, and further, the use of CEE-workers has been an integral part of Swedish companies' work organisational structures, prior to the enlargement of the EU in 2004/07.

Yet, the inclusion of new member states to the EU in 2004/07 legalised as well as accelerated the earlier informal migration (Engbersen, Snel, & De Boom, 2010, p. 119). As noted by Arnholtz and Ibsen (2021), at the time of the inclusion of new member states, unemployment in Poland was 18% and average wage-levels were one-fifth of those in Sweden (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, p. 194). The financial crisis in 2008, together with the following years of economic austerity and its concomitant decrease in living standards, to a further extent also diversified the group of migrant

[8] Except for Ireland, Sweden, and the UK, the other EU-member states used the right to implement a transition period of totally seven years (two + three + two years) before the free movement of labour came to include also the newly included member-states. However, most of the old member-states, except for Austria and Germany, accepted visa-free movement after the initial two years of this transition period (Galgóczi, Leschke, & Watt, 2011, pp. 8-9).

workers seeking employment. This enlargement has therefore not only changed the migratory landscape, but has also had a profound effect on the European labour market (Dølvik & Eldring, 2017). In addition, considering the previously mentioned capacity to absorb otherwise excluded groups of workers in the labour market (Neergaard, 2015), large supplies of cheap labour have particular effects on the construction industry.

The Laval case and the role of the trade union

One case in particular has come to illustrate these new preconditions: The Laval case. As explained by Thörnqvist and Woolfson (2011), in June 2004, a Latvian company, *Laval un Partneri,* was contracted by a municipality in the Stockholm area to renovate a school building. The renovation was carried out by its Swedish subsidiary, *L&P Baltic Bygg*, who had Latvian builders posted to several construction sites across the Stockholm area. When approached by the builders' trade union, and encouraged to sign a collective agreement, which would guarantee the Latvian builders the same salary, on site security measures, and other social security measures commensurable with Swedish builders, Laval refused the request, arguing that the Latvian workers were already connected to the equivalent of collective agreements in Latvia. The trade union protested and responded with a blockade, closed down the working site, and argued that it ought to be the principles previously instantiated by the Swedish labour market parties that should be upheld and not the Latvian. A month later, after another set of failed negotiations, the blockade was extended to all of Laval's project sites in Stockholm, as the electricians' trade union engaged with Byggnads in sympathetic action. As a result of this, Laval took the case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), where the court eventually ruled in favour of the company, referring to the freedom of providing services (Thörnqvist & Woolfson, 2011, pp. 12-14).

As noted by Arnholtz and Lillie (2020a), the Laval-case demonstrates the legal tensions and inconsistencies in EU-legislation that companies make use of to gain competitive advantages by posting workers (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a, p. 6). More specifically, it highlights how two fundamental rights are set against each other—the right to strike and a

company's right to free movement—and how the ECJ in the case of Laval favoured the posting company (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a, p. 8). Practically, this also means that posting companies are exempted from the host country's labour regulations. Lillie (2010) has termed this 'spaces of exception', where transnational subcontractors gain the competitive advantage compared with companies in the host country by offering to work at rates which domestic companies cannot meet (Lillie, 2010, p. 694).

As I discuss below, EU-legislation increasingly pressures national models of industrial relations. Importantly though, the spaces of exception only remain competitive because collective agreements and other institutions unique for a country's industrial relations remain intact for domestic workers (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a, p. 11). In Sweden, the building sector has traditionally been characterised by a relatively strong regulatory framework. A major reason for this was the solid position of the builders' trade union, Byggnads. The unique model of collective agreements, with the labour market's social partners self-regulating (see also 2.3) the principles of the labour market, without the interference of the state, explains the traditionally high membership rates, and therefore also Byggnads' influence on the development of the industry (Kjellberg, 2009, 2017).

Nevertheless, both the Laval case and the enlargement of the EU in 2004/07, did contribute to the change in pre-conditions for the industry. Around the same time as the Laval case, an additional decision from the European Court of Human Rights meant that a clause in the collective agreements, The Monitoring Fee[9], was declared illegal. As a result of the removal of the clause, Byggnads lost a substantial amount of their annual income, and therefore had to compensate by increasing their membership fees. Together with parallel changes in labour market policies regarding

[9] The Monitoring fee was a clause that since 1976 had been included in the collective agreements with the purpose of providing Byggnads with insight and information about which salary-levels were paid out to its members by the employers. According to the agreement, a fee of 1.5% of each individual worker's salary was deducted by the employers and paid to Byggnads to finance the monitoring.

unemployment benefits and A-kassan[10], it became extremely expensive for employees with memberships and insurances. A previous tax deduction on trade union membership was at the same time removed. Altogether, it resulted in a plummeting number of memberships, reducing Byggnads' income and influence even further. The level of membership sank from 81% in 2006 to 73% over the course of just two years, and has continued to sink in the following decade with only 58% of the workers affiliated in 2020 (Kjellberg, 2019; 2021, p. 35).

In addition, clouded estimates of the number of foreign workers on Swedish construction sites has made it difficult to measure how many members of the actual share of the workforce that are union members. Altogether, this means that there is not only limited possibilities for Byggnads to influence day-to-day activities on many project sites, due to the actual absence of members on site, but their low membership rates and weak position in the labour market also thwarts the collective bargaining and potentially affects wage-levels negatively (Niklasson, 2021a).

The insecurities of those who actually work on construction sites resulted already in 2006 in the launch of *ID06*, an electronic registration system that aims to identify all individuals at a project site. By making this compulsory for all companies involved in the production process, (including both general contractors and subcontractors), firms had to supply workers with a special ID that is bound to each specific construction site and the idea was to make sure that there are no unauthorised personnel involved in the Swedish building sector. The workers thus have to electronically register as they enter through the gates at the project site. Connecting individuals with specific employers and companies, also makes it possible to make sure that the identified companies involved at the project sites in turn are connected to collective agreements. The employers' association thus implemented this system to secure a just and sound competitive construction industry, as well as making project sites safer for the employees (ID06, 2018).

Around 70'000 companies were connected to ID06 in 2018 (ID06, 2018). There are different opinions as to what extent it works and how

[10] A-kassa is a form of unemployment insurance which is based on a membership and a monthly fee. In 2006, the fees were raised drastically, while the benefit was lowered. Consequently, the membership rates plummeted (Kjellberg, 2010).

effective it is. Both employers and trade union representatives have expressed dissatisfaction during the course of this research. From the employers' perspective, it is said to increase the work burden and administration, while Byggnads claim that it is easy to fiddle with the system by creating false cards or by swiping the cards and enter through the gates two or three people at the same time[11]. The difficulties in guaranteeing that everyone on site is employed on legitimate terms have resulted in discussions about the possibility of using biometric identity cards, which are thought to entail both fingerprints and face-recognition (Johansson, 2021).

Linked to the ambition of limiting unserious and criminal actors in the industry, the law on entrepreneurial joint liability was implemented on 1st of January 2019[12] (SFS, 2018:1472). With this law, it was emphasised that general contractors are responsible to make sure that subcontractors also follow the binding collective agreements. If not, the general contractor can be forced to pay the monetary difference. It also ensures that there are more responsibilities for clients, to prevent the exploitation of both domestic and posted workers. This touches upon the previously mentioned issue of employer responsibilities with regards to subcontracting (Kalleberg, 2000), with the aim to avert unfair competition, and encourage more control and shorter lines of subcontracting in the construction industry (Nilsson, 2018).

Also, a new and more generous form of tax deduction on building renovations was made available for private homeowners in Sweden in 2009, which replaced previous systems and had a major impact for certain parts of the building sector. The more generous form of tax deduction is called ROT, and specifically self-employed carpenters, painters, and those involved in electricity work and water and heating, sanitation and plumbing, witness of more jobs after the reform. The intention was to stimulate the economy, and especially to make previously informal and undeclared jobs legal by making a percentage of the labour cost deductible

[11] It is important to note that the difficulty to control the validity of ID06-tags, and how they are used, blurs and to a certain extent also illegitimates the official figures of posted workers even further.

[12] Huvudentreprenörsansvar in Swedish.

on the contracting homeowners' personal income tax declaration, up to a maximum threshold[13] (Skatteverket, 2018). The reform has been praised by the employers' association, as a way to generate new jobs and constant growth in the building sector. It has however also been criticised and it has received a lot of attention in the media, due to comprehensive frauds. At Byggnads congress in 2018, the trade union's members voted to work for it to be removed. This resulted in a heated debate where some members argued that a removal would lead to higher unemployment, while others pointed out that there are other and more efficient ways to stimulate employment within the building sector, linked to broader national policies regarding residential housing (Christensen, 2018; Skatteverket, 2018).

In addition, a recent report by Byggmarknadskommissionen, which is the industry's own initiative to map and analyse working-life criminality in the construction sector, concludes that there are difficulties to control that ROT-work is performed by workers connected to collective agreements—or even that they work legally in Sweden. The commission suggests regulating tax-deduction so that it is available only when there is proper documentation from the work site, even if this might be difficult, considering that most ROT-work is done in private households and that clients are private persons (Byggmarknadskommissionen, 2020c).

2.3 Tracing the Swedish model: Market incentives and regulatory change

Capitalism is politically and economically regulated in a variety of ways across the EU (Hall & Soskice, 2001). In Sweden, the tradition of compromise between social classes has generated what is usually referred to as the Swedish model, which describes a specific political and economic development in Sweden during the twentieth century. This development was characterised by rapid economic growth, political consensus and as indicated, it is famous for its 'middle way'-approach: To balance between

[13] Recent changes lowered the deduction to 30% of the total labour cost of the renovation, compared to 50% when implemented ten years ago.

ownership rights, profits, and the redistribution of income (Korpi & Shalev, 1979; Standing, 1999; Thullberg & Östberg, 1994).

The Swedish model describes the modern welfare state, and focuses on the high levels of equality and its close ties with the Swedish Social-Democratic party. In relation to the labour market, the standard employment relationship (SER) has traditionally been an intrinsic part of the welfare state. Not just in Sweden, but this holds for the development of welfare states in general. Even though it varies internationally, the SER traditionally refers to a stable and socially protected full-time employment that is regulated through either collective agreements or other forms of social legislation. Notably, the SER is distinguished not by full-time employment per se but rather by the protective mechanisms from market forces which it involves (Bosch, 2004, pp. 618-619).

More importantly, the SER implies that workers are paid not only during working hours but also for times when they are not working, during holidays, sick-leave, or parental leave. I discuss the concepts of both work and labour in more detail when presenting the theoretical framework for the study in Chapter 3, but, in short, social legislation and the SER protect the worker from capitalist and exploitative market forces to a further extent than in labour markets dominated by less regulation, large informal economies or day labour. Esping-Andersen (1990) refers to this process as de-commodification, and argue that the welfare state builds on notions of the workers as separated from their labour power: Unlike other commodities that generate value, workers also need to rest and take part in social life outside of wage labour.

As emphasised by Esping-Andersen (1990), de-commodification does not imply the complete eradication of labour as a commodity. Rather, it refers to the degree to which the worker "can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 37) and varies between countries and institutional systems.

The Swedish model is not just the welfare state though. It refers also to a model of industrial relations with institutionalised practices of dialogue and negotiations between the social partners in the labour market. The social partners in the labour market refer to representatives for trade unions and employers' associations that negotiates as part of a system of collective

agreements between trade unions and employers (Korpi & Shalev, 1979, pp. 171-172).

In addition, the Swedish model is used also in terms of political decision-making processes, which based on compromises and consensus historically have included the interests of civil society groups already in early stages of the preparation of political decisions, as a means to avoid conflicts (Thullberg & Östberg, 1994, pp. 5-6).

In this study however, it is primarily as a model of industrial relations that the Swedish model is relevant. As noted by Kjellberg (2017), the Swedish model is characterised by self-regulation. This highlights the uniqueness in that collective agreements are negotiated by social partners in the labour market, independent of the involvement of the state. This is not to say that it has not been in the interest of the state, rather the opposite. In the late 1930s, during the early years of the Swedish model of industrial relations, a government commission proposed a centralisation of the major blue-collar trade union, *LO*, as a means to secure industrial peace and economic growth. This would prevent other, more radical and conflict-oriented trade unions having their members vote on already agreed collective agreements, negotiated by the major trade unions (Kjellberg, 2017, p. 371).

The centralisation of LO implied not only peaceful negotiations but also a less fragmented union structure. That is, compared to other, highly de-centralised systems of collective bargaining such as in the U.S., where negotiations take place locally, there are still local negotiations in Sweden but they take place within the wider framework of the already negotiated central agreement (Kjellberg, 2009). This combination of centralisation and de-centralisation is, according to Kjellberg (2009), together with self-regulation, an explicit part of the Swedish model of industrial relations.

According to Thörnqvist (1999), centralised bargaining has been fruitful for most actors in the labour market. Considering the successful industrialisation during the post-World War II era, it has facilitated employers and governments limiting wage developments at the same time as it has given trade unions influence and increased their bargaining power. Yet, with processes of economic globalisation and new ways to organise work in the 1980s, arguments to de-centralise the bargaining system have increased. From an employers' point of view: De-centralisation has made

it possible to widen wage differentials, and reward higher-skilled workers, to encourage employee commitment, and to stimulate productivity. From a trade union perspective however, it has been seen as an attack, undermining solidarity among groups of workers and placing them against each other (Thörnqvist, 1999, pp. 71-73; 2011, p. 26).

Also, one can see that the success of the Swedish model of industrial relations is traditionally characterised by the social partners in the labour market recognising each other (Kjellberg, 2009). This has historically generated a will to both cooperate and compromise. However, this changed in 1990, as the employers' association declared that they no longer intended to take part in centralised negotiations. Much of the 1990s political climate was thus characterised by hostility rather than the political consensus for which the Swedish model had for a long time been known (Thörnqvist, 1999, p. 74).

Together with changes in the occupational structure as a result of de-industrialisation, a general decline in membership rates, and politically motivated attacks on the unemployment insurance (a-kassa), the bargaining power of trade unions has decreased. As argued by Thörnqvist (1999), the global trend of de-centralisation is thus harmful to the Swedish model because of the shift in power balance between labour and capital in the direction of the employers.

Parallel with the global trend of de-centralisation, there was a wave of liberalisation and regulatory change in the Swedish labour market. These changes were fuelled by market-oriented arguments of efficiency and flexibility, and reflected a wider shift of the global economic system, a transformation characterised by a move from what Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) have termed national stability to global flexibility. More specifically, the social processes that were fuelled by global capitalism involved demands for more flexible work arrangements. As noted by Bosch (2004), there are national differences to the demands for more flexible forms of labour, yet, a number of factors are particularly helpful in understanding this process. Among them, and of specific interest for this study, is the flexibilisation of product markets and also the already mentioned political regulation of labour markets.

Bosch (2004) argues that the stability of the full time employment, which was previously the norm in many industrialised countries, was

possible only because product markets were structured in a similar manner (Bosch, 2004, p. 627). That is, since the SER built on the aforementioned compromises between the social classes, it also mirrored the interconnectedness between firms' work organisation and the mass production that characterised the manufacturing industry. However, with a globalised economy and the restructuring of production, the SER no longer matches company interests, who rather seeks what they see as more flexible solutions. The turbulence and unpredictability of product markets thus generates demands also for more flexible forms of work organisation (Bosch, 2004, pp. 631-632).

Hence, regulatory change needs to be understood in a context where the political development was influenced by specific ideas of capital accumulation that were established elsewhere, and given an opportunity to establish also in the Swedish model. In other words, flexible work arrangements were introduced in the labour market through political regulation and did not occur *sui generis* (Bergström et al., 2007).

One example of such regulatory change in search for more flexible work arrangements, is the de-regulation of the authority for employment services, *Arbetsförmedlingen*, which up until 1993 had a state monopoly in providing employment services in Sweden. The main purpose with de-regulation was to contribute to a more effective labour market, as an overall strategy to spur economic growth, and as a result, private labour market intermediaries such as staffing agencies entered the Swedish labour market (Bergström et al., 2007, p. 43; Håkansson & Isidorsson, 2016, pp. 48-49).

The principle of staffing was met with scepticism from trade unions, primarily by LO, who feared that the transfer of employment responsibilities to a third part would potentially increase insecurity in the labour market for its members, and lead to processes of re-commodification. In other words, that their members to an increased extent would be exposed to market forces, and concurrent business relations. There were also fears of worsened working conditions and social dumping, that is, that workers would be replaced by other, less-paid, groups of workers (Bergström et al., 2007, p. 56).

The following years were punctuated by debates, and in 1998, it was not only major staffing agencies that were established in the Swedish

labour market, but also smaller firms. In addition, also state authorities had restructured their work organisations and started to make use of temporary staffing workers. In the health care sector for example, a shortage of trained nurses led to common practices of temp nurses, which in turn had higher salaries and made it increasingly attractive for even more nurses to change and work through staffing agencies. In total 400 staffing agencies of varying sizes were established in the Swedish labour market with the industry having an economic turnover of around five billion SEK (Bergström et al., 2007, pp. 58-59).

With the Swedish model of industrial relations increasingly under pressure, the agreement between the social partners in the labour market a few years later, on the use of staffing agencies, was no surprise. What happened was that employer associations and trade unions compromised on the use of private labour market intermediaries and their role in the labour market[14]. An important aspect of this was the legitimisation of staffing agencies through collective agreements. This is what Coe et al. (2009) has termed managed flexibility (Coe et al., 2009, p. 81). Just like the state monopoly on employment services that up until it was abolished in 1993 had made it illegal to hire through staffing agencies, it is argued that the new system of managed flexibility legitimised the presence of the staffing industry as an established actor in the Swedish labour market (Bergström et al., 2007, pp. 17-18).

From an international perspective, the legitimisation of staffing agencies through collective agreements is a unique process. It is unique because all individuals employed through staffing agencies ought to be automatically connected to collective agreements, which in contrast to a system of minimum wages provide employees with a guaranteed salary even when not placed with a client company. It is important to note though that not all staffing agencies are connected to collective agreements. There is also an extensive use of different forms of employments, both part-time, and those employed by the hour. To the extent that they are connected though,

[14] Even though LO centrally joined the agreement there was internal conflicts and disagreement among several of its member organisations. Among others, Byggnads was one of the unions that opposed the acceptance of staffing agencies in the labour market. As I show further on in my analysis, the strong opposition was partly a result of Byggnads, at the time, strong position in the labour market.

staffing agencies and the organisation of work through labour market intermediaries is integrated to the core of the Swedish labour market (Bergström et al., 2007, p. 55). Thus, the staffing industry actively legitimise their presence as a competitive force, by introducing itself in the labour market while securing future access and possibilities to grow in the market (Peck & Theodore, 2002).

In 2020 there were in total 88,000 persons employed through staffing agencies in Sweden. This is equivalent to only 1,6% of the employees in the Swedish labour market, and in line with most other countries in the EU (Kompetensföretagen, 2020). Yet, as noted by Håkansson and Isidorsson (2007, 2016), even though the number of employees constitutes a marginal share of the labour market, the effect should not be underestimated considering how only a few number of agency workers change the dynamic in a work organisation (Håkansson & Isidorsson, 2007, p. 123). Additionally, as noted by Peck, Theodore, and Ward (2005) even though a small share of the market, one or two percent still generates a significant amount of revenues for the staffing agencies. According to Kompetensföretagen, the trade association for Swedish staffing agencies, the industry's turnover in 2020 exceeded 37 billion SEK (Kompetensföretagen, 2020). This points to the lucrative business that private labour market intermediation implies (Peck et al., 2005, p. 6).

This is also what I want to emphasise with the example of the establishment of the staffing industry in Sweden: The principles of staffing illustrates how attitudes to the organisation of work has changed. And more specifically, how ideas of market incentives have come to play a vital role as a governing mechanism in the organisation of work in today's labour market.

Activation policies and the emergent importance of EU-legislation

A central aspect in processes of marketisation is the predominant reliance on active labour market policies (Greer, 2016). As noted by Lundqvist (2017) though, active labour market policies have a variety of connotations attached to them. For example, in the early stages of the welfare project, activation policies referred mainly to the retraining of workers to meet

demands in a growing economy, and in Sweden, it was an important element in undermining and replacing the previously dominant male breadwinner model. Through an increased number of women in the Swedish labour market, an active labour market policy helped to shape a dual earner model instead (Lundqvist, 2017, pp. 8-9).

Nevertheless, and of particular importance for this study: The active labour market policies that are key in the EU-labour market today, share the imprint of notions of workfare rather than the legacy of a Keynesian welfare state (Greer, 2016; Jessop, 2002; Lundqvist, 2017).

As argued by Greer (2016), contemporary activation policies aim to increase labour market participation primarily as a means to reduce state spending. Such notions of welfare state spending was formulated as a critique against the welfare state project already in its early stages. The critique departs from the ideological conviction that benefits reduce workers' incentives to take on jobs while also limiting capitalists' interest to invest, and thus have hampering effects upon economic growth (Greer, 2016, p. 163). However, such reasoning does not take into consideration the previously mentioned effect of social legislation and welfare benefits upon the workers, namely that it unties workers from the *disciplinary element* of the labour market through de-commodification.

Consequently, active labour market policies generate institutional change that intensify the control over both workers and the unemployed. More specifically, it re-shapes the labour market and makes workers and the unemployed more willing to accept non-standard forms of employment (Greer, 2016, pp. 164-166). Such non-standard forms of employment have in the last decade been frequently referred to as precarious work, and has been characterised with low pay, part-time, short-term contracts; and with little or no access to the social entitlements that were included in the previously mentioned SER (Rubery, Grimshaw, Keizer, & Johnson, 2018, p. 510).

More specifically, what has happened is that changes in the product market and the political regulation of labour markets as a result of processes of economic globalisation, have increased the demand for flexible work arrangements and shifted the balance in the labour market, which in turn have stimulated a re-commodification of labour (Greer, 2016; Rubery et al., 2018).

This is visible in the building sector. As noted by industrial relations scholars involved in studies of construction work (see for example Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020b for an overview), the free movement of labour and the enlargement in 2004/07 is of crucial importance to understand this development. Compared to previous expansions, the inclusion of primarily CEE countries had a specific symbolic value of uniting a divided region. At the same time, the expansion of an integrated EU-single market was intended also to generate improved opportunities for economic growth (EU, 2006). As noted by Dølvik and Eldring (2017), the accession increased the EU-population with up to 100 million people—close to a fifth of the total population. Considering the aforementioned variation of social and economic stability in the EU, it is no surprise that this generated the largest intra-EU labour migration in modern times.

Originally, the freedom to move within the EU was set in place already in 1957 through the *Rome Treaty*. The intention was to boost individuals' economic freedom, even though it initially was a privilege for those who were gainfully employed. In other words, it limited the possibilities for the unemployed or other individuals that were temporarily inactive in the labour market. However, this changed in 1993 with the *Maastricht treaty*, which guarantees the right for anyone, gainfully employed or not, to move freely within the EU in search for employment (Ochel, 2010, p. 314). However, the Rome treaty referred not only to the free movement of labour, but also to the free movement of goods, capital, and services. And as indicated earlier, in relation to construction work and the presence of both foreign companies and foreign labour in the Swedish building sector, there are competing legal principles and inconsistencies between the four freedoms that companies take advantage of (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a, p. 6).

For example, the free movement of goods entails that companies follow the rules of the country in which the company is established, and that the country in which its product is sold in turn needs to recognise the standards of the company's home country. This contrasts with the free movement of labour, where labour mobility is governed by the rules and regulations of the host country. The tensions between the different governing principles are thus evident, as previously mentioned, with regard to the Laval-case, and in relation to the Swedish building sector,

which means that posting companies are exempted from Swedish labour regulations (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a, pp. 7-9).

These 'spaces of exception' (Lillie, 2010) are specifically attractive for construction work and other immobile and geographically bound industries, such as the cleaning sector, since it makes it possible for companies to import cheap labour through posting. Thus, dis-integrated work organisations and subcontracting makes it possible to avoid national labour legislation, without directly confronting it. However, the impact of these practices, that is, the re-organisation of labour and the restructuring of the workforce it implies, still pressures the legitimacy of national legislation (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a, p. 8).

In addition, the wage differentials between domestic workers and posted workers from abroad, as well as previously mentioned trends to re-commodify labour creates tensions in the labour market. The symbolic unification of a previously divided Europe, through the creation of an integrated single market, is thus jeopardised as groups of workers face each other in an increasingly competitive labour market.

3 Organisation and work: Theoretical points of departure

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework that guides the analysis of the organisation of work in the study. Organisation of work refers to the social organisation of an economic activity, that is, how economic and productive activities are facilitated, coordinated, and controlled. The analysis therefore includes the political economy of the labour process, and the social relationship between labour and those commissioning the economic production—owners and their agents—usually termed managers.

First, considering that the study departs from the inter-organisational relationships that are brought about by increased subcontracting in the Swedish building sector, I introduce construction management as a specific subcontracting regime. The conceptualisation of a regime makes it possible to draw on a specific set of conditions that structure the social relations of interest. More specifically, that which structures the inter-organisational relationships between building companies, trade specialists, and suppliers.

Second, to analyse where new practices of organising work originate, and whose interest they represent, I examine power, control, and management from a labour process perspective. In addition, I argue that control is exercised through power relations, which in turn stem from an organisation's position in the specific industry. In other words, from a company's varying access to product and labour markets. Hence, the analysis navigates between on the one hand subcontracting arrangements, and on the other, the dynamics of work organisation, with reference to intra-organisational relations. Based on an empirical analysis, my ambition is to theorise the dynamic between inter- and intra-organisational relations

as a means to show how construction management impacts the labour process.

Finally, I define organisational fields and strategies to emphasise how a realisation of a strategy always involves a mix of planned and unforeseen events. Thus, any strategy demands manoeuvring space and flexibility for it to be successfully implemented.

3.1 Construction management as a subcontracting regime

Work in the Swedish building sector is increasingly organised though construction management. This refers to the process which aims to oversee the planning, design, and construction of building projects—from beginning to end—and can be performed by both clients and contracting companies (Harris & McCaffer, 2013). In the last decade, there has been a trend in the Swedish building sector, which has entailed building companies taking on both a construction management role and organising the production process accordingly. That is, rather than producing the different parts of the project themselves, building companies are, to an increasing extent, buying production inputs from various subcontractors, while overseeing and coordinating the production. Even though productive activities are outsourced, it is still the building companies, as general contractors, who have the overall responsibility to make sure that the project is finished on time, that it meets quality standards, for safety, and that the production follows current labour market legislation.

As a consequence of increased subcontracting, there are also possibilities for downsizing among the general contractors, that is, of reducing the number of workers employed by the company. Construction management is in other words based on a variety of contractual relationships between suppliers, trade specialists, and general contractors. This is what I refer to as *subcontracting arrangements*.

In this study, I treat construction management as a specific *subcontracting regime*. I refer to regime as a set of conditions that structures the social relations in a specific system (Bélanger & Edwards, 2007), in

this case, a set of conditions that structures the relationships between suppliers or trade specialists, and the general contractor. In their notion of workplace regimes, Bélanger and Edwards (2007) identify three conditioning factors: Technology, product markets, and institutional regulations. I argue that these factors are also relevant in the case of a subcontracting regime. As noted by MacKenzie (2002, 2008), subcontracting as a mode of production has been encouraged by both technological advancements, increased market competition, and de-regulative efforts in the labour market.

In addition, I emphasise that the notion of the subcontracting regime is key also to analyse changes in the *labour process*. With labour process I mean that "part of the mode of production in which workers' productive capacity is deployed in order to produce use-values and at the same time surplus value" (Edwards, 2010, p. 32). In other words, the labour process refers to the process that conditions the capacity of work into concrete labour. This includes the workplace dynamics between managers and workers, which builds on the underlying conflict of capital and labour (Edwards, 2010, pp. 32-33).

The conditioning factors: Technology, product markets, and institutional arrangements

Technology conditions the social organisation of work. Yet, even though it conditions the possibilities it does not mean that technology has determining effects on work and social relations in the workplace. In fact, the use of any specific technology itself results from decisions made within the organisation (Bélanger, 2006, p. 325). I mention this to highlight that technology is intimately tied to power-relations at the workplace, and in the organisation. It can therefore be used in different manners by management to control and monitor the labour process, but also by employees to enhance job autonomy and empowerment (Bélanger & Edwards, 2007, p. 717).

In the building sector, the impact of technology on work, and the social organisation of work, manifests in at least two interrelated manners: through the persistent striving for specialisation, and the further development of industrialisation. Specialisation refers to the large number

of trade specialists in construction work, such as carpenters, concreters, brick-layers, plasterers, painters, and electricians (Eccles, 1981, p. 337). Industrialisation on the other hand, refers to the development of technology and its impact on the production process (Bosch & Philips, 2003). It can be through the utilisation of electrical hand tools, or through pre-fabricated walls and bathroom modules, which are manufactured elsewhere and delivered to the project sites.

The possibility to pre-fabricate concrete elements in the manufacturing industry creates a situation where pre-fabricated concrete walls are transported from factories to project sites, mainly lifted from the trucks and installed, much like a puzzle, on the actual project site. Thus, this also means that there is still a need for manpower and labour at the project site, but that the nature of the work has changed. Consequently, prefabrication is a time-saving process for building companies as installation on site generally takes less time than building from scratch. At the same time, it still entails production, and physical employment at the specific geographical location where the building, factory or infrastructural projects are being built. This rigid composition of the construction industry thus prevents contractors from moving production abroad, and therefore also helps to maintain a relatively stable demand for employment within construction over a longer period of time (Bosch & Philips, 2003, p. 7).

The argument that technology is tied to power dynamics in the labour process, indicates the interrelated nature of specialisation and industrialisation (c.f. Blauner, 1964). Karlsson (1982) noted already four decades ago that there was an urge from *Byggföretagen*, the employers' association in the Swedish construction industry, to increase industrialisation, and to routinise work. This is prevalent in the Swedish building sector today, with a high-degree of pre-fabrication on project sites.

Moreover, a large number of trade specialists, with varying skill-levels and labour roles at project sites, makes the coordination of work activities more complex. Thiel (2013) has termed the production process in construction work 'sequential', with reference to the different stages of production following an interconnected order. Such compartmentalisation, or 'sequentialism', in turn increases specialisation

further. Traditionally, this has been a way for companies to access skilled expertise, and to complement one's own organisation (Bresnen et al., 1985). However, what is new is that building companies these days also replace core features of their own organisation as a means to reduce labour costs. Yet, such externalisation brings forward an inherent paradox as well as a potential future problem for the building sector: the short-term counter-pressures of lower production costs versus investments in a well-trained and skilled workforce (Bosch & Philips, 2003, pp. 10-11).

The sequentialist nature of the production process in construction is different from the manufacturing production process (Eccles, 1981). This builds on the argument that the sequentialism in construction work does not have any buffer inventory that facilitates absorption of fluctuations in output. Eccles (1981) suggests that even though every sequence of the production has a certain amount of time allocated for a specific task, it is not necessarily absorbed into an intermediate product, compared with assembly line production in the manufacturing industry for example (Eccles, 1981, pp. 337-338). This means that unforeseen events in one stage of production easily have consequences elsewhere, not least since much of the work cannot start until the previous stage is finished. For example, it is not possible for the plasterers to start their work inside the apartment until the pre-fabricated concrete walls have been installed. A delayed delivery of the concrete elements thus has major effects on the overall production process.

Just like other sectors, the building sector is also sensitive to economic fluctuations and the volatility of product markets (Bosch & Philips, 2003). Organisations that are too big are problematic in times of crisis, as little demand for new constructions risks making large organisations costly, which often results in redundancies. At the same time, as the industrial tide turns, there is a risk for a limited capacity if the organisation is not big enough to take on more work as demand for new construction grows. To externalise parts of the production and make use of subcontractors therefore enhances the wiggle room for building companies, in the sense that they minimise risks when they engage in new projects.

The limited capacity and the volatility of product markets also makes the building sector competitive. It has always been sensitive to volatilities in product and labour markets, but it is as a result of institutional and

regulatory fluctuations that organisational flexibility through subcontracting has become a strategy.

With an eye on these institutional fluctuations I refer to changes in the legal frameworks of both labour markets and financial markets that encourage organisational change and the restructuring of work. I emphasise that institutions change over time (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009; Streeck & Thelen, 2005), and as noted in the previous chapter, this is evident in the emergent role of EU-legislation in the Swedish labour market, and not least through the posting of workers from one EU-country to another (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020b).

According to Arnholtz and Andersen (2018) the posting of workers illustrates a tension between the mandate of EU-institutions, and the sovereignty of each EU-member state to regulate the respective national model of industrial relations (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018, pp. 395-396). Their argument builds on the notion that institutional change does not necessarily imply formal institutional change and that it does not happen overnight, but rather incrementally. They write (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018, p. 396):

> "…national employment relations are in fact changing under pressure from posting, but that these changes are harder to identify because they do not take the form of formal institutional change. Instead, the pressure of posting has caused changes in the strategies of traditional actors, incremental shifts in predominant decision-making forums and the appearance of new actors on the regulatory scene. To understand these changes within basically unchanged formal institutions, we introduce the concept of extra-institutional change. We argue that such extra-institutional changes can have significant effect on employment relations."

Extra-institutional change thus emphasises that the meaning and usage of formal rules are never self-evident. On the contrary, they are always conditioned by legislators, employers, and other actors who facilitate the legitimisation, the meaning and usage of the rules incrementally. Yet, even though this process is incremental, it can potentially also accumulate and result in structural change. Thus, different interpretations of legislation on the posting of workers among building companies potentially transforms

how institutions work in practice, even though the formal rules are yet to change (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018, p. 398).

Arnholtz and Andersen (2018) mention specifically three mechanisms of extra-institutional change in relation to the building sector. Firstly, they argue that the relations between traditional actors such as employers and trade unions are pressured by the posting of workers as the parties are faced with both challenges and possibilities as a result of posting (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018, p. 399). Secondly, they show that forums that were previously important may lose their importance as a result of extra-institutional change. This is best exemplified by how conflicts in the Danish labour market are settled to a large extent through labour court rulings, rather than solved through the system of collective bargaining which was previously the case (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018, pp. 408-410).

Thirdly, they show how new actors—such as foreign companies—when entering new labour markets are perceived as disruptive. As a result of unfamiliarity with new institutional settings, and by interpreting rules and regulations differently, foreign companies involved in posting pose a threat to the extant labour market stakeholders. The disruptiveness manifests differently depending upon the influence of the firm though. Small firms generally only avoid legislation, while larger actors have the possibility to challenge rules and legislation directly (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018, p. 399).

Subcontracting, transaction costs, and trust

To subcontract implies to contract out the production, or parts of the production, to an external actor (Purcell & Purcell, 1998). More specifically, it involves the relocation of the administrative mechanism that governs production, from intra-organisational structures based on hierarchy, to market-based inter-organisational relations, namely contractual relationships (MacKenzie, 2002). It thereby inherently involves aspects of uncertain agency, as the control of production is shifted from one actor to another (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2019).

As noted elsewhere (Fellini, Ferro, & Fullin, 2007; MacKenzie, 2008), subcontracting has traditionally been analysed from a transaction costs perspective (Williamson, 1975, 1981), and the notion of 'make or buy'.

This refers to the strategic choice that companies make with regards to the possibility of producing a product themselves, or to buy it from a company externally. Briefly, according to the transaction costs analysis, the company makes the decision dependent on estimated costs, and the higher the transaction costs the stronger the incentive to buy the product rather than to produce it (Fellini et al., 2007, p. 280; MacKenzie, 2008, p. 869).

In construction work there are high levels of uncertainty and an unpredictable production process—particularly with regards to what resources firms will require in future projects. To outsource work and to rely solely on subcontractors as a mean to reduce costs, is in general a strong incentive for building companies to engage in subcontracting arrangements with trade specialists, rather than building for themselves (Fellini et al., 2007, p. 280). This organisational form in construction work is what Eccles (1981) has termed the 'quasifirm', and it is analogous to the inside contracting system described by Williamson (1975). The quasifirm is based on a transaction costs analysis, and Eccles (1981) argues that it illustrates how the subcontracting of trade specialists is preferable to the vertical integration of the same trades (Eccles, 1981, pp. 335-336).

From a sociological perspective, transaction costs analysis has analytical limitations; not least because of its application of "rationalisations of potentially contradictory outcomes" (MacKenzie, 2008, p. 881) rather than an analysis that engages with social dynamics of inter-organisational relationships involved in subcontracting. More precisely, the process in which such relations develop, and the role of trust, has traditionally been downplayed by transaction costs analysis. As noted by MacKenzie (2008) while citing Bachmann (2001), this is problematic since trust is a central mechanism in inter-organisational relationships (Bachmann, 2001, p. 338).

By building on Luhmann's (1979) theory on the social origin of trust, Bachmann (2001) conceptualises trust and power as social control mechanisms in inter-organisational relationships. He argues that trust is the basic coordinating mechanism that reduces uncertainty as it allows for specific assumptions about other actors' potential behaviour. Importantly, this does not mean that inter-organisational relationships necessarily are harmonic, rather the opposite. As highlighted by labour process theory, trust can also be a sophisticated tool to exert power and can facilitate

subordinate behaviour under the imperative of capitalism (Bachmann, 2001, pp. 338-339).

While trust absorbs uncertainty, it also produces risk. Such risks are what the involved actors want to minimise, and if it would be possible, any risk would be excluded from the contractual relationship. Yet, if that was the case, then trust would not be needed in the first place. Risks are in other words an unavoidable feature of trust, at the same time as those involved in the relationship try to find good enough reasons for believing that the risks they are about to take are low and reasonable (Bachmann, 2001, pp. 342-343).

With this in mind, we should also consider Granovetter's (1985) argument that all economic activity is embedded in a wider social scheme. This means that contractual relations like subcontracting arrangements are tied also to regulatory frameworks and social relationships rather than based on individual and rational calculations only (Fellini et al., 2007; Thiel, 2010). This is emphasised by MacKenzie (2008), who argues that mechanisms of trust and power need to positioned in the "contractual environment within which it operates" (MacKenzie, 2008, p. 870). That is, trust needs to be conceptualised in its institutional context. For example, legal regulations aim to reduce risks and uncertainty, but also acquaintances and other informally developed practices are potential safety nets to avoid situations where business partners turn out not to be reliable. Thus, before we reach the stage where we decide what risks we are willing to take, we reflect whether we are willing to consider trust at all, as the mean according to which we coordinate the business relationship (Bachmann, 2001, pp. 343-345).

Woolthuis, Hillebrand, and Nooteboom (2005) conceptualises three ways in which trustworthiness is manifested in inter-organisational relationships. These three are *opportunity control*, *incentive control*, and *benevolence*. It is argued that trust stems from partly institutional regulations, values, social norms, and moral obligations, and partly also from context specific situations and relationships. MacKenzie (2008) expands on this and argues that:

> "Mechanisms of contract enforcement, or the authority lent by hierarchical relations, may provide the opportunity controls that help close

> off potential avenues of wayward conduct. In turn, incentive controls based on dependency or relational specific investments may dissuade contract partners in their relationship. Alternatively, inter-organizational relationships may develop on the assumption of benevolence between contract partners – based on a macro context of socially accepted norms of behaviour and a micro context of empathy and identification." (MacKenzie, 2008, p. 870)

The institutional context is in other words decisive for understanding the trustworthiness between contractual partners. There are situations where trust is guarded by formal control mechanisms, such as for example through sanctions. However, this might have unwanted results and undermine, rather than build trust; moreover, social control on the other hand, which builds on norms, shared values, and moral obligation, might be more successful in building trust in other situations and contexts. Either way, as noted by Macaulay (1963) and others after him, the desire for flexibility and possible non-contractual negotiations are central aspects of any business relationship.

This is illustrated by Thiel (2010) who shows how contractual relationships in the British building sector are informally regulated and re-produced, sometimes also illegally, as a result of de-regulation (Thiel, 2010, p. 444). The specific institutional context in which such social embeddedness of subcontracting has developed, manifests through contractual agreements based on previously shared work experiences. In fact, he argues that a stable network of contacts is contingent upon previous contacts and social status, and that it to a certain degree is a necessity for future contracts (Thiel, 2010, p. 455). This is in line also with Eccles (1981) argument that there is a stability of subcontracting relationships which grows over time, and that subcontractors are contracted based on their perceived trustworthiness.

In addition, just as there are institutional structures that condition subcontracting (Eccles, 1981; Fellini et al., 2007), Thiel (2010) shows that informal contractual relations are spurred on by three main driving forces in construction work, which are: the indeterminate nature of building contracts; the many unforeseen events as previously discussed; and finally, the problems in construction work that are related to the possibility of accurate monitoring of the physical work at the project sites (Thiel, 2010,

p. 463). Again, this highlights how building companies not only draw on calculations of financial costs, but also of the trustworthiness of the contracted trade specialist.

Furthermore, of specific interest in the building sector is the specialised impact of social relations in subcontracting, which result in business clusters, and the rather long-term contractual relationships characterised by acquaintance and reciprocity (Thiel, 2010, p. 464). Such industrial networks are for example visible through industry-internal labour market recruitment, where building companies regularly loan and hire manpower from each other, for shorter periods of time, or for a specific project (Fellini et al., 2007, p. 290).

Different subcontracting arrangements

To put it simply, there is not one form of subcontracting, and neither is there one reason as to why a subcontracting arrangement is shaped in a specific way. As argued in the previous section, contractual relations are shaped by institutional as well as industrial particularities, but also by social relations and networks (Eccles, 1981; Fellini et al., 2007; MacKenzie, 2008; Thiel, 2010).

Previous conceptualisations of subcontracting arrangements have distinguished between *production subcontracting*, *transnational subcontracting*, and *internal or external subcontracting* (Fellini et al., 2007; Neo, 2010). Neo (2010) argues for example that production subcontracting involves three forms of arrangements: capacity, specialisation, and supplier subcontracting. These are separated by the extent to which the control of production remains with the general contractor (Neo, 2010, p. 1014).

Capacity subcontracting refers to the arrangement in which a subcontractor is contracted for manual labour only. In other words, for a specific work task often characterised by low-skill labour, where the mental labour, that is, the planning, has already been carried out by the general contractor, or sometimes by another subcontractor, consultancy firm, or supplier. Thus, capacity subcontracting is used to increase the capacity of the workforce, and when a contractor needs a pair of extra working hands only.

In *specialisation subcontracting*, much of the control of the labour process is transferred from the general contractor to the subcontractor, because of the subcontractor's relative expertise as a trade specialist. The work in specialisation subcontracting therefore involves little or no separation between mental and manual labour. In this arrangement, the work is both planned for and performed by the subcontracted trade specialist. Such work typically involves higher skill-levels, for example electricity work, heating and ventilation—but not exclusively. Rather, some trades are customary in both capacity and specialisation subcontracting. This reveals how general contractors value work tasks differently, and also illustrates how trustworthiness based on social networks and personal connections plays a big role in subcontracting arrangements (Fellini et al., 2007; Thiel, 2010).

The last of the production subcontracting arrangements mentioned by Neo (2010) is *supplier subcontracting*, where the subcontractor is a supplier-firm in full control of the production process (Neo, 2010, p. 1014). In this study, the supplier-firms are often based in the manufacturing industry, but also engage commercially in the construction industry. An example of this is a kitchen company that produces kitchens and kitchen fixtures for warehouses and private households directly, but whom also sells their products to building companies.

All forms of production subcontracting are at the same time external subcontracting, which refers to a business relation with an external company, responsible for a specific part of the production. This is contrasted with internal subcontracting, that merely brings workers and manpower into the organisation on principles of "labour contracting, or employment disguised as business relations" (Neo, 2010, p. 1015).

Lastly, transnational subcontracting refers to the increased practices of subcontracting across borders. In this study, the desirability from Swedish building companies to make use of subcontractors based in CEE, due to the regional variations of social and economic stability. In other words, transnational subcontracting is primarily used to reduce labour-costs (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020b; Fellini et al., 2007; Lillie, 2012).

The fact that transnational arrangements are used primarily to cut labour-costs, explains why capacity subcontracting more often than specialisation- or supplier subcontracting is of transnational character.

With much of the control over production remaining with the general contractor in capacity subcontracting, because of the relatively low-skilled work involved with manual labour, it is more attractive for contractors to use the cheapest possible labour available; particularly since there are little incentives for the general contractor to build trust and long-term relationships with the subcontractors. As shown by Fellini et al. (2007), transnational subcontracting arrangements involves subcontracting to foreign firms, subcontracting of foreign self-employed workers, and also subcontracting through recruitment firms—based either nationally or internationally working with the recruitment of workers from one EU country to another (Fellini et al., 2007, p. 289).

In this study, all three forms of subcontracting are prevalent. In addition however, I propose also a fourth form of subcontracting, which I have termed *masked staffing*. This is my own conceptualisation, and a form of capacity subcontracting arrangement where general contractors need manual labour only. However, in masked staffing, the capacity subcontracting is characterised by internal subcontracting rather than the external subcontracting as conceptualised by Neo (2010). For example, a firm is contracted for the plastering of walls inside the apartments at a project site. Normally, because of the external business relation with the subcontracted plastering firm, it is also the plastering firm that is responsible for finishing on time; and they therefore have their own foreman leading the work on site. In masked staffing however, this is not the case. Rather, it is the site management of the general contractor that leads the work on a daily basis. The plastering firm has in this case only provided the manual labour, much like a staffing agency. In other words, as mentioned previously, rather than working in the praxis of a normalised business relation, this is labour contracting and employment disguised as business relations (Neo, 2010, p. 1015).

Moreover, I show in my analysis that the various subcontracting arrangements identified in this study are distinguished by establishing whether they are based on price or acquaintance, and by scrutinising the respective work organisation of the two companies. As I have argued thus far, it is not always particularly clear as to whether a contractual arrangement is based on acquaintance or price. Sometimes a firm is contracted because they are both cheap and have a good reputation for

example. Nonetheless, by defining acquaintanceship as based on a shared history of working together, or as based on personal recommendation, I distinguish between acquaintanceship and reputation. Based on this division, I argue that those arrangements that are based on price, include work tasks that are regarded as low-skill work, and these arrangements are generally also based on transnational recruitment. Arrangements made because of acquaintanceship however, are in contrast characterised by more of an independent labour process, and a domestic workforce.

However, because of the restructuring of work among most companies in construction work, both general contractors and trade contractors to a larger extent now tend towards subcontracting their production. And as MacKenzie (2008) shows in his study, the shift from an integrated bureaucratic organisation, with an administrative mechanism that governs production based on hierarchy, towards the vertical integration of market forces into the work organisation, entails an incremental learning process for all organisations. This means that organisations adjust their practices throughout the production process, manoeuvring so as a result of the inherent limitations of existing practices (MacKenzie, 2008, pp. 875-877). Thus, I argue that shifting practices among both general contractors and their subcontractors, impact both workplace dynamics and the labour process.

Therefore, to understand the analytical connection between both inter- and intra-organisational relations, there is a requirement to scrutinise further the dynamics of the organisation of work and the labour process.

3.2 Organisation of work and the labour process

A sociological perspective on organisations acknowledges that social organisation is tied to human interaction, and that it is through human interaction that we develop specific behaviour, norms, and rules. Thus, organisations are defined as organic systems structured by social relations between individuals, their values, and the pressure imposed by its surroundings (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980; Scott, 2014). The social relations of interest in this study are those that structure work in the building sector, and following Thompson and McHugh (2002), I define

work organisation as an arena for organisation of work, where economic processes and contradictions of capital and labour meet. This includes questions of division of labour, control, and management strategies (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, p. 366).

The organisation of work is structured in specific ways with the aim to secure profitability for the company. This builds on the Marxist notion that when labour is purchased it has only the *capacity* to work, and that it is the conditions of production that decides productivity rates, and thus also the profitability (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, p. 103). Moreover, a certain division and coordination of labour has a specific effect on the productivity of the company as well as on the well-being of its employees (Mintzberg, 1993, pp. 2-3).

In this study, more specifically, work organisation refers to the structure of Building Group's and Green Constructions' organisation of work. Key to these work organisations are that they to a large extent rely on bought services from other firms and companies: subcontractors. The three project sites are, on the other hand, conceptualised as temporary project organisations (c.f. Miterev, Mancini, & Turner, 2017); considering the temporary nature of the organisational constellation. This is further accounted for in Chapter 4, on methodology.

Work, labour, and employment

All work activities generate *use value* (Tilly & Tilly, 1994), but wage labour is theoretically distinguished from other forms of work activities that we engage with outside of employment. For instance, if I work as an employed painter at a project site, it means that I have sold my labour power to an employer. The value of my labour power is in other words dependent on market relations, and my work is tied to the *exchange value* of that labour in the labour market. Even though I participate in similar activities and work tasks at home, and for example paint my own house, it is distinguished from wage labour since I am not contracted by someone else to paint my own house. In other words, painting at home as a work activity is indeed work since it adds use value, but it is not tied to capitalist social relations in the labour market (Marx, 2012, 2013).

As noted by Smith (2010), it is worth pointing out that labour power does not enter the production process as a blank slate. Rather, labour power is structured by capitalist social relations, developed over centuries, and patterned by different industrial and bureaucratic cultures, by educational systems, and by expectations of employment. In other words, it is conditioned by temporal and historical conditions, as well as competitive market forces (Smith, 2010, pp. 278-279).

Also, labour power is unlike any other commodity. It is a capacity owned by the individual who sells the labour to a buyer, and it is thus impossible to separate labour power as a commodity from the owner, regardless of what it is used for (the use value). Hence, to buy labour power requires consent and negotiations between employers and employees. It is this which Smith (2010) identifies as the embodiment question, and what distinguishes wage labour from slavery: In a system of slavery, the owner owns the person – not only the individual's labour power (Smith, 2010, p. 280).

Moreover, labour power is different from other commodities also because it always involves a potential conversion. A worker can be trained and equipped with new knowledge and skill, and thus also be used in different positions within an organisation, which increases workers' possibilities in the labour market (Smith, 2010, pp. 280-281).

The theoretical distinction between the labour power and the worker is important because the labour power and the worker is often confused, as the two are difficult to separate in practice. As argued by Smith (2010), the embodiment of labour creates the illusion that capitalists employ people rather than variable capital. Such illusions potentially lead to the confusion that certain people are more suitable than others for certain positions, when capitalism in fact is indifferent to who produces the labour power—it is merely interested in that it is produced (Smith, 2010, pp. 281-282).

In the modern labour market wage labour is regulated through a contract of employment (Streeck, 2010). This reflects the development in the twentieth century where workers were less contracted for specific work tasks, and rather provided with a relatively stable income over time, as the employer provided the worker with a steady stream of work tasks within the scope of the employment. This shift is what Streeck (2010) has termed

the transformation of a contract of work to a contract of employment (Streeck, 2010, pp. 260-261). The contract of employment institutionalised a number of social rights and obligations between employers and employees. These were standardised in the industrialised economies, even though there were national differences, as a means to protect employees and de-couple their economic dependence on employers, and it is this that is referred to as standard employment (Streeck, 2010, p. 265). As noted in Chapter 2, this does not mean that wage labour is necessarily organised in a standard employment contract. Quite the opposite, there currently exists a variety of non-standard forms of employment (Rubery et al., 2018).

Nor are all workers organised through a simple employment relationship. Self-employment is an alternative and common way of organising work, particularly in construction (Thiel, 2013). The self-employed are theoretically conceptualised as independent producers or workers that just like wage-labourers are in possession of their own labour power. However, unlike wage-labourers they do not sell their labour power, but instead products or services. This also means that they control, on a certain scale, the means of production (Karlsson, 1986, pp. 52-53).

Self-employment is thereby distinguished from wage-labour in that the worker is not subordinate to an employer, but independent (Karlsson, 1986, p. 53). Rather than being subject to a contract of employment, there is a business relation between the self-employed and various contractors, and thus, instead of selling labour power to generate an income, the work activity of the self-employed is connected to a product or service market from which profit is made, and from which the overall income is generated (Poulantzas, 1973, p. 37).

This is also what self-employment has in common with those organised in different types of family-businesses, or small business owners, in which it is not uncommon to have one or two employees. Yet, as noted by Karlsson (1986), potential employees should in such scenarios be considered an extension of existing labour power rather than a substitute for it (Karlsson, 1986, pp. 65-66). That is, self-employment does not, under normal circumstances, purchase labour power with the objective to exploit labour for the purpose of generating profit. Thus, in theory, the economic exploitation of labour by self-employed, family businesses, and

other small business owners is distinguished from the capitalist exploitation of labour that exploit labour to generate profit.

More specifically, as argued by Stigendal (2021) while drawing on Therborn (1981), self-employment is distinguished from the capitalist mode of production. Instead, it is a specific mode of production that Marx refers to as *simple exchange of commodities*, in which the objective is to sustain a livelihood and independence rather than generating profit through the accumulation of capital (Stigendal, 2021, pp. 40-41).

This does of course not exclude the possibility that employees and workers in small businesses are mistreated, exploited, and paid below the levels agreed in collective agreements. In fact, much of the informal sector, where such misconducts are numerous because of authorities' difficulties to control employment standards, have traditionally consisted also of different forms of self-employment, organised through self-owned firms, family businesses or small business partnerships (Karlsson, 1986, p. 66). A recent report shows that such exploitation of workers these days are apparent also in the formal economy as a result of the previously mentioned tax-deduction system of ROT and RUT (Byggmarknadskommissionen, 2020c).

As noted by Poulantzas (1973), simple commodity exchange as a mode of production co-exists with the capitalist mode of production, although the latter is dominating in the capitalist society. He emphasises that even though independent and small scale producers do not extort surplus value directly by exploiting others' labour power, they still participate in the total distribution of surplus value as a result of their work activities and business relations (Poulantzas, 1973, p. 37). Self-employed and independent workers therefore also benefit indirectly from the capitalist social relations, in contrast to wage-labourers (Poulantzas, 1973, p. 33). Similarly, and for the same reason, the capitalist system as a whole also benefits from the economic activities of self-employed and small business owners (Copes & Peterson, 1990, p. 24).

Yet, even though simple commodity exchange is theoretically distinguished from the capitalist mode of production, the empirical manifestations of it are seldom as clear cut (Copes & Peterson, 1990, p. 26). As a social class, the petty bourgeoisie includes both self-employed craftsmen, shopkeepers, and consultants of all kinds; for example, from

architects to web-designers. What they share though, as already pointed out, is that they—in contrast to the capitalist—rely on their own labour power in their work. Further, and in line with Marxist theory, this common and shared position in the material production *shapes also political and ideological views*, and not least their relation to work (Peterson, Stigendal, & Fryklund, 1988, p. 63).

With regards to construction work, I argue that the legacy of the guild system—and thus of simple commodity production—has structured the work activity through history in a different manner compared with other industries (Thiel, 2013). More specifically, it has generated a relative autonomy of work and in turn influenced what can be said to be a general, and as we shall see, somewhat romanticised view of craftsmanship. This is illustrated by Mills' (1951, p. 220) ideal type of craftsmanship, which he argues builds on six major features. Notably, this refers not only to self-employed work, but also to construction work in general, including wage-labour.

> "There is no ulterior motive in work other than the product being made and the processes of its creation. The details of daily work are meaningful because they are not detached in the worker's mind from the product of the work. The worker is free to control his own working action. The craftsman is thus able to learn from his work; and to use and develop his capacities and skills in prosecution. There is no split of work and play, or work and culture. The craftsman's way of livelihood determines and infuses his entire mode of living."

Mills (1951) himself emphasises that this is an ideal type of craftsmanship, and that ideal types always represent theoretical abstractions rather than exact accounts of reality. More specifically, it is doubtful whether a single carpenter's working life ever carried all these meanings simultaneously, but what is important is that it presents *typical features* of craftsmanship that has shaped this occupation through history (Mills, 1951, p. 224).

However, the social relations that structures work activities in today's building sector are different from what they have been historically. A major reason for this is the industrialisation of the building process, as noted by Karlsson (1982) four decades ago, in his study on the Swedish construction industry; this results in the diminishment of craft skills, as

well as the transference of the control of work from workers towards the upper echelons of company management (Karlsson, 1982, p. 342).

With regards to Mills' (1951) features of the ideal type of craftsmanship, Karlsson (1982) suggests that (1) workers continuously respect the quality of the end-product, but that they are also forced to adapt various production measures that are introduced by the management. (2) The meaningfulness of work tends to disappear when the prime demand is to work quickly. This has an effect on the pride one feels in one's work, which is gradually replaced by the urge of meeting production goals. (3) Increased productivity standards and more rigorous planning reduce the workers' control of the work, which effects also (4) the possibilities of learning from the work that is performed. Finally, (5) the work is structured by others as opposed to simply the workers themselves, which results in the separation between work and leisure to a greater extent than previously; consequently having the effect that the meaning of work is more strictly tied to the pay-check that pay the bills, rather than the work in-itself (Karlsson, 1982, pp. 329-330).

More recently, Haakestad and Friberg (2017) have argued in a similar vein and have shown that the processes of industrialisation, a fragmented building sector, and the recruitment of cheap labour from low-cost countries on the economic periphery of the EU, marginalises the importance of craft-based knowledge and decreases workers' autonomy. Instead, it develops a management system based on *neo-Taylorist* principles (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017, p. 10).

I return to the legacy of Taylorism further below[15]. In the current precis, the proletarianisation of craftsmanship that results from processes of industrialisation, and which results in both the standardisation of work, as well as the loss of control of work for the craftsmen, brings to the fore the changing character and degradation of work in the building sector (Braverman, 1974).

I argue that these processes highlight distinctions among the group of self-employed craftsmen in the Swedish building sector, and that certain trades in which self-employment is common—such as among carpenters—are more exposed than others. More specifically, in my

[15] See section 3.3 in this chapter for more on Taylorism.

analysis, I show that this results in tensions between the ideology of work and the actual work activity in which self-employed craftsmen in the Swedish building sector are engaged. This manifests through less independence and control of work, but also through the fact that the self-employed do not always engage in their work activity autonomously but rely also on others' labour power to maintain the capacity needed in a competitive market.

Such processes of de-skilling indicate also the aforementioned practices of false self-employment (Thörnquist, 2011, 2013, 2015; Vershinina et al., 2018). That is, for example, how self-employed craftsmen may be contracted for an installation but rather than using their own tools or owning the means of production in the first place, they use tools and equipment provided by the contractor, and therefore merely sell their labour power (Karlsson, 1986). In this study, I show that the current subcontracting regime of construction management in combination with regional variations of social and economic standards in the EU, as well as the building sector's traditionally vulnerable relation to economic fluctuations, encourage on the one hand self-employment in general, but on the other, also forms of dependent self-employment, and false self-employment in particular. This means that the group of self-employed craftsmen in today's Swedish building sector is more diverse than the previous generation, and is also exposed to a further extent to capitalist market forces. Or, in Poulantzas' (1977) terms, the fractions of the petty bourgeoisie to which the self-employed craftsmen belong, are increasingly engaged in wage labour and ensnared within capitalist social relations (Poulantzas, 1977, p. 109).

Control and power in the work organisation

Control is the mechanism that structures the labour process, and as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the labour process is the process that conditions the capacity of work into concrete labour (Smith, 2010, p. 282; Thompson & McHugh, 2002, p. 103). This includes also the workplace dynamics between managers and workers (Edwards, 2010, pp. 32-33). Thus, rather than being absolute, control is based on the same antagonistic relationship between capital and labour as the employment

relationship. It is not necessarily an end in itself, but a means to make the purchased labour power efficient and profitable (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, pp. 103-105). Such reasoning also presents control as exercised through power relations. These power relations arise from an organisation's position in the specific industry, with varying access to product and labour markets, but also from technological advancements, and the development of the wider political economy (Korpi, 1985). This includes also non-industrial power relations that stem from national models of industrial relations, EU-legislation on the posting of workers, as well as other societal norms that are transferred into project sites – such as for example class and masculinity.

There are in other words both external and internal conceptualisations of control. *External* control of organisations refers to the organisational context in which a specific company operates (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). No organisation is self-sufficient but is always dependent upon its surroundings for survival. There are institutional and extra-institutional contingencies that the management of a company needs to consider and to navigate. For example, a building company might have all the competence needed for constructing a building, but if there is no demand for new constructions, the company will not receive any orders. Similarly, in an economic boom, building companies are reliant on accessible labour to be able to take on new projects from developers. This also means that what happens in an organisation depends upon variables that are not only dependent upon the specific organisation. A key to survival for organisations is therefore the ability to handle uncertainties by acquiring and maintaining resources (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976, p. 83; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, pp. 2-3).

As noted by Davis and Cobb (2010); and Hillman, Withers, and Collins (2009), the sources of power and dependence, and therefore also organisations' strategies to handle uncertainties, are increasingly impacted by information and communication technologies, financialization, and globally integrated processes of trade (Davis & Cobb, 2010, pp. 38-39). The accelerated use of outsourcing, and in the case of this study, subcontracting, is therefore of particular interest in terms of resource dependence (Hillman et al., 2009, p. 17).

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) conceptualise companies' survival strategies through three factors: effectiveness, environment, and constraint. This builds on the notion that the organisational field, (to which I will return below), that a given company operates within and relies upon, is in constant fluctuation. This uncertainty is what a company constantly considers, responds to and adjusts its production processes in reference to. *Effectiveness* is thus not to be confused with *efficiency*. In contrast to effectiveness, efficiency refers to companies' internal standards. A company's effectiveness is the external measurement of how well a company meets demands from other organisations on which they are contingent. A company's knowledge about the field, or the environment in which it is operating is thus vitally important (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, pp. 11-14).

Constraint on the other hand is tied to decisions made outside of an organisation's immediate reach, for example, labour market regulations or labour laws that prevent companies from arbitrary dismissals. However, this also means that those decisions which in one guise may be *constraining*, can be reversed or challenged through new, extrinsic forms of legislation. In other words, constraint is a social and historical product tied to an organisation's wider context. It is therefore important for organisations to manipulate and put pressure on groups and other organisations in decision making positions. To conceptualise constraint thus helps to illuminate the process by which organisations try to control and influence their organisational context (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, pp. 15-18).

Consequently, organisations adjust their activities to the contemporaneous organisational field. Conceptualising effectiveness and constraint means portraying organisations as actively adjusting and responding to their relative environment through various strategies. Not only do they acquire resources for survival, but they also actively seek to influence organisational fields and make use of the acquired resources as a means to be profitable. To focus on external control therefore makes visible institutional contingencies and constraints, while at the same time highlighting the fact that organisations make strategic choices as a mean to increase their competitiveness. This contingency also makes intra-organisational relations interesting (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976, p. 84; Davis

& Cobb, 2010, p. 23; Hillman et al., 2009, pp. 2-3; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, pp. 18-19).

Internal control presents management as structurally located within a company. For example, the purpose of a foreman on a project site is twofold. On the one hand, the foreman coordinates different activities. On the other, the foreman also controls the labour process through surveillance and monitoring, as a result of a hierarchical authority over workers that is separated from the means of production (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, pp. 103-104). Hence, authority is introduced in work organisations as control mechanisms that result from an urge to rationalise the production. I argue below (from a Marxist perspective), that such processes of bureaucratisation are developed to increase efficiency and profitability for the organisation. Bureaucratisation is thus understood as managers on different levels carrying out tasks on behalf of their owners, without necessarily having any real ownership themselves (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980).

Managerial jobs are on the other hand defined as an agency relationship (Armstrong, 1989), in which the agents of capital (the managers) gain from contact with capital and more senior managers in an organisation. This builds on the premise that their role cannot be performed in another way; as a result of, for example, technological development and automatisation. This in turn, emphasises the supervisory character of management, in the sense that management is fundamentally about the control of employees in production, even though it also includes the coordination of work (Edwards, 2010, p. 34).

However, as Edwards (2010) notes, there are inherent contradictions in the management process. The contradictions are grounded on a structured antagonism in the relationship between managers and workers, which builds on the two parties defining themselves based on each other's role in the work organisation. Hence, just as there cannot be a manager without a worker, there cannot be a worker without a manager (Edwards, 2010, p. 35). Moreover, both parties share the same interest in some ways, while in others they do not. For example, both managers' and workers' jobs depend upon decisions made higher up the work organisation, by the owners or senior management. Both parties thus have a shared interest in ensuring a certain level of productivity. At the same time, managers' interests are

driven primarily by the targets set up by the company executives, which in turn build on the control of others'—the workers'—labour. Also, this conflict of interest is enhanced by the possibility (and unvoiced promise), of future promotions within the organisational hierarchy for those in managerial positions, as compared with the workers. The analysis of the labour process thus treats work as a form of activity with specific characteristics under capitalism (Edwards, 2010, pp. 34-35).

Similarly, Clegg and Dunkerley (1980) remind us that neither hierarchy nor division of labour is a product of the capitalist mode of production, but merely a specific mode of organisation within the capitalist system. For example, hierarchy was apparent also in the guild system, although it was linear rather than pyramidal in the sense that the master worked alongside the apprentice as a tutor. Key to this linear hierarchy was that it was structured so that the apprentice would one day be able to become a master himself (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, p. 51). Most foremen and site managers in the two cases scrutinized in this study also have a background as craftsmen, however, the work organisation in the capitalist enterprise is not structured with the intention of inviting all employees to advance in the company. As a result of the processes of bureaucratisation, and the rationalisation of work, few employees end up in managerial positions. At the same time, regional and business managers higher up the hierarchy often have an education in engineering or some similar qualification Thus, both the division of labour and control of the labour process structures not only the work organisation, but also has potential implications in that it also segments the labour market (cf. Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973).

Consequently, internal control takes place on two levels. Aside from the general level of control just mentioned, which aims to subordinate labour in the direction of the production process as a whole, a second level of control involves more detailed control; that is, aspects which are tied directly to work. Such aspects involve the direction and specification of work tasks, the evaluation, monitoring, and assessment of performance, and systems of discipline and reward (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, pp. 103-104). This is organised through management systems, designed with the aim to give the most effective control, productivity and profitability. Such structural control is achieved through the bureaucratisation of production, inspired by that which Weber (1968) referred to as

bureaucratic management[16] (Weber, 1968, p. 66). The idea is that bureaucratic control through regulation is embedded in the social structure of the organisation and therefore less dependent on the individual worker. As noted by Burawoy (1985), and drawing on Edwards (1982), bureaucratic control is to be contrasted with simple control, which was the form of arbitrary and personalist domination by managers over workers that characterised factories in nineteenth century capitalism. It is also contrasted with technical control represented through assembly line production (Burawoy, 1985, p. 124). As previously demonstrated, bureaucratic management makes it possible to tie rules and procedures to specific positions in the organisational hierarchy through increased division of labour and specialisation. Once detached from the individual worker, bureaucratic management appears the most rational form of organisation (Weber, 1968).

3.3 Management systems, the legacy of Taylorism, and financialized capitalism

A management system that builds on principles of bureaucratisation and rationalisation, and which has influenced the organisation of work across industries, is scientific management (Taylor, 1947). Also known as Taylorism, it is an example of a system developed with the intention of applying scientific methods to every aspect of the labour process. A general principle for scientific management is that since every aspect of the labour process involves huge quantities of knowledge, it is impossible for the worker to fully comprehend "without the guidance and help of those who are working with him or over him, either through lack of education or through insufficient mental capacity" (Taylor, 1947, p. 26). The management is thus encouraged to take over and perform each part of the labour process, and to learn from it—as a means to make it more 'scientific' and maximise the overall material output (Taylor, 1947, p. 27).

[16] Weber differentiated between bureaucratic management in capitalist enterprises, and bureaucratic authority in public and government organisations (Weber, 1968).

According to Weber (1968), it is this detailed study of production and the worker, and the concomitant knowledge produced in concert with the management with regards to how better optimise the production line, which makes "scientific management enjoy the greatest triumphs in the rational conditioning and training of work performances" (Weber, 1968, p. 38).

Based on the antagonistic relationship between capital and labour however, scientific management implies increased managerial control of production, and thus departs from the *capitalist's perspective* of how to best organise production and should therefore be considered "the science of management of others' work", rather than anything else (Braverman, 1974, p. 90).

Consequently, it is no surprise that scientific management developed at the time both parallel with, and partly as a result of, the birth of unionism. Employers needed to curb what they saw as problems surrounding the control of production, with decreasing profitability as a result of the mobilisation of workers. Scientific management facilitated this by re-emphasising the "individual nature of work as against the collectivist ideology of trade unionism" (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, p. 86). This process of individualisation was based on three general principles, according to Braverman (1974). The first one is the *dissociation of the labour process from the skills of the workers*. The organisation of work should not depend on the ability and skills of the workers, but, as already indicated, on managerial practices. By studying the labour process in detail, it is possible for management to acquire knowledge of the labour process and implement the most effective and profitable production methods (Braverman, 1974, pp. 112-113).

The second principle is that of the *separation between conception and execution*, referred to also as the separation between mental and manual labour. Rather than being responsible for both the planning and execution of work, based on the worker's previous work experiences and individual judgement, the planning (the mental labour) is replaced with jointly systematised and 'scientific' data based on the management's study of the labour process (Braverman, 1974, pp. 113-115). With the concentration of knowledge of the labour process in the hands of management, the third principle is then the *use of the monopoly of knowledge to control each step of*

the labour process and accordingly, its execution. (Braverman, 1974, p. 120).

Braverman's (1974) analysis is tied to the argument that neither hierarchy nor division of labour results *from* capitalism. It is rather a specific way to organise production *within* capitalism. As noted by Clegg and Dunkerley (1980), a consequence of processes of bureaucratisation, and the structural control that scientific management implies, is the mechanic view of workers, that they are viewed not as human individuals but as a means of production in a deliberate project of deskilling the labour force in an attempt to gain more control (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, pp. 82-83). This legacy is flagrant in modern management, where the division of labour and an ever-increasing specialisation is driven by the rationale to increase productivity by capturing workers extra efforts (Graham, 2006, p. 340). It incentives not only processes of deskilling but encourages also the relocation of production. Consequently, this highlights how organisations embody not only one universal rationality but rather contested rationalities, arising from the conflict of capital and labour.

The legacy of scientific management is perhaps most visible with the development of Lean production (Björkman & Lundqvist, 2013). Lean is a production system originally based on the Toyota Production System (TPS) (Womack, Jones, & Roos, 1990) that has influenced not only automotive production around the world, but also manufacturing in general—and in recent decades also other sectors of the economy. This is true also for Sweden (see for example Sederblad, 2013; Vänje & Brännmark, 2017). Like other Japanese-style management systems (Stewart, 1996), it focuses on the elimination of elements in the production process, which in the spirit of scientific management are considered unnecessary. It is worth noting that most companies in an array of sectors use singled-out principles of Lean in their production, such as the aforementioned minimising of waste, meticulous management control, and principles of *just-in-time* (Björkman & Lundqvist, 2013).

The construction industry is no exception, and Green (1999) noted the industry's quest for 'lean construction' already two decades ago. More recently, Koch (2013) demonstrates how principles of Lean are visible in construction work through the implementation of the 'Last Planner': a one week horizon schedule that involves the engagement of foremen from the

different subcontractors involved in a specific stage of the production. The idea is to coordinate the work so that there is no wasteful use of material, to shorten production times, and to streamline the production so that the different actors involved do not have to use more manpower than necessary. It involves also making sure that the right information is available to all parties (Koch, 2013, p. 264).

In line with the original ambition of Lean, there are expectancies of also emancipatory effects and learning outcomes on employees through participation (Womack et al., 1990). Such expectancies are a major reason as to why Lean has been classified as democratic-Taylorism if implemented under the right circumstances (Adler, 1995). Yet, this functionalist ideal has faced heavy criticism for constructing an idealised rhetoric that diverges drastically from workers' experience (Stewart, Danford, Richardson, & Pulignano, 2010; Stewart, Mrozowicki, Danford, & Murphy, 2016).

For instance, studies critical of Lean production have demonstrated how Lean staffing policies in combination with technological innovations imply rather an increased intensity of work, reduced worker autonomy, and a loss of control of the labour process (Stewart et al., 2010, p. 620; Stewart & Garrahan, 1995, p. 533). In other words, rather than learning-based participation, these studies suggest that Lean production is harmful for workers' quality of life at work, and also to workers' health beyond employment with job-related anxiety, and other stress indicators that follow from work overload (Stewart et al., 2016, pp. 155-158).

This discrepancy, between rhetoric and practice, is evident in a study by Stewart et al. (2010) where assembly line operators, in a General Motors factory in the UK, witness how they are trained "to do jobs that are required as standard" (Stewart et al., 2010, p. 618). The line operators emphasise that this training does not involve "utilising [their] brains, only [their] arms and legs" (Stewart et al., 2010, p. 618). Hence, training policies appears to follow Tayloristic principles rather than anything else, and as pointed out by Vänje and Brännmark (2017), such limitations in Lean only regenerate Tayloristic principles in the organisation of work. More specifically, they argue that management systems that aim to monitor and supervise rather than to actually instruct and teach workers, imply merely an organisational learning process rather than having any

emancipatory effects for individual workers (Vänje & Brännmark, 2017, p. 498).

This highlights also the critical question of who gets to be involved in such participatory processes. In construction work, the implementation of the 'Last Planner' would imply up-skilling for the foremen involved in operational management, yet, it potentially also leaves out the builders that perform the work (Koch, 2013, p. 267).

When discussing the legacy of Taylorism in modern management it is important to remember that the global interdependencies of capitalist production are more intricate today and therefore possibly also more complex than in the early twentieth century when scientific management was first theorised. With a parallel development of workers' social and political rights, as well as both regulations and deregulations of financial markets during different periods of time in the past century, the development of global capitalism has had an impact also on the politics of production and management systems (Burawoy, 1985). It has resulted in the modern capitalist work organisation being dependent not only on the arbitrary and coercive measures as developed in the early phases of capitalism, but also to a greater extent on consent (Burawoy, 1979, 1985). Burawoy's argument builds on the notion that Marx's analysis does not recognise:

> "the political apparatuses of production as analytically distinct from the labour process because he [Marx] sees market despotism as the only mode of labour process regulation compatible with modern industry and the pressure for profits." (Burawoy, 1985, p. 123)

Here, Burawoy (1985) refers to market despotism as a specific form of labour process regulation in the nineteenth century that rests on three historically dependent conditions: Workers' necessity to sell their labour power, competition among firms, and the expropriation of skill (Burawoy, 1985, p. 123). By dividing the capitalist system into different historical periods, it is argued that each period is tied to a specific form of labour process regulation, which is in turn structured by a political machinery of production. If the early phase of capitalism was characterised by market despotism—that is coercion and arbitrary repression by employers—the following decades with increased social and political rights for the workers

through state regulation were structured around hegemonic consent (Burawoy, 1985, p. 126). Built on a mutual agreement, the workers interest in increased influence through trade unions, higher wages, and protection from arbitrary dismissal for example, were combined with the capitalist's interest in increased purchasing power among the working classes (Burawoy, 1985, p. 149). It is important to note that the presence of consent does not exclude the coercive nature of the labour exchange relationship. It means only that workers are less dependent on employers compared with the previous period of market despotism. The development of the Swedish model of industrial relations, which builds on negotiations and dialogue between the social partners in the labour market, is an example of this.

As noted by scholars on industrial relations also more recently (see for example Edwards, 2004; Hall & Soskice, 2001; Pulignano, 2011; Pulignano & Keune, 2015) the specific character of the capitalist system varies between different national and institutional contexts. It depends on the extent of social insurance provided by the state, and also on the character of state regulation. In other words, the reason for state intervention of necessity follows capitalism's own logic, but the way in which it is carried out varies (Burawoy, 1985, p. 128).

Through his periodization of capitalism, Burawoy (1985) shows that the global interdependencies that followed not least from technological development allowed for what he identifies as a third historical period: Hegemonic despotism. This builds on the era of hegemony, but reflects the vulnerability of labour in relation to capital's global mobility:

> "The interests of capital and labour continue to be concretely coordinated, but where labour used to be granted concessions on the basis of the expansion of profits, it now makes concessions on the basis of the relative profitability of one capitalist vis-à-vis another – that is, the opportunity to costs of capital. The primary point of reference is no longer the firm's success from one year to the next; instead it is the rate of profit that might be earned elsewhere… The new despotism is the 'rational' tyranny of capital mobility over the collective worker." (Burawoy, 1985, p. 150)

I think this quote illustrates well the vulnerability of the working classes as a result of the international mobility of finance and capital. As discussed

elsewhere in this dissertation, in the Swedish building sector, the vulnerability is differently structured than for example in the manufacturing industry. It is partly the same, in the sense that the industrialisation of the building sector, together with the fragmented production process have moved parts of the production from project sites to factories, which in turn have been geographically relocated abroad. Yet, it is different when we consider the geographical boundedness of construction work. Even though production to a certain extent has moved from the project site to the manufacturing site, it does not mean that there are less employment opportunities—only that instead of being physically built on site the apparatus is *installed* or *mounted* on site. However, by drawing on Lillie's (2010) notion of 'spaces of exception' as previously mentioned, I argue that the creation and expansion of the EU-single market in 2004/07 have had particular effects on the building sector. Considering the labour intensive nature of construction work, employers have taken advantage of cheap labour available on the periphery of the EU, as regional variations in socioeconomic standards across the EU have encouraged workers to migrate to Sweden and other parts of Western Europe (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a). Thus, rather than being vulnerable to the mobility of capital, Swedish builders are vulnerable to the mobility of labour in the EU, and the ability that capital possess to contract labour from the expanded labour pool that the EU-single market represents.

Burawoy's (1985) periodization of capitalism has been critiqued for being too broad (Thompson & Smith, 2017; Thompson & van den Broek, 2010) but it is insightful in that it captures how the politics of production have changed over the last century. Furthermore, it helps highlight recent developments in the theoretical area of *the disconnected capitalism thesis* that highlights how new forms of capital accumulation which are based upon principles of financialization, have influenced the workplace and the dynamic of the employment relationship (Cushen & Thompson, 2016; Thompson, 2003, 2013). Moreover, it is not only the control over the labour process, or changes in the labour market that have had an impact on the social organisation of work, but also concomitant changes in capital markets, the increasing influence of shareholder value pressures, and the general guidance of fiscal principles on business management (Thompson, 2013, pp. 473-475).

Thompson (2013) refers to financialized capitalism as a new form of labour process regulation that characterises the current phase of capitalism. The organisation of work in this era rests on a different rationale than during previous periods, which were characterised by Fordism[17] and hegemonic consent (Burawoy, 1985); steered by a logic that legitimises organisational behaviour tied to principles of financialization. Such principles originate in accounting practices driven by an urge to allow for precise measurements of liabilities, profits, and expenditures needed to make profit-maximising decisions (Carruthers & Espeland, 1991, pp. 35-36). My argument is that these are not neutral accounts of economic reality but are in actual fact contextually founded on a specific form of rationalised logic.

Financial markets are social systems (c.f. Keister, 2002) in which the economic reality is perceived in a particular way (Carruthers & Espeland, 1991, p. 51). Such argumentation is further tied to contributions of the sociology of quantification (Espeland & Stevens, 2008), which points to the process of reduction, in which quality is transformed into quantity. More specifically in the context of this thesis, how labour organised according to principles of financialization is perceived as any other cost and thus as expenditure. The overarching objective of profitability in the capital market results in reluctances from employers to invest in skill development of the core workforce, and, as in the case of the building sector, that practices of subcontracting and construction management as forms of work organisation come to dominate (Bosch & Philips, 2003, pp. 3-4). Such new-fangled commitments illustrate the shift in balance between employers and employees, and how employers to a lesser extent than during previous periods keep their side of the collective bargains (Thompson, 2003).

However, even though contemporary capitalism follows a logic based on shareholder value and financialization, the processes in which certain

[17] As noted by Thompson (2003), Fordism is a broadly and sometimes vaguely used concept that can refer to either the Taylorist labour process, an era characterised with mass production and mass consumption, or a mode of institutional regulation. Here, I use the latter to highlight the central role of "the employment relationship and collective bargaining as an institutional means of maintaining growth and stability" (Thompson, 2003, p. 361) in the era of hegemonic consent.

management systems develop are likely to reflect not one but a mix of negotiated strategies, reflecting the appropriateness for the specific industry and the specific country, where the production in question takes place. This process is further dealt with in the next section.

3.4 Strategies and organisational fields

All organisations base their management systems and other activities on strategies. Hyman (1987) notes that strategies differ from tactics, in that strategies involve the long-term planning and organisation of adequate resources in the company, while tactics are arrangements that guarantee efficiency of everyday activities. Also, even though there are different strategies to different parts of the production, he argues that strategies above all are conditioned by capital. This does not mean that there is no room for strategic choice, it merely highlights previously mentioned contradictions between the production and the realisation of surplus value (Hyman, 1987, pp. 27-29). The matter of strategic choice is considered also by Streeck (1987) who emphasises that strategic decision-making is of particular importance in times of crisis, since it is in times of crisis that existing structures are pressured, and restructuring becomes an option. He argues—just like Pfeffer and Salancik (1978)—that rather than a means to increase their control of labour, companies make strategic decisions primarily to increase their competitiveness, because "the principal capitalist objective is not class rule but profit" (Streeck, 1987, p. 284).

However, strategies are not just processes of formulation and implementation. They result from the relationship between a conscious process based on management intentions, and that which is gradually shaped, sometimes unintentionally, as decisions are made in the moment. It is a pattern that reflects a stream of decisions, referred to by Mintzberg (1978) as realised strategies (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935). Yet, the process in which they are realised differ, and it is in the interplay between the intention and realisation that they are distinguished as either deliberate, unrealised, or emergent (Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

Deliberate strategies are explained as those that are intended and realised. In relation to subcontracting arrangements in construction work,

deliberate strategies are exemplified through successful subcontracting arrangements, where subcontractors finish on time and without major unforeseen events. Unrealised strategies on the other hand, are intended but for various reasons not successfully realised. These would include, for example, subcontractors that cannot keep their end of the contract and do not deliver in time, either due to a lack of manpower, a lack of funds, or because of bankruptcy.

Moreover, *emergent strategies* are those that gradually develop even though they were not intended in the first place, either because there was no plan, or because the preconditions changed (Mintzberg, 1978). In subcontracting arrangements, where a subcontractor does not deliver as promised, the general contractor might have to find alternative solutions. Notably, it is suggested that there is no such thing as purely deliberate or purely emergent strategies, rather that all processes of strategizing follow a continuum of strategies that are more or less intended and more or less emergent (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, pp. 257-259).

Strategies are shaped through the interplay between the bureaucratic machinery of the organisation and its institutional context. It is the role of management to mediate between these, for example, as a means to maintain the stability of the production until it adapts to new preconditions in a changing environment (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 941). One such type of strategy, mentioned by Mintzberg and Waters (1985) that is shaped in the continuum of deliberate and emergent strategies, is *the process-strategy.* A process-strategy is described as partly deliberate and partly emergent, in other words, as *deliberately* emergent (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 270).

Of particular interest are recent findings that show how project-based activities—such as the three project-sites in this study—actively shape and impact future strategizing in a company's wider organisational structure (Löwstedt et al., 2018). In other words, the work on a project site, with its many unforeseen events, unpredictability, and general difficulty in bureaucratising production, forces site management to develop improvised and innovative solutions that in turn have an impact on wider organisational structures; that is, on a company's organisation of work on other project sites.

Organisational fields

To understand why organisations implement certain strategies, what such strategies involve, or why process-strategies evolves the way they do, the organisation needs to be socially and politically contextualised. An analysis of a company's manoeuvring space requires for example, consideration of both competition with other companies, as well as the conflict between capital and labour. The concept of *fields* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) facilitates such analysis, because it emphasises external forces that condition organisations and draws attention to an organisation's location in a socially defined space. As mentioned initially, contextualising Building Group's and Green Constructions' organisation of work within the wider sectorial environments (the Swedish building sector), makes it possible to analyse their strategies and motivations in relation to other organisations, such as subcontractors, trade unions, and government agencies. In addition, it makes it possible to analyse not only the organisation's access to resources of different kinds, but also how this access impacts and structures intra-organisational features such as organisational routines and rules. Here, I accentuate the realist dimension of fields: as real relations, strategic decisions, and struggles over resources (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 96-97).

Organisational fields are thus defined by institutionalised practices according to which their relations to other organisations are established (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This also involves extra-institutional practices as previously mentioned, that is, external conditions that gradually encourage change, even though formal institutional rules are yet to change (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018, p. 398).

By scrutinising the identified research problem of increased levels of subcontracting, the organisational field in this study is defined firstly, by the different organisations involved on the three project sites; secondly, by the Swedish model of industrial relations; thirdly, the EU-labour market and its legislation; and finally, the social processes that structure construction work, including *extra-institutional* practices of new forms of work organisation.

This definition institutes the Bourdieusian model of accentuating relationality, and the concurrent positioning of organisations as situated in a wider field of forces—both economic and symbolic. Comprised of

configured objective relations between specific positions, Bourdieu (1992) emphasises that fields are also of intersubjective nature (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 96-97). This means that they consist of competing logics of praxis, as well as different understandings of social reality.

Thus, even though it is objectively a field, the intersubjective nature of the building sector consequently creates tensions and conflicts with regards how to best organise work from the perspectives of different actors. This creates a dynamic relationship where fields are built on conflicts and struggles, as the different actors are seeking to impose their conception of reality on others (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). For example, both trade unions and employers' associations are influential actors in the Swedish building sector, and both are interested in more flexible labour market arrangements to increase productivity. Yet, they also have conflicting views of what such flexible measures would entail, and therefore also work towards different objectives.

Strategies, resources, and flexibility

Companies in the Swedish building sector have gradually come to organise work along the lines of construction management and different forms of subcontracting arrangement. The combination of increased industrialisation and specialisation, the limited capacity as a result of a volatile product market, and the expansion of the EU-labour market to include also CEE countries in 2004 and 2007, are all factors that have facilitated and encouraged this development.

I mention this again to highlight that the strategy a company chooses is on the one hand externally constrained by the organisational field, and on the other internally conditioned by the company's objectives and a constellation of existing assets and attributes. Notably, both objectives and strategies usually differ, depending on what type of organisation it is, whether it is a profit-driven company, a public administration, or a non-profit organisation for example (Johansson, 1997, p. 86).

However, any strategy builds on what the specific organisation wants to achieve (Mintzberg, 1978). In the case of profit-driven companies, the overarching objective is profitability. There is rarely one objective that an organisation wants to achieve, rather, there are several objectives that do

not necessarily exclude one another, nor do they necessarily work in harmony. In the building sector, apart from profitability, companies are driven by the further objective of meeting clients' demands for good quality housing. There are in other words both overall long-term objectives, as well as short-term objectives. This potentially leads to discrepancies between the overall objective and the daily routines of an organisation. For example, even though meeting a clients' demand for good quality housing is one of the objectives for building companies, there is potentially more profit to be made if the work is procured from a subcontractor that is willing to do the same job for half the price. In such situations, a company needs to make a balanced decision and consider the trade-off between a potentially lower quality product and increased profitability, as previously discussed in relation to transaction costs and trust (Fellini et al., 2007, p. 280; MacKenzie, 2008, p. 869).

The process in which these objectives are achieved, builds on notions of cause and effect, and that which is perceived as the most effective way of going about a strategy. Johansson (1997) points out that there is not always consensus on how to approach the organisation of work, because of previous experiences, views, and interests (Johansson, 1997, p. 87). These differences stem also from false conceptions and inaccurate information. The uncertainty that such differences results in, is integral to the processes by which strategic decisions are made, and fundamental in determining why organisations are more or less likely to relent to institutional pressure and adopt isomorphic behaviour (c.f. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

How the organisation implements its strategies on the other hand depends on access to resources. Since the overarching objective for companies is profit, the most valuable resource is capital, and what matters most, is the possibility of controlling the resources. More specifically, the questions of how, when, and where to use them (Johansson, 1997, p. 89). More explicitly, in regards to this study, it refers to the willingness and possibilities for building companies to invest for example in the hiring and training of one's own staff; or whether it is more profitable to buy the same services through a subcontractor. It is also in this practical area that changes in the capitalist system, with the increased influence of principles of financialization, become evident. More specifically, labour is treated as

a financial cost only, and not as an investment for the future (Cushen & Thompson, 2016; Thompson, 2013).

To control the means of production in this manner implies control of their use, and also distribution of resources. This in turn entails the possibility of re-organisation and the restructuring of production if necessary (Johansson, 1997, p. 94). In other words, the degree and possibility that organisations have to adjust production to changing circumstances reflects also the degree of flexibility in the organisations. Streeck (1987) notes that organisational flexibility refers to the "general capacity of enterprises to reorganize in close response to fluctuations in their environment" (Streeck, 1987, p. 290). However, in longer periods of crisis, or that which Streeck (1987) refers to as a permanent state of uncertainty, organisational flexibility potentially becomes a value in itself. He writes:

> "This alone can explain why for many employers flexibility has turned, from a capacity to master a limited set of concrete adjustment problems, into a value in itself – a permanent property of economic organizations that is sought almost for its own sake in a situation in which adaption seems to consist above all in increasing the general capacity to adopt." (Streeck, 1987, p. 290)

I argue that this is applicable to the building sector. The volatility in the product market creates an industrial environment filled with uncertainty regarding future projects, which in the long run turns the search for flexibility into a value in itself. Hence, the notion of organisational flexibility builds on that which Meyer and Rowan (1977) have termed *rationalised myths*, that is, notions of organisational principles that are institutionalised, not necessarily because they are the most efficient way to organise work, but because they provide legitimacy within the organisational field. They are thus rationalised as the best way of organising production.

Organisational flexibility manifests through both internal and external measures. Internal measures refer to what is often categorised as functional flexibility, which includes the overall ambition of quickly being able to redeploy workers from one task to another within the organisation. Consequently, it involves notions of empowerment, and improving

workers' skills through training and education. It concerns also adjustments in working-time and dependence on cyclical or seasonal demands. External measures on the other hand consist mainly of numerical flexibility, which involves externalisation, and emphasises the exchangeability of workers (Streeck, 1987, p. 290).

Functional and numerical flexibility have traditionally been conceptualised in accordance with Atkinson's (1984) flexible firm-model, and treated as core-periphery features of an organisation, where functional flexibility refers to those involving the core workforce, and numerical flexibility methods on the other hand are used for workers on the periphery of the organisation (Kalleberg, 2001, pp. 481-483). However, there appears to be significant weight behind the criticism of how the flexible-firm model has been conceptualised; in that it is oversimplifying the everyday reality of organisations. As shown by Kalleberg (2001) and others, organisations also use numerical solutions for core features of organisations—and vice versa—internal solutions on the periphery of the organisation. In point of fact, the type of flexibility measure that is implemented depends largely on institutional, and organisational settings.

Ultimately, companies seek the capacity to adjust and reorganise the production in response to changes in their environment. Therefore, in the building sector, process strategies such as subcontracting are attractive. This is because it involves de-centralised control mechanisms; for example, in the sense that the site management at the project sites are given more space for manoeuvre regarding decisions such as which subcontractor to use. It also means that the building company does not need to pre-allocate their resources (capital) and invest in machines or staff, but that the potential resources are more mobile and adjustable to the volatility of product markets. This illustrates also that not all management strategies are based solely on the control of labour but also for example on sales, marketing, financial controls, supply of material, and the quality of the products.

4 To study the organisation of work

This dissertation is a study of the organisation of work in the Swedish building sector. A central aspect of the organisation of work is the labour process, and just like construction work, dissertation-projects also involve a labour process. This is usually referred to as *the research process*, and it involves both the planning and the execution of work. In other words, a dissertation project also involves aspects of mental and manual labour. For example, both writing and the conducting of interviews involve aspects of manual labour, while mental labour is more evident in the formulation of a research problem, the design of the study, the overall analysis, and not least, the notion of what the end-product should look like.

Nonetheless, just like the separation of mental and manual labour in construction work dissociates the worker from the object of work, and potentially leads to processes of de-skilling; any attempt to treat the two—mental and manual labour—as separate processes in research generates either a false image of the research process, or it signals potential fallacies. For example, while I conducted interviews for this study, I was also attentive to what the respondents said, and tried to identify trends or tendencies of particular importance that reflected the research problem, and which therefore was important to follow up. In other words, I tried to identify formative mechanisms that I found specifically relevant for an analysis of increased subcontracting in the Swedish building sector. Interviews as a research technique are thus not strictly mechanically separated from the thought process, but involve both manual and mental labour.

I mention this because it is this—the research process—which I have set out to account for and explain in this chapter. I will describe the research

process and introduce the design as well as research techniques used for this study. In other words, I account for the methods used, as well as any methodological considerations that have guided me throughout the research.

First though, I depart from Mills' (2000) argument that sociology is the tool with which the interplay between individual and society can be explained, and argue that reflexivity is key to explore this process because it questions and problematises what we tend to take for granted in society. Second, I argue that a case study research design was analytically favourable as the overall research strategy for this study to connect Building Group's and Green Constructions' work organisations to each other. That is, when constructed as cases, it is possible to see how the work organisations are mutually reinforced by various organising principles in the building sector.

Third, I account for the data production, including both the collection and the analysis of the empirical data. These stages involve the sampling process, and why it was a strategic decision to approach the regional management of building companies. I also identify the pros and cons with qualitative interviewing, and I describe the visits I made to the project sites. To conclude, I present troublesome aspects of data collection with regards to both social class and foreign workers. Ethical considerations and dilemmas are raised throughout the chapter.

4.1 A sociological approach to the organisation of work

To study work organisations is to study social relations and different dimensions of work. Defined as an arena of organisation of work, the work organisation facilitates identification of relevant actors, relationships, and processes of interest. Furthermore, the aim of the research is to analyse different relationships, processes and power dynamics within specific organisations that are of interest. The sociological concern often departs from the division of labour and seeks explanations as to why the work is

organised in a specific way, or who is in control of the labour process, or how it affects the well-being of those who perform the work tasks.

These are all sociologically relevant questions because it brings attention to issues that concern the social structure of work. In a sense, it is the main concern of sociology to provide the tools to explain the interplay between individuals and society. This is also how I interpret C. Wright Mills (2000) conceptualisation of the sociological imagination: The ability to apprehend social structures and the connection between single events, and the milieu in which the particular event takes place.

In his explanation of the sociological imagination, Mills (2000) distinguishes between personal troubles and public issues as a means to unite that which appears troublesome for individuals with wider societal issues. Personal troubles are referred to as the troubles individuals experience in the private sphere, while public issues are those that turn into a general concern on a societal level. Issues of public interest thus represent conflicts in society based on shared value commitments (Mills, 2000, pp. 8-10). This does not mean that the personal troubles that individuals experience are not effected or intertwined by social structures, rather the contrary. The point though is that personal troubles on an everyday basis are mostly defined with a biographical method, with reference to how individuals choose to live their lives and the choices they made. The contribution and strength of a sociological imagination is that biographical explanations are combined with historical events and structural processes. A sociological imagination thus presents the social structure as the analytical tool with which the interplay between individual and society can be explained.

In addition, a sociological imagination entails also elements of reflexivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). To grasp and analytically reflect on social structures implies the ability to critically reflect on existing knowledge, practices, and not least one's own values. I want to emphasise though that I do not treat reflexivity as an individual project, but rather as an integral part of a sociological imagination. Thus, sociological theory facilitates the questioning of the social order and identifies conflicts and public issues that we, without sociology, potentially would explain as personal troubles.

In relation to the sociology of work, such reflexivity is exemplified by Thompson and McHugh's (2002) argument that researchers interested in the organisation of work ought to question existing attitudes and practices in organisations as a means to critically assess the rationality of an organisation and its structures (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, pp. 15-16). According to them, to question the rationale of an organisation highlights the distinction raised by Habermas about technical and practical rationality. That is, compared with an instrumental quest for efficiency, where efficiency is treated in neutral terms and thus neglects the internal conflict of capital and labour, a practical rationality refers to reflections based on awareness and knowledge that presents alternative arrangements about how to organise work. In a sense, to question rationality sheds light on the role of technical rationality as an ideological construction. This can be exemplified with organisational restructuring taking place in the name of rationalisation as a means to make production more effective. A reflexive sociological theory thus offers a critical analysis of organisation of work in that it conceptualises rationalities as legitimating processes, and organisations as tools for both personal- and class interest (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, pp. 10-11).

Consequently, a sociological imagination based on social change from contemporary as well as historical contexts emphasises social organisation as a process. From the perspective of this study, with the aim of analysing changes in the organisation of work, it is therefore necessary to situate such processes in their structural setting.

Needless to say, organisations are located in 'open systems', which means that the different entities of an organisation—such as workers and managers for example—that interact with each other, cannot be observed in isolation from the overall organisational and societal context (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014, pp. 6-7). This context is the social structure mentioned above, and it includes the economic forces, political decisions and the social relations that the scrutinised organisations are embedded in. In other words, that which in Marxist-influenced notions is usually referred to as the totality of the capitalist mode of production (c.f. Lukács, 1968). I want to emphasise that this does not mean that I reduce the "totality to a meaningless level of generality" (Thompson & McHugh, 1990, p. 32). Just as not all personal troubles can be analysed within the

specific social structure of work for example, a sociological imagination is still dependent on the ability to grasp the social structure as encompassing both biography and history.

Similarly, the totality offers the possibility to discover social relations such as tensions, contradictions and conflicts between work organisations and the social, political and economic contexts in which they take place. This is not to say that the notion of totality reduces the agency of individuals within an organisation. Even though caught up in structural processes, social reality is constructed through individual action, and events are experienced intersubjectively. Social reality is therefore also reconstructed, and modified, accordingly (Thompson & McHugh, 1990, p. 33).

4.2 Work organisation as case study

In this study, I set out to investigate increased levels of subcontracting, and how a variety of subcontracting arrangements result in complex organisational structures. I follow Ackroyd and Karlsson's (2014) suggestion to design the study with a case study research design (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014, p. 23). This is favourable when initiating an in-depth empirical inquiry of a social problem that is likely to be embedded in important contextual conditions, since it facilitates identifying particular but formative processes (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014, pp. 25-26, 29).

A crucial aspect when employing a case study design is to identify the unit of analysis and define the case(s). This might seem like an obvious first step, but is often overseen and misunderstood (Yin, 2014, pp. 31-33). In this study, it would for example be easy to define each project site that I visited as part of the data collection, as discrete cases. By doing that, the research would focus on the project site, the temporary project organisation, the different actors and organisations involved in the daily work, as well as the social relations between them. However, the focus of this study is not the temporary project site, but the organisation of work. Thus, *the unit of analysis is the organisation of work*, and more precisely *Building Group's and Green Constructions' organisation of work*. Hence, the unit of analysis is not limited to the geographical area where the work for

the specific project takes place, and neither are the boundaries of the study set by the time during which the temporary organisation is active. Instead, the boundaries are set by Building Group's and Green Constructions' work organisation. As mentioned elsewhere, I follow Thompson and McHugh (2002) and their definition of a work organisation as a place where economic processes and contradictions of capital and labour meet, and which includes questions of division of labour, management strategies, and control (Thompson & McHugh, 2002, p. 366). Hence, while the unit of analysis in this study is a process—the process of organising work, *the cases are on the other hand defined as Building Group's and Green Constructions' respective work organisation.*

This view of case study research design is supported by Ackroyd and Karlsson (2014) who argue that cases do not have to be narrowly drawn, but can be defined also in a broader sense, and therefore warrant the investigation of, for example "a generic type of organisation or management system, such as bureaucracy, the Taylorized factory, or even an example of a particular type of economy" (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014, p. 24). Moreover, this is in line also with Yin's (2014) argument that a case can be almost anything—an event, a place, an individual, a group, or a community, but that it either way needs to be defined by the unit of analysis (Yin, 2014, p. 31).

To identify the boundaries of the cases, it is thus vital to identify those mechanisms that shape processes of work organisation, and which lead to particular outcomes in particular settings (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014, p. 24). Again, this is facilitated by drawing on the unit of analysis, because it is in the process of organising work that not only company decisions become visible, but also strategies and management systems, which are all tied to the respective company's wider organisational structure. This means that the work organisations are structured on the one hand by organisational relations at the specific project site, and on the other by the building companies' respective position in the broader political and economic context of the Swedish building sector.

Hence, an in-depth analysis of the organisation of work that a case study design implies, makes it possible to identify important generative mechanisms that encourage subcontracting. These mechanisms are thereafter abstracted from their empirical manifestations as a means to

generalise (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018, p. 10). This essentially means that I re-describe and abstract the empirical data gathered through observations and interviews with the help of theory, to explain the processes that lead up to increased levels of subcontracting (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014, p. 17).

Notably, this does not mean that I generalise inductively through empirical extrapolation and draw on observed empirical similarities in the two cases independent of the social structure. Rather, I argue that I theoretically generalise through a comparative strategy that builds on the abstraction of the empirical observations in Building Group's and Green Constructions' respective work organisation (Danermark, Ekström, & Karlsson, 2019, pp. 99-101). Consequently, I make use of comparative cases to identify those generative mechanisms with distinctive properties that in specific settings encourage contractors and subcontractors to externalise work and make use of subcontractors, rather than to maintain an integrated work organisation (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014, pp. 31-32). Hence, it occurs when the organisation of work is constructed as a case that we see how that which plays out on one project site reciprocally resulting from, and influencing, different organising principles in the building sector. Notably, this is not structurally determined but mutually reinforcing (Burawoy, 2009, p. 51).

To summarise, I argue that a case is analytically constructed through the empirical data collection, which also means that *two* cases are constructed in this study: Building Group's and Green Constructions' work organisation respectively. The cases build on empirical data from the three project sites that I visited for the data collection, gathered through observation as well as interviews with on the one hand the regional management of the respective company, and on the other of the site management of the respective project site. In addition, the data for each case includes also interviews with subcontractors involved with Building Group and Green Constructions. I mention this to clarify the boundaries of the cases, and to illustrate that the rest of the data for the study, such as interviews with trade union representatives, and skilled workers not tied to the respective company, are tied to the social and political context rather than to the individually constructed cases (Yin, 2014, pp. 33-34).

4.3 Data production

Data production involves collection and analysis of empirical data. The empirical data for this study consists of both extensive and intensive types of data (Fletcher, 2017, p. 185); including also secondary sources which were collected through a review of previous research, interviews, and visits to project sites. With regards to extensive data through secondary sources I refer to statistical data on wider trends in the Swedish building sector available through Statistics Sweden (SCB) and reports from authorities and trade associations such as the Swedish Tax Authority, the Swedish Work Environment Authority, Byggföretagen, and Kompetensföretagen. Such statistics include figures of the construction rate of apartments over the last decades, the number of employees in construction work in Sweden, the sectorial structure of the Swedish building sector, and also the number of posted workers in the Swedish building sector during the last decade.

Considering the study's overall focus on Building Group's and Green Constructions' work organisation, I emphasise the intensive part of the data collection (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014). This denotes the interviews and the observations made during the visits to the project sites, and as previously indicated, the analysis of the empirical data takes place already in the process of collection. That is, when I reviewed previous research on construction work, on subcontracting, and different management systems for example, or during interviews, or when I attended meetings between the site management and clients, I was attentive to identify "tendencies of rough trends or broken patterns" in the empirical data (Fletcher, 2017, p. 185). This is so, because it is from these tendencies that the process of abduction and the theoretical re-description of empirical manifestations depart (Fletcher, 2017, p. 188).

For example, in interviews with the site management I was interested in Building Group's and Green Constructions' practices of externalising work to subcontractors. More specifically, I was interested in *who* was subcontracted for *what*, and *why* certain subcontractors were contracted for specific tasks. That is, I was interested in potential patterns of subcontracting as a means to distinguish strategies in the organisation of work, and under what conditions specific strategies were used.

Subsequently, I analysed the observed regularities—the use of posted workers for example—by contextualising and re-describing the observations within a specific framework and a new set of ideas, with the ambition "to move from a conception of something to a different, possibly more elaborated or deeper conception of it" (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 113). That is, my interest was the generative mechanisms in the social setting—the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992)—that structures specific subcontracting strategies. Starting from the observed regularities with the use of posted workers, I contextualised the observation by theorising a specific subcontracting arrangement. Thus, I re-described the use of posted workers on Swedish project sites as tied to a specific conceptualised form of subcontracting and contractual arrangement.

This is what I refer to as the process of *abduction* (Danermark et al., 2019, pp. 111-113). In contrast to deduction, it differs mainly because it does not stake a claim to what something is—it rather shows how something can be explained. It therefore also acknowledges that there are different theoretical orientations and notions applicable to the analysis of the same empirical manifestation. In contrast and based on a deductive approach, I would have followed my theoretical 'rule' and claimed that posted workers on Swedish project sites are explained by the type of contractual agreement that I have contextualised. However, this approach does not include the possibility that there are also other types of contractual agreements, or mechanisms, which explain the use of posted workers.

At the same time, abduction differs also from induction in the sense that the analysis departs from theoretical notions used to describe the observed regularities. Consequently, it does not assume that posted workers on different project sites, or posted workers tied to different subcontractors, are used for the same purposes or that they are contracted on similar agreements elsewhere. Rather, each empirical manifestation of, in this case posted workers, is processed and contextualised in consideration to the specific structures and mechanisms of relevance (Danermark et al., 2019, pp. 112-113).

Key aspects of abduction are thus the contextualisation and re-description of the empirical manifestations. This is not enough to explain why and how specific theoretical notions are chosen over others though.

To explain this, I use retroduction, which in turn aims to identify the variously underlying powers of the identified structures (Fletcher, 2017, p. 189). Or as put by Danermark et al. (2019, p. 38):

> "Abduction can be redescribing and giving meaning to events, taking one's starting point in a theory, a coherent system of ideas. Through retroduction, concepts and theories are developed that can provide answers to such questions as: What characteristics make X what X is?"

In other words, retroduction highlights the matter of getting to know the necessary contextual conditions in which the identified mechanisms generate the empirical manifestations observed. More specifically, through the conceptualisation of a specific subcontracting regime in the Swedish building sector, I identify those conditioning factors that structure the specific subcontracting strategies that Building Group and Green Constructions adopt.

As mentioned, I initiated the collection of extensive types of data through a review of previous research related to construction work and the building sector. Initially, it focused on the construction industry broadly, and therefore involved aspects of technological advancements, the industry's key role in creating employment, its intimate connection to the global economy, as well as its reliance on surplus labour and migrant workers (Bosch & Philips, 2003; Buckley, 2012, 2014). Gradually, as the research problem developed, the review was expanded to involve also research on inter-organisational relations in general; focusing upon outsourcing and subcontracting in particular (Drahokoupil, 2015; MacKenzie, 2002, 2008; Purcell & Purcell, 1998), temporary work arrangements, and more specifically also posted work within the EU-labour market (Arnholtz & Hansen, 2013; Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020b; Black et al., 2010; Engbersen et al., 2010; Friberg et al., 2014; Ochel, 2010). Additionally, research on labour process theory was included to complement inter-organisational aspects of the analysis with intra-organisational perspectives through the conceptualisation of work, labour, control, and management systems for example (Edwards, 2010; Smith, 2010; Thompson & McHugh, 2002; Thompson & Smith, 2017).

I have attended research seminars dealing with the Swedish labour migration reform in 2008, which have proposed what a future labour

market might look like, and also both seminars and webinars arranged by trade unions and other stakeholders on changes in the Swedish building sector. Together with a variety of reports from trade unions, trade associations, and research institutes, the ambition was to further grasp the specifics of the building sector and its challenges (Byggmarknadskommissionen, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021b). This challenge includes also researching ILO reports on the characteristics of construction work and migrant work in construction, reports from research institutes such as the European Institute for Construction Labour Research (CLR) on the future of European construction work, posted workers, and the gendered nature of construction work (Buckley et al., 2016; ILO, 2001; Wall, 2015). I have also used reports from LO on various forms of employment in the Swedish labour market (LO, 2014, 2017).

In addition, I have used social media, such as Facebook and Instagram to complement newspaper articles, radio programs, and TV-documentaries, as a means to keep myself continuously updated on the latest stories going around in the Swedish building sector (Attefall & Begler, 2021; Bengtsson, 2018; Borg, 2018b, 2018c; Christensen, 2018; Fyrk, 2019; Haglund, 2019; Nandorf, 2018; Nilsson, 2018; Olsson, 2017; Spängs, 2014; Wahl, 2019). All in all, this has provided me with a platform of knowledge, whilst the research was on-going, with developments and reactions from both companies and employer associations, as well as trade unions and others representing the workers. This has facilitated the research process, prepared me for the interviews, and guided the analysis.

Parallel to the review of previous research I submitted an application to the regional Ethical vetting (Regionala Etik Prövningsnämnden) in Lund[18]. As noted by Eldén (2020), all stages of the research need to proceed from an ethically informed ground, including the research design, sampling, data collection, and analysis. In the initial stages of the research it is of particular importance to consider the feasibility of the study, and also to try to anticipate potential ethical dilemmas that might occur during

[18] Registration number 2017:371. It was concluded that the research did not fall under the requirements of Ethical Review, as stated by the Research Ethics Law.

the course of the research (Eldén, 2020, p. 75). With regard to this study, such potential dilemmas included not least to what extent I could access building companies, subcontractors, project sites, and workers involved in construction work. More specifically, how would I access different groups of interest for the study, and what considerations and precautions needed to be made to make sure that their integrity was protected in the best possible manner?

As I have accounted for also in the section on sampling later on in this chapter, I decided to approach the data collection with a top-down approach, in the sense that I contacted several building companies with the ambition to access one or several of their project sites, and from there in turn got into contact with subcontractors and employees involved on site. I could have tried a different approach and accessed groups of workers through trade unions and subcontractors; however, this would not necessarily have provided me with the data necessary to address the research problem, as such an approach would not have provided me with insight into aspects such as Building Group's and Green Constructions' work organisations and their strategies for externalising work.

I have conducted 20 interviews involving a total of 22 people that represent different groups of relevance for this study; 19 of the interviews were individual interviews, and one was a group interview with three people. As shown in table 1, the interviews consist of five expert interviews with representatives from trade unions and staffing agencies, out of which one was a follow-up interview. Three interviews were made with the management from the regional offices of Building Group and Green Constructions, six interviews with on-site management from the respective company, and three interviews with subcontractors involved with the respective company. One of the subcontractors is self-employed.

In addition, two skilled workers and a self-employed painter without a direct connection to Building Group and Green Constructions were also interviewed. Two of them are former employees to subcontractors involved with Green Constructions, and the other is an electrician I got in contact with through acquaintances. I included the interviews with the skilled workers despite them not being directly involved with the project sites of Building Group and Green Constructions under analysis in this study, since I did not access any craftsmen at all through the contacts with

Building Group or Green Constructions, and neither of them had any craftsmen of their own employed at the project sites I visited. This indicates that all three of the project sites I visited for this study are perfectly representative of the current subcontracting regime.

Also, most subcontractors involved on the project sites unfortunately turned down my requests for an interview, and neither was I granted access to the two Polish project-based employees hired by Green Constructions, despite repeated requests. I discuss this below in Chapter 5.

Table 1 Number of interviews

Respondents	No. of interviews
Regional management	3
On-site management	6
Subcontractors	3
Trade union representatives	4
Staffing agency representatives	1
Skilled workers	2
Self-employed painter	1

Consent and confidentiality

With regards to consent and confidentiality, all participants that were interviewed gave their consent to voluntarily partake in the study after being informed about the study's aim and methods. They were also told that they could interrupt and cancel the interviews at any time; and also, withdraw their participation from the study overall.

With this said, and as noted by Eldén (2020), despite informing participants of the study, there are often aspects that need clarification in a more informal and non-academic manner. This is partly due to the differing interests of the researcher and the respondents, and it is sometimes not until after the interview, or at an informal discussion of interesting events in relation to the study that there is a better understanding of what the study is about (Eldén, 2020, pp. 86-87). My feeling is that this happened quite frequently when conducting the interviews, and many interesting discussions were therefore also held after the interview was done and the digital recorder was turned off.

The voluntary nature of participating in a study also raises a few questions, particularly in studies like this in which the initial consent and access to different project sites is given by the regional management. This potentially puts the site management and workers on specific project sites further down the hierarchical organisational structure in delicate positions. For example, it could well be that they feel obliged to participate in the study because it is a management's level decision (Eldén, 2020, p. 87). It was therefore important to be cautious and pay attention to situations or topics that were sensitive or potentially could jeopardise the participants' employment status.

When informing respondents and participants about the study, I also explained that all companies and persons involved in the dataset would be given fictive names as a means to keep their confidentiality. Yet, considering the qualitative nature of the study and the rich descriptions of project sites, meetings, and social relationships between different actors in the study, it is possible that participants felt like they recognised either themselves or other actors or situations in the study. Hence, it is important to note that confidentiality is not the same as anonymity. That is, confidentiality involves the commitment from the researcher to prevent any information given during the course of the research from being revealed to external actors. This contrasts with anonymity, which involves the complete eradication of any ties between the informant and the final product (Eldén, 2020, pp. 130-131). Such elimination of ties is close to impossible in qualitative research, not least since the interview establishes an inevitable relationship between me as the researcher and the respondents.

Sampling

During the first year in which I positioned the study in the field, several actors and potential gatekeepers were identified. Guided by the research problem, these are the first steps in the sampling process. Also this stage of the research involves several ethical dilemmas (Eldén, 2020, p. 78). For example, why do I target certain groups but not others, what does this mean for those whose voices are represented? And what are the potential

implications of such demarcations for the analysis? Also, how do I handle situations in which certain groups that I wish to access are not accessible?

One aspect of this is to get to know the social setting in which the study is situated. In other words, to study the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), but also to learn about specific contexts within the field. More specifically, what do I need to know to answer my research questions and how do I acquire such information?

In this study, I initiated the sampling by strategically (Mason, 2017) focusing on regional and site managers for building companies, trade union representatives for the relevant trade unions, and various employment agencies. Subcontractors were also seen as potential gatekeepers to different groups of workers, including foreign workers. As mentioned, the decision to approach the regional management of contractors was based on the anticipation that it would be the easiest way to access construction sites, since the regional managers have an overview of any on-going projects and know the site managers, which leaves them in a confident position for granting me access to the project sites.

Just as regional managers were gatekeepers to project sites, and therefore also to site managers, the access to site managers opened up possibilities of further access to other actors involved on the project site, such as subcontractors. Similarly, subcontractors possessed a potential key role to different groups of workers, both temporary and foreign. Subcontractors had also another potential role, namely that of granting me access to other subcontractors that they normally worked with. In particular, self-employed workers were identified as potential respondents through their contact with other subcontractors. In addition to the purposive sampling, the snowball sampling technique was thus also evident (Bryman, 2016).

Yet, as with all gatekeepers, the downside is the risk of becoming too dependent on a few actors, which potentially limits the access to relevant information. Ethically, snowball sampling also denotes relations between respondents who know each other from previous encounters, and it was therefore important that I was attentive not to reveal what other respondents in previous interviews had said (Eldén, 2020, p. 81).

Working my way down in the organisational hierarchy also had potential consequences, such as the management steering me in a direction they prefer, and workers feeling as if I was aligned with the management.

Yet, a top-down approach felt as the only way to access the project sites, and it did facilitate the making of contacts and an introduction to some of the actors.

Still, there is one group of potential respondents that are central to the analysis and who are not represented in the dataset, namely posted workers. Analytically, it is potentially problematic that the accounts and experiences of posted workers are missing. At the same time, the aim of the study is to analyse how organisational change manifests through new forms of work organisation contingent on subcontracting. Thus, the analysis is not reliant on the specific situation of certain groups of workers. Nonetheless, this does not mean that such accounts are not important or relevant, or that they potentially could have extended the analysis. Rather, it flags the factor that sometimes false meanings are indicated by samplings. As a researcher, you are often at the mercy of the involved actors rather than anything else (Eldén, 2020, pp. 79-80). This was evident during the course of the research, as the site management on the project sites effectively directed me towards only Swedish subcontractors and workers. This is possibly explained by the mere fact that many of the posted workers do not speak English, but as I discuss below, it also has ethical implications.

Accordingly, the initial research overview that aimed to learn more of the building sector, which took place during the first year of the PhD-program, 2015-2016, was thus followed up by the making of contact with four major building companies in the south of Sweden. I informed them about the research project with an initial enquiry encouraging them to participate. Two of the companies were positive about meeting and were interested in hearing more about the project. After a meeting and interviews with regional managers, I was presented with the opportunity of accessing three of their project sites.

Qualitative interviews

Parallel to the identification of building companies that were willing to take part in the research, I conducted background interviews (Fletcher, 2017) with researchers and representatives for Byggnads, the trade union that organises builders, and with Kommunal, the Swedish municipal

workers' union, which at the time had recently evaluated the impact of the Swedish labour migration reform for various sectors in the Swedish labour market. At this point in time I also contacted and interviewed a representative from one of the largest staffing agencies involved in the building sector. Together with the regional managers from the building companies, these respondents were all identified as relevant in the initial phase of the research. Firstly, the trade union representatives possess an overall knowledge of the sector, but also knowledge concerning the effects of political decisions, institutional developments, and the underlying conflict between capital and labour. To a certain degree, the trade union representatives represent the collective worker and can therefore provide a good overview of the sector and its challenges. Similarly, both the representative for the employment agency and the regional managers of the companies represent another side of the building sector, with different and contrasting objectives from those of the trade union. Secondly, this group also contrasts both the site management, the subcontractors, and the skilled workers interviewed for the study, in that they are not involved in the building process on site. This also indicates that their perspective is potentially limited and embedded in a specific context representing specific agendas, as a result of their 'expertise' and role as top-down management officials (Smith & Elger, 2014, pp. 120-121).

Most of the time, the initial expert-interviews took place in the respondents' respective offices or in conference rooms at their work-place. In one sense, the questions posed at this stage of the research were general questions that reflected the review of previous research and the identified research problem. Yet, this also made them specific, and indicates how I as a researcher identify relevant mechanisms, events, and episodes in previous research that potentially identify inconsistencies or contradictions, which in turn could raise further questions and discussions (Smith & Elger, 2014, pp. 130-131).

The questions focused on the Swedish building sector, organisational changes, demands for flexibility, and the role of foreign competition. Also, they were of open-ended character, to encourage the participants to share their experiences and highlight their implicit knowledge within the field. The interviews were digitally recorded, which facilitated transcribing

them. The transcription in turn helped to identify valuable themes and specific events of interest for the analysis.

This was true also for the on-site interviews with site managers and foremen, and just as the initial interviews were conducted at the respective respondents' office, the interviews with on-site management were conducted at the respective project site, in the barracks, where offices and lunch-rooms were located. In contrast to the expert interviews, these interviews were more focused on explicit aspects of building, such as in what order the different stages of the production are initiated, which subcontractors were they pleased with, how the management had changed with the increased use of subcontractors, and so forth. The subcontractors and the skilled workers were contacted outside of the project sites, and the interviews with them were in turn conducted at their respective office or over lunch.

As a research technique, interviewing has a key role in qualitative methods. Not only does it provide the researcher with direct access to the respondents' views, opinions, and arguments, but it is above all an interactive process based on a conversation where the respondents voice their explanations to the social phenomena of interest. More particularly, the interview invites the interviewer and the interviewee to a "mutual construction of meanings and possibility of the joint construction knowledge about experiences, events, and activities" (Smith & Elger, 2014, p. 110).

The construction of knowledge through conversation that such an approach implies, is not to say that I see interviews as a dialogue free from conflicts and filled with harmony. On the contrary, interviews are institutionalised forms of professional conversations, based on asymmetrical power relations (Kvale, 2006, pp. 481-483; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 49-50). As a researcher, I have different interests than the interviewees in the sense that it is I who controls what the interview is about, plus, the interview departs from and is steered by the research problem and interest of the study. Moreover, it is also I as a researcher that interpret what is said in the interview, and how I make use of it in the analysis. In other words, as a researcher I have a lot of responsibility not to take advantage of the power asymmetry that the interview involves (Kvale, 2006, pp. 484-486).

However, part of the researcher's responsibility is also to include the interviewees in the interview and make them feel comfortable. That is, to encourage them to take part and contribute to the interview in such a fashion as to make them feel both empowered and important. In this sense, the open-ended character of the questions are important, as a means to encourage the interviewee to participate and share their experiences and opinions (Eldén, 2020, p. 106).

Because I transcribed most of the interviews the next day or during the days that followed the interviews, I could also prepare myself even more for the interviews that I had not yet conducted. This made it possible to ask better follow-up questions, which provided me with a better understanding of the rich nature of the descriptions by the respondents regarding their work tasks, and their day to day work-life (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 82). Additionally, this facilitated situating the experiences and opinions of the respondents and thus also to better analyse the social context in regards to potential constraints and opportunities that their respective position (top-level management, site manager, foreman and so forth) entailed (Smith & Elger, 2014, p. 111).

Visits to the project sites

I visited the three project sites on eleven occasions from February 2017 to June 2018. Most of the visits lasted for half a day, during the course of four or five hours, and while I was there, I usually conducted one or more interviews, participated in meetings, and walked along during inspections.

Since the only way into a construction site is through the gates, and since I did not have an ID06 tag to identify myself with, I usually phoned the site manager upon arrival, and waited to be let in by him blipping his card so that I could enter. It initially struck me how easy it must be to get in on someone else's card, by walking close up against each other, and then surreptitiously sneaking in. This explains also quite well why it is so difficult to control who enters the project sites, and that there are quite a few possibilities for those who want to allow unauthorised personnel into the project sites.

At Green Constructions' project-sites the barracks with offices and lunchrooms for both staff and management were located just by the gates,

and since the site managers were the ones to let me in, the strolls around the project sites to see how the building progressed often took place at the end of my visits. During these visits, I participated in meetings between contractors and clients, as well as contractors and subcontractors. The meetings with clients were mostly to monitor the on-going work, to discuss inconsistencies in the blue-print, and therefore changes in the blue-print, and processes of following-up changes (mostly delays) in the time-table. Meetings with subcontractors included also aspects of monitoring the on-going work, but these meetings were of different character, clearly influenced by both parts' background as builders. The communication in these meetings was more direct, as compared to the meetings with clients, and it was evident that they spoke the same 'language' (Bourdieu, 1984). I was most often positioned at the end of a table, listening, observing and taking notes, with the work continuously on-going on the project site outside the window of the meeting room. The meetings provided me with a good entrance to both clients and subcontractors, and further highlighted the complex structure of the building sector. It clarified and nuanced not least the role of the site manager, and his key position in the contact with both clients, management, workers and subcontractors. Overall, observations worked as a good complement to the interviews, as I could relate the participants' accounts with my observations, and also ask the informants to tell me more about and reflect upon concrete incidents that had taken place or things that I had observed in meetings or at on the site in general.

In other words, the visits provided me with the opportunity to engage in discussions with employees—both with the foremen and workers belonging to subcontractors. These discussions were mostly of an informal nature, and not always related to work tasks. Either it was around the coffee table in the lunchroom, where they discussed recent political events, or the latest car models. There were also discussions related to their work situation, what they thought of as the pros and cons with posted workers, as well as how much cheaper it is to use foreign workers, when renovating your bathroom at home.

In addition, I had the opportunity to walk around the project sites. On these occasions, I wore both a helmet and protective footwear, and observed the work in progress while I took notes about who did what, how

did they do it, what different languages were spoken, and so on. I was always accompanied by one of the foremen during these tours, and it gave me the opportunity to ask more casual questions than in the interviews. Was it always that messy in the court-yard, for example, with all the deliveries up side-down, or had something gone not as planned? I usually took the opportunity to try and count how many subcontractors that simultaneously were involved in a specific stage of the production, and I never counted less than eight working parallel at one time.

In regards to the previous discussion on consent, both meetings and strolls around the project sites are research activities that exemplify the issue raised by Atkinson (2009), of consent given by individuals in studies of organisations that involves observation and ethnographically-inspired methods (Atkinson, 2009, p. 20). Even though I was granted consent by several individuals to conduct interviews with them, and also granted permission by the management to spend time on the project sites, attend meetings, and get a closer look at how work progressed, I was not granted consent from all meeting-participants; for example, subcontractors and their employees that I sometimes ran into during the strolls around the project sites were often more reticent about participation in the overall research programme.

However, as Atkinson (2009) argues, this is not always a desirable situation anyway (Atkinson, 2009, p. 19). First of all, it would be impossible to be granted consent from every single individual involved on a project site, specifically since not even the general contractors have full control over who is present at project sites. Secondly, and more importantly, the workers occupied with plastering or concreting that I walked into at the project sites, or the representatives for clients, suppliers, and subcontractors in the meetings that I attended, were only of interest for this study with respect to their *organisational affiliations*. I did not interview these people, and if I did approach them with a request for an interview, which they later accepted, they were always similarly informed as the other respondents. However, either way, they still participated in the study because of their membership (Atkinson, 2009) in the various organisations involved on the project sites. The delicate matter of consent is thus evident in qualitative studies like this and highlights how important it is to manage the data with care.

During these occasions, the unexpected meetings and sometimes informal discussions added also a certain element to the data production, in the sense that at an early stage it improved my understanding of construction work in general, the work culture, the technicalities tied to specific aspects of the production, and also how things in general are run on a project site. I overheard discussions on whether or not the subcontracted workers did what they ought to do, and on other occasions, the best way to cast concrete was explained to me. The talk regularly involved summons to be careful, or to not step here or there, or to make sure I held on to the scaffold. It was clear that both foremen and workers were generally more relaxed and comfortable during our walks around the sites, than during the interviews in the barracks.

As previously mentioned, the data collection was carried out through interviews and visits to the project sites. I describe it as visits rather than ethnographic fieldwork because even though they took place during the course of almost two years, the analysis was still based on a limited number of visits rather than one lengthy period of stay. This methodology thus contrasts with more anthropological and traditional ideas of a researcher spending longer periods of time at a specific location and in close connection to a group of people (Falzon, 2009). However, the fact that project sites were in different stages of the building process allowed me to grasp the variously delineated dynamics in the different phases of the building process. For example, to what extent certain stages of production are more prone to be externalised, or what it entails to have two different subcontractors working next to each other at a specific stage of production. As noted by Pink et al (2013), designing the data collection with the aim of visiting project sites at different stages of the building process is a frequently used strategy in construction ethnography. This originates in the turn to reflexivity in the 1980s, and is used with the ambition of gaining experience through the embodiment of construction work: to learn through one's own body, and engage on an everyday basis with others whose everyday life is construction work, and thereby provide the researcher with a unique awareness of construction work (Pink et al., 2013, p. 5).

However, even though this is a well-suited approach to get a deeper understanding of what construction work entails, *the object of this study is*

how work is organised, which would not necessarily require the researcher to engage per se, with your body, in the actual work of building. Still, the visits, observations, and the time spent on project sites have given me valuable insight into the vacillations of construction work, and how things are run on the various sites. It has provided me with a better understanding of daily routines, the roles of the different groups of workers, their jargon and work culture, as well as the constant pressure of finishing on time, while spending as little money as possible, in order to be able to keep the budget in strict and stratified order.

4.4 The troublesome parts of getting access: Ethics, social class, and foreign workers

I visited the first project sites in 2017, during late winter, early spring. It felt like a big breakthrough. Up until then I did not know if I would be allowed on to any project sites at all, and to what extent I would be given insight into the companies' organisations. As a researcher, I could imagine that I am potentially perceived as a threat in the eyes of the employers, because I am an outsider and an independent assessor of not only their organisation, but also its modality of production. The popular image in the media of the building sector as permeated with informal arrangements, and migrant workers exposed to shady actors stretching labour market regulations, would in no small measure contribute to this trepidation. It made me doubtful as to what extent identified potential actors would want to participate in the research.

I was therefore relieved when Building Group and Green Constructions' regional management decided to take part in the study, giving me access to three of their project sites. My first visit was at one of the Green Constructions project sites, and as with the initial visits to the other sites, it was obvious that the site manager was slightly hesitant about my presence. This is understandable, for several reasons, and illustrates the aforementioned ethical dilemma in regards to the *voluntarist* aspects of participation in the study; namely, that I was granted access to project sites through the higher echelons of management (Eldén, 2020, p. 87).

Having been introduced to the research project, it seemed as if the site managers had limited interest in understanding what I intended to do. Moreover, given their unwillingness to introduce me to posted workers, I quite often got the impression that they thought I was working within the genre of investigative journalism; searching for sensational findings and flagging informal subcontracting arrangements and underpaid foreign labour.

My position as an outsider, and not least as an academic with no background of working as a builder myself, further contributed to this perceptual suspicion. I was imaged both as a threat and as an academic/student that did not have a 'proper' job. For example, at one of the sites, I was constantly referred to as 'the professor', creating a clear alterity. Similarly to the analysis by Willis (2003), in his book *Learning to Labour*, this could be interpreted as typical working class behaviour and perhaps also a masculine mentality, of testing each other, and inviting an outsider or a person from another social class to participate on premises adjudicated by themselves. However, once there develops a mutual platform, based on mutual acknowledgment on which the *rapport* grows, that is, how the interaction between me and the participants are developed based on mutuality and trust (Gray, Williamson, Karp, & Dalphin, 2007, p. 153), these social obstacles can be (and were) overcome.

This was so despite our distinct 'language' or habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), constantly distancing us from each other. It was clear that this is a key aspect, bearing stark witness to our social background(s), of my role as a researcher—always analysing and asking 'wrong' or uncomfortable questions, exemplified by me not knowing what a 'rebar' was during small exchange with the site manager. This saw me loose face in his eyes as he described the process of concreting, and how the rebar is the reinforcing steel that is used as a rod. In his opinion, and on a project site, this is common knowledge, and illustrates quite well the contingent nature of the rapport between us.

Nonetheless, it was evident that once I was accepted by the site manager, the foremen also relaxed and were easier to talk to. As indicated already, except for the individual and digitally recorded interviews with them, the small-talk and the informal discussions while having a coffee in the barracks or climbing up the scaffold during the daily inspections to

overview the extant nature of the work as it should have been progressing, helped bridge any such existential gaps. However, when I asked the site manager and the foremen to put me in contact with the subcontractors, it was strictly the Swedish subcontractors, and those who used Swedish workers that I was introduced to. Even though there were plenty of posted workers, (and at certain stages more or less *only posted workers*), it was not them to whom I was directed. This further touches upon the previously mentioned ethical issue of representation and those whose voices are heard and included in the dataset (Eldén, 2020, p. 78). In this instance, it also demonstrates the segmentation of posted workers into specific parts of the building sector (Frank, 2013), and how access in this study was constrained through the combined processes of both social class and ethnicity. Perhaps I could have pushed harder to gain access to certain actors, but at the time it felt like a fine line and a balancing act, considering that I did not want to risk getting zero access at all.

With regards to this, the Green Constructions 'in-house' resources included also two Polish carpenters throughout the production process. Even though I was never able to get a clear understanding of their employment status, I refer to them as project-based employees of Green Constructions. That is, despite being 'in-house' resources, they were not Green Constructions' own staff. At the same time though, *they did not belong to any subcontractors either*. However, what I was able to find out, was that if the site management deemed it necessary, Green Constructions often included a couple of general carpenters during the length of the project. These two, Karol and Krystian, had experience from working with one of the site managers, Mathias, before, on several occasions. Their roles at the project site were also special, somewhat like handymen, with the purpose of making sure that the work progressed smoothly by being available and assisting the posted workers from the various subcontractors where necessary. In that process they often also acted as middle men and translators when needed, between Polish workers and the site management.

While there was no problem arranging a meeting with the foremen for an interview or just to come out and have a look at the project site for a number of hours, it was a totally different story trying to arrange an interview with Karol and Krystian. On several occasions while at the

project site, I asked the on-site management to speak with them and if it was possible that the site manager or foremen could arrange for half an hour of their time. But there was always an excuse or hindrance. Also, I was told that neither Karol nor Krystian had a phone number or email, even though they were hired by Green Constructions.

It is difficult to speculate on these matters, but the fact is that I never got to talk to them in private. It should be taken into consideration that 2017 when I visited the project sites, was a busy period for the building sector. In fact, numerous contractors, subcontractors, and self-employed actors had agreed to meet, but in the end stopped replying to emails, or never returned phone calls. Nonetheless, my feeling throughout the research process was that I was not granted access to either Karol or Krystian due to the *informal* nature of their employment status. This is indicative of the social segmentation based on the intimate ties of both class and ethnicity—not unique to, but highly apparent in—the Swedish building sector.

5 Organisational flexibility through subcontracting

A myriad of men, trucks, cranes, and prefabricated walls waiting to be put in place. From the roof on top of the five-story building, I have a good vantage point over the project site. Once an old industrial harbour, it is rapidly turning into a residential area by the sea. The cargo ships are long gone, and so are the workers that used to load them. Instead, trucks are arriving with deliveries, and rather than loading cargo to ships, material, walls and prefabricated modules are unloaded and put in a temporary place before installation. From my position, I have an overview of the other four project sites nearby. Groups of workers are spread out across the area, occupied with casting the foundation of a cellar on one site, directing the crane operator moving a prefabricated concrete wall onto another, and installing roof trusses on the building opposite to me. I note that the general contractor's logo is visible on the giant banners that blow in the wind, but not on the workers' clothes. Here, subcontractors' names and logos are printed instead. It is Friday, and as usual, when the weather allows for it, a barbecue is prepared outside the barracks, and some of the workers are getting ready for lunch.

Similar events unfold at project sites across Sweden. This chapter provides an analytical discussion based on observations and interviews from three of them. Departing from the research problem of increased levels of subcontracting in the Swedish building sector, I introduce the two cases and show that Building Group's and Green Constructions' attempt to achieve greater organisational flexibility through the externalisation of work, is a process driven by increased industrialisation, volatilities and uncertainties with regards to the product market, and institutional changes in the labour market. I show that organising work based on subcontracting

is preferred to other forms of external solutions, such as for example through staffing agencies. Yet, although desirable to achieve organisational flexibility, the subcontracting involves calculated risks. These manifest through concerns surrounding subcontractors' abilities to deliver the required quality of work, on time, and on budget. In what follows, I show that both Building Group and Green Constructions respond to these uncertainties by making use of control mechanisms, in the form of extensive networks and trust-relationships.

5.1 Introducing the two cases

When I first set foot on the project sites, I knew that the building sector was in transformation. Based on readings and the initial interviews for the study, I understood that the sector was characterised by a sequential production process and that it was increasingly fragmented, with a variety of actors working parallel to each other in the different stages of the production. I had learnt that foreign labour was frequently used, and that the sector as a whole was competitive and in constant search to increase efficiency. What surprised me though, as I started to gather my own data, was the extent to which all of this was happening. The incredible coordination behind it and the many alternative arrangements that were made. In short, the machinery behind it.

Building Group and Green Constructions are both two prominent building companies in the south of Sweden. In terms of numbers, Building Group is far bigger, and active also outside of Sweden. Their own workforce, including both blue and white-collar workers, is therefore much larger compared with Green Constructions'. Regionally, the difference is less tangible, and Green Constructions is also in a phase of rapid growth and strengthening of their organisation. Nevertheless, as I was told by the regional manager of Green Constructions, the strengthening of the organisation is being mainly realised in relation to management and in the hiring of white-collar workers.

Both Building Group and Green Constructions externalised all parts of production on their respective project sites that I visited, a conscious strategy to increase their general capacity independent of changes in the

product market (Streeck, 1987). This has been part of a wider business strategy from Green Constructions during the 2010's, while it is a fairly new development for Building Group[19]. Drawing on Hyman's (1987) argument about how strategies are primarily conditioned by capital, and involve the long-term planning of a company's activities, it also reflects the general trend in the Swedish building sector during the last decade, with a restructured workforce and the fact that companies to a further extent than previously are becoming more reliant upon subcontractors.

Interestingly, Green Constructions—the smaller of the two companies—was the one who initially restructured along the principles of construction management. This is explained by the volatility of both production and labour markets that make particularly smaller companies reluctant to bind resources (capital) to craftsmen of their own (Bosch & Philips, 2003). In other words, both cases in this study take on a construction management role in projects they undertake. Below follows a more detailed presentation of the organisational structure of the two cases.

Green Constructions

The case of Green Constructions builds on empirical data from interviews with the regional management, as well as interviews with the site management from two project sites. It builds also on visits at the project sites, but the interviews and the data in relation to the subcontractors are based on interviews and observations from one of the sites only, since, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the second site was almost finished when I visited it, which made it more difficult to access the subcontractors involved on that site.

Figure 1 illustrates the different firms involved in the 'Green Constructions'-case. The striped boxes are included to illustrate that there were also other subcontractors (on different levels) involved on the two project sites, subcontractors that I heard of in interviews or saw present at

[19] I write a "fairly new development" since I was told by Building Group's regional management in an interview in 2017 that they only recently started to build according to principles of construction management.

the site, but who I did not come into contact with or discuss further with the informants. I have included just a few boxes; however, in reality, it was apparent that many more subcontractors were and had previously been involved in work at the sites.

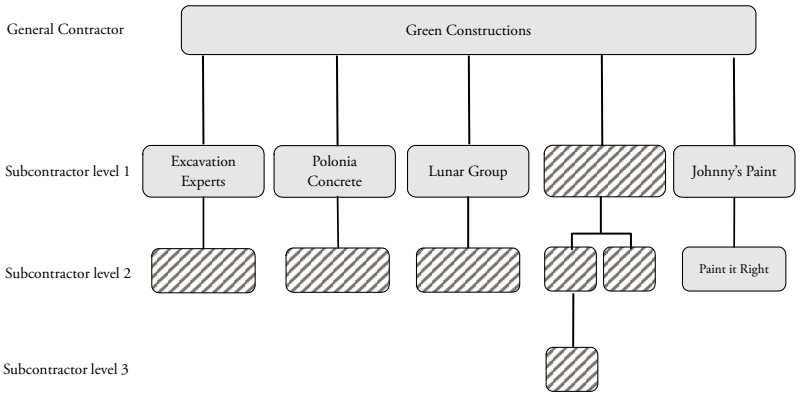


Figure 1 Case 1, Green Constructions

The figure illustrates the organisational structure and how subcontracting takes place on multiple levels. It shows how the general contractor makes use of different subcontractors, both domestic and foreign, for various sequences of the production—the Excavation Experts are used for the groundwork, Polonia Concrete for casting the foundation, Lunar Group for plastering inside the apartments, and Johnny's Paint for painting. It also shows that the subcontractors in turn can chose to externalise parts of the work to yet other subcontractors, in this case Paint it Right.

The two project sites that the empirical data for this case builds on comprise of 130 and 60 apartments respectively. The two building complexes both consists of two blocks, and both of them included day-care facilities in addition to apartments. On one of the project sites there was an underground garage constructed. As mentioned, these were fairly typical examples of project sites for Green Constructions, in terms of both size and complexity.

In an interview with the regional manager of Green Constructions I was told that the staffing on projects like these generally involves a limited number of directly employed staff, and that all stages of production are

bought through subcontractors. Normally, the site management involves a site manager and two foremen. The site manager has the overall responsibility for the project, including the budget and the time schedule. A site manager's working days thus consists to a larger or lesser extent of meetings with subcontractors, the client, any consultants, but also of reporting back to regional management.

There are usually also two foremen working in close contact with the site manager. The two foremen are the ones in contact with the subcontractors, and are responsible for the coordination of work on a daily basis. They are thus the primary link between the site manager and the subcontracted workers. They are the ones the group leaders from the different subcontractors on site should turn to when any problems arise, or if they have questions, rather than going directly to the site manager.

Additionally, if the site management finds it necessary, there are typically also two or three project-based general carpenters involved on the project-site as a means to assist where needed, and to make sure that the production flows without interruptions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, at one of the project sites, the two project-based carpenters, Karol and Krystian, were Polish. I was not able to figure out the terms of their employment, but their role entailed to assist the subcontracted workers where needed; at the same time, they also kept an eye on how the work progressed. They also reported to Green Constructions' foremen, just like the group leaders from the subcontractors, but contrary to the posted workers from CEE that belonged to the subcontractors, they spoke good English and also some Swedish. They had worked in Sweden for a number of years, and had also worked for Green Constructions on earlier projects, so the site manager, Mathias, knew them well. He said that he knew what to expect from them in terms of work and he also expected them to help keep an eye on the subcontracted workers, in the sense that they insisted on the requisite on-site protection equipment, and that the work progressed as it should.

Building Group

I visited one of Building Group's project sites. Apart from interviews with the site management, the case builds on interviews with the regional management team, and two subcontractors. Of these two, Concrete Solutions was involved in the production at the project site that I visited, and JK Kitchen & Carpentry worked almost exclusively with Building Group, but not on this specific site. The organisational structure between the firms in the second case is illustrated in Figure 2.

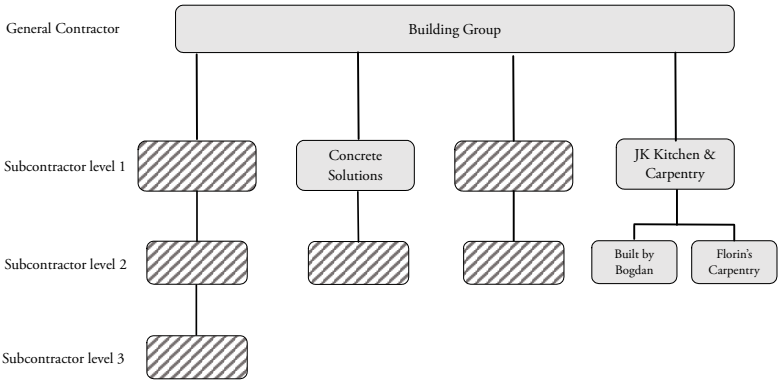


Figure 2, case 2 Building Group

Just as with the 'Green Constructions' case, both subcontractors in this case also turned to yet other subcontractors for various parts of the work. The reasons for this are scrutinised further on, but just as in figure 1, there were also in this case many more subcontractors involved in the overall production than those illustrated in this isolated figure.

Moreover, Building Group's project site comprised of 130 rental apartments, mostly small apartments and studios. Just as with the project sites in the other case, the five-story building complex included an underground parking garage. However, rather than being ordered by the municipal housing company, the client in this case was a private housing developer.

Like the other case, the project delivery method was a design- and build contract, with the main contractor fully responsible for the design, coordination, and production of the project. Building Group's personnel

were limited to only a few persons, including the site manager, Henrik, and two foremen, Alex and Jonas as their only employees. Moreover, the work was also organised in a similar manner to the case with Green Constructions. The site manager rarely left his office, and all contact in relation to daily work tasks with subcontractors and suppliers went through the foremen. It was they who made sure that the subcontracted workers were up to date, kept the schedule, and knew what to do. This way of organising work was fairly new to Building Group in this region, and the site that I had visited was one of the first sites where all stages of the production was procured from subcontractors.

In addition, the level of pre-fabrication was higher than on Green Constructions' sites, with readymade modules and elements delivered and installed by subcontracted installation teams. Overall, the three project sites resembled each other both in terms of the way they were organised, and in their architectural design.

5.2 Trends of subcontracting: Construction management in the Swedish building sector

At Building Group's project site, while standing on top of the soon-to-be five-story building, the foreman Alex explained to me how he and the other foremen from the four different project sites (built by different general contractors) in the same area, met on a regular basis to solve logistics problems. With deliveries arriving at least three times a day at every site, using the same narrow dirt road, there is a concerted need for both planning and patience. The production cannot stop at any time, especially not due to logistical failures. With one truck waiting to unload—or unloading at another spot than the one designated—another one might have to improvise, getting in the way of somebody else, creating a potential chaotic situation and consequently interrupting the flow. It is clear that logistics are important, and the use of Lean-inspired production systems (Womack et al., 1990) is therefore no surprise: several actors need to be able to work side- by-side, and to perform different tasks at different

stages of the project at the same time, without creating so-called queue situations and slowing each other down.

This specific area, an old industrial land strip by the sea in the outskirts of the city, differs from the other sites that I visited, since there were three general contractors building in the same spot, at the same time. The overview I had of the different sites from the rooftop, strengthened my first impression of increased subcontracting among contractors. The logos of foreign companies and of regional subcontractors on jackets and helmets indicated that few of the workers engaged on the sites appeared to belong to general contractors. Alex pointed out that externalising all parts of production is a fairly new development for Building Group, but that it so far has worked out fine. As foreman, his job has always been to both coordinate and supervise the work, but also to help out where needed, whenever something needs to be fixed. However, with a work organisation based on subcontracting there is less of the latter these days. The supervising is also tenser and edgier due to the many new faces appearing from week to week, from different subcontractors and also from different countries. It appears as if the foremen's work description has changed, and that it distances the foremen from the group of workers, and accentuates the monitoring part of the work, as opposed to the leading aspect.

Alex has worked for Building Group for a number of years, and knows the company well. He is the younger of the two foremen at the site and in his early twenties. He just recently became foreman, something which I could tell that he took pride in, and he told me that he is not interested in being a builder his whole working-life. Indeed, it was his ambition to become site manager at some point, and advance in the organisation.

On our way down from the five-story building, walking through the naked skeleton of what was to become the 130 brand-new rental apartments with a sea-view, one of the subcontracted workers shouted at us, and signalled to Alex to shut a machine off. A slight gesticulation followed, and Alex explained, laughing, that at that phase of the project, most of the workers were Lithuanian. However, even though it is sometimes a bit difficult to communicate, it is generally no problem, he said. He continued to explain that there are usually one or two of the subcontracted workers that speaks some English. They are often the group's leader, and even though it is just rudimentary English, it is enough

to act as the link between the subcontracted workers and Alex or Jonas (the other foreman) or the site manager. When I asked why the subcontractor, Concrete Solutions, hires Lithuanian workers, Alex said that subcontractors like these usually hire the cheapest workers available at the time. Previously, they had hired both Swedish and foreign workers, he said.

An increased presence of subcontractors on project sites was also a main topic in interviews with the top management of both Building Group and Green Constructions. Compared with Building Group, Green Constructions have externalised all parts of production to subcontractors for almost a decade. Magnus, the regional manager of Green Constructions said that most building companies of their size have implemented such organisational structures. He excluded the top five largest companies from this trend, who often have both their own daughter companies but also a large share of their own employees. He continued:

> But we and companies of our own size started to rely solely on subcontractors in the early 2010's. We got rid of our own craftsmen and bought all services—like kitchen fitters and similar [workers]–through subcontractors.
>
> Magnus, regional manager Green Constructions

From what he has said, it is evident that labour flexibility has been a key part of the new strategy, effectively implemented through the externalisation of work (Streeck, 1987). To subcontract all parts of production was a strategical move to increase the company's competitiveness, and share of the market. In his own words, it was the most cost-effective way to grow:

> It's important to grow wisely, not to be over—or under—dimensioned. You need to bear in mind costs, the economy, and also social aspects—that everyone feels welcome and so on…
>
> Magnus, regional manager, Green Constructions

He repeatedly returned to the size of the company as a key aspect, which potentially explains the timing of the restructuring of the organisation.

The financial crisis in 2008 hit the Swedish building sector hard, and companies with similar revenues like that of Green Constructions were more severely hit than, for example, Building Group, who had both higher revenues and a larger organisation. Green Constructions therefore also had more incentives to reorganise its production after the crisis.

In comparison, Building Group initiated their restructuring a few years later. Lars, construction manager at Building Group, with many years of experience at building companies of different sizes, and in different positions, emphasised the importance of technological development, and flexible specialisation as a reason for increased subcontracting already in the 1980s. Originally a trained engineer, Lars has worked as both foreman, site manager, and, during the last two decades, in positions in the top-management of both major and minor building companies. This provided our interview with depth and a thorough overview of what he experienced as changing in the building sector. Lars' experience was particularly helpful, since most of those that I interviewed at the sites were younger, and thus had not worked as many years and could therefore only compare with the last ten years or so.

While discussing at what point Building Group started to buy services from subcontractors, Lars identified bricklaying as one of the first trades that general contractors started to buy from specialised trade contractors, as a result of technological development. He said that this was also an example of a trade that the major building companies today rarely have their own expertise in.

> Rasmus: How come bricklaying was among the first trades to be externalised then?
>
> Lars: It's actually the same basic argument as with other trades. Because bricklaying went from being a fundamental part of many of the old buildings, where the bricklayer started from the point where the basement was done and thereafter had continuous work throughout the building process. With technological advancements the demand for bricks decreased, and other various concrete constructions were used instead, with bricks mainly used to dress the buildings. So rather than being part of more or less the whole building process, the bricklayer now had three months of work. Which in turn is a challenge for the contractor. Together

with rigid labour laws, it made it difficult to keep the bricklayer engaged with jobs on a regular basis.

Rasmus: So that's why there are so few companies that have their own bricklayers today?

Lars: Exactly. I mean, a few, perhaps the biggest companies might have some. But at the same time, a parallel development with firms specialising in only "dressing" buildings emerged, and had plenty of contracts. Three months with one company, and three months with someone else. So, one could say that there was a restructuring of the labour market more or less.

Lars, construction manager, Building Group

What Lars shared with me is an illustrative example that facilitates understanding of the process in which subcontracting over time has become desirable among companies, and also why it is a key feature of today's building sector. As a result of technological development and industrialisation, bricklaying is now a marginalised part of the production process (Bosch & Philips, 2003). A new arraying of production in sequences pressures employers not to employ their own bricklayers—at least not permanently—since it leads to high costs, and fears of unnecessary expenditure on labour costs (tied to a directly employed workforce) in times of financial recession. In other words, there is a demand for labour flexibility from the contractors. This has opened up space for, and encouraged firms to, specialise in bricklaying only: To meet the demands for flexibility, and to come in for shorter periods of time, in specific stages of the production, for example, to dress façades.

For building companies that continue to employ their own brick-layers, one flexible solution is to have the bricklayers do other tasks (functional flexibility) until needed for brick-laying. As noted by Kalleberg (2001), such internal solutions usually involve additional training programs to acquire new skills, and therefore also more costs for the company. It is therefore cheaper to use numerical and external solutions, that is, to release the bricklayers from their employment and rely on temporarily hired bricklayers through staffing agencies. Or alternatively, to externalise all bricklaying fully, and thus buy it as a service from a subcontractor specialised in bricklaying instead.

I discussed different strategies and flexibility-solutions also with Magnus, the regional manager of Green Constructions. He explained to me that internal flexibility-solutions are reserved for larger and well-established companies that have possibilities to either re-train their employees or move them between projects as a result of their organisational capacity and their large volume of projects. He was of the opinion that this was linked to the tradition of working in teams, and the piece-rate wage system:

> I mean, as a craftsman at one of the very large companies, you're used to working in a work-task team. Compared to more recently established companies like ours, in the larger companies, working in a team is taken for granted.
>
> Magnus, regional manager, Green Constructions

To work in a team is a traditional practice, which according to the regional manager still exists, but to a greater extent only in the larger companies, and exclusively in companies that have their own craftsmen employed. In companies of Green Constructions' size, Magnus says that it is not financially sustainable. For them, it is rather desirable with external solutions, as a means to cut down on costs or to minimise financial risks (Druker et al., 2021).

The same reasoning also became apparent in a group interview with the regional top management of Building Group. In the interview, with the regional manager, the business manager, and the national procurement manager, they said that part of the reason as to why they were reducing their own workforce, was linked to what they saw as inconvenience within the piece-rate wage system:

> Tomas: There are several reasons for this development [the removal of the piece-rate system]. The sector is more industrialised, more of production is placed in the manufacturing industry, with more installations, and mounting on project sites. The different components are more developed…in a sense.
>
> Rasmus: So there's a connection between fewer directly employed workers and a rationalisation of …

> Tomas: - [interrupts] Yes, we're shortening the building process. You want to construct the products inside in the manufacturing industry, and have less hours outside, on project site.

Tomas, regional manager, Building Group

Increasing technological development illustrates how production is gradually becoming more sequential, and as a result also more fragmented. To have directly-employed workers, and to organise them in teams so that they are paid in accordance to the piece-rate wage system, is more expensive for the company, because there are less parts of production that Building Group actually constructs itself. The more industrialised production is, the more cost-efficient it is for the building company. The work that is not shifted towards the manufacturing industry on the other hand, is shifted to subcontractors who are specialised in a specific trade instead (Bosch & Philips, 2003).

All of the top management representatives that I interviewed mentioned that production costs in general, and labour costs in particular, are the primary reason for these strategies. This indicates the influence of a rationalised logic based upon financialization (Cushen & Thompson, 2016). The construction manager at Building Group, Lars, developed this further and indicated that it was desirable from a top-management perspective, but that there initially was resistance among the on-site management towards the use of subcontractors:

> There's been a mixed reception among site managers since we started to buy these services. Some thought it was a great way to even out the uneven structure of employment, while other thought it was a devil's work that we stopped using our own staff. So there was definitely some resistance; even though I experience it as passing. Once the site managers tried buying the services, most of them wanted to continue with it.

Lars, construction manager, Building Group

The uneven structure of employment refers to times in between projects or when a contractor builds less and therefore needs fewer workers than normal. It is arguably of a double nature from the employer's perspective, since the uneven structure of employment results partly from increased

specialisation. That is, increased specialisation implies a welcome standardisation of production, which in turn means that work can be routinised, and done faster. Yet, it is also problematic since the uneven structure of employment is tied to unwanted costs. Externalisation is therefore presented as the most viable solution. Rather than having craftsmen on the payroll in between projects, when there is no work for them, it is more convenient to externalise the work tasks to subcontractors and keep one's own personnel to a minimum as a means to keep costs down (Druker et al., 2021).

The initial resistance among site managers and foremen, against the use of subcontracted workers was both founded on an anxiety of what would happen to directly-employed craftsmen when other, subcontracted workers took over tasks they had previously done themselves, and also uncertainty about the extent that the subcontractors could deliver the requested work. This uncertainty is tied to specific stages of the production, in which predominantly posted workers from CEE are used.

I return to the uncertainty and segmentation of posted workers further on in this chapter (see 5.4). For now, I want to highlight that the companies' ambition to have a flexible organisation is realised through mainly external solutions, and that it is based on a top-down strategic decision, impelled by technological development, and flexible specialisation. However, following the advice of Kalleberg (2001) that institutional contexts impact why organisations make use of specific flexibility strategies, I want to consider two events of particular importance for the Swedish building sector: The financial crisis in 2008/09 and the enlargement of the EU in 2004/07.

The financial crisis in 2008/09 can be seen as a turning point for many contractors. As mentioned by Magnus, regional manager at Green Constructions, it had meant that they restructured their work organisation, and among the first things that were cut were labour costs. It shows how principles of financialization impact management strategies and the organisation of work, and that labour is perceived primarily as a cost, rather than as an investment (Cushen & Thompson, 2016; Thompson, 2003, 2013). As a result, Green Constructions these days rely solely on subcontractors, rather than having directly employed craftsmen

of their own. Occasionally however, they hire in addition, one or two project-based carpenters.

Similar trends of externalisation are true also in the case of Building Group. The site manager told me that "many were let go in connection to the financial crisis in 2009", and in the group interview with the regional top-management, I was told about a recently-commenced project (which I later found out was the project that I was about to visit) with a work organisation based solely on subcontractors, in a similar manner as Green Constructions:

> A project we're about to start won't have any employees of our own, only subcontracted labour, and foreign labour in particular. So it's interesting to follow the process of change we're in.
>
> Tomas, regional manager, Building Group

Building Group's strategy to buy services from subcontractors rather than building themselves, is in other words explained not only by increased industrialisation, flexible specialisation, and the financial crisis, but also by the breadth of access to foreign labour. With the inclusion of new member states in the EU-labour market in 2004/07, millions of extra ancillary workers were captured by the EU-labour market. Considering the variation in social and economic stability across the region, this opens up possibilities for building companies to make use of a relatively cheap labour force through subcontracting (Lillie, 2010).

The financial gain is in other words too big not to make use of for the companies. This shows that yes, sequential production as a result of industrialisation, and flexible specialisation have been part of the Swedish building sector for several decades, and have in turn encouraged further specialisation, and subcontracting. Yet, it was the expansion of the EU in 2004/07, and the following financial crisis in 2008/09 that provided Swedish building companies with the incentive to restructure their work organisations. This follows also MacKenzie's (2002, 2008) argument that subcontracting as a mode of production has been encouraged by both technological advancements, increased market competition, and de-regulative efforts in the labour market.

Tommy, a representative for the builders' trade union, Byggnads, shared the regional management's view of organisational restructuring in the building sector. I met him in his office for our first out of two interviews, and he struck me as the typical blue-collar trade unionist representative. He has worked as a builder for many years, and holds firm views on political aspects of construction work. His way of sharing his experiences clearly reflected a discourse of directness, of speaking from his heart based on knowledge from project sites, and often with a sarcastic, and funny twist towards the end of a story. There was occasionally also a feeling of hopelessness in his narratives, of fighting a superior and stronger opponent that marginalised the values he stood for, and what he thought was right.

In our interview, he explained what he saw as a direct link between a diverse workforce (in terms of nationalities), increased subcontracting, and a sequential production process.

> Rasmus: So how's the sector changed during the last 10-15 years for example?
>
> Tommy: The big change during my twelve years [in the trade union] is how general contractors have moved from having a lot of their own employees to divide the work into various subcontractors… For example, rather than having only three subcontractors—carpenters, electricians, and tin-smiths—it's divided into further sub-sections; such as the frame, windows, roof, and so on. And you externalise every section to different buyers. That's the big difference. I mean, the difference is huge. And this is also where the foreign companies have become established.
>
> Tommy, trade union representative, Byggnads

Tommy agrees with the regional management on the connection between a diversified workforce, a fragmented production process, and an increase of foreign firms involved in project sites. His emphasis on foreign labour is no coincidence either. His time at the trade union has overlapped with the enlargement of the EU, the Laval-case and the following conflict, as well as the continuous supply of relatively cheap labour from CEE available for Swedish contractors ever since this epoch. This current situation stands in sharp contrast to his own experience of working as a

builder, where foreign workers existed, but were not seen on-site to the same extent as today.

At the same time, he acknowledges that foreign workers are here to stay, and says that as long as the regional economic differences are as apparent as they currently are, builders from CEE will be attracted to the Swedish building sector. From previously working primarily on renovations and smaller house constructions, often travelling alone or in smaller groups for a shorter period of time during the 1990s, the inclusion of new member states in the EU has allowed both companies and workers to organise themselves differently, and to newly-establish themselves in the Swedish building sector. These days, many firms in CEE have specialised in supplying cheap labour to Swedish contractors, and there are hardly any project sites at all without posted workers. As in the given example in the introductory chapter with NCC Montage, some of the currently major Swedish building companies even have their own branches abroad, and hire workers through these geopolitical routes for projects at home in Sweden.

5.3 The limited presence of staffing agencies in the Swedish building sector

The use of external and foreign solutions is widespread throughout the EU. However, in some countries such as the Netherlands and also Norway[20], foreign workers are contracted through staffing agencies (Fellini et al., 2007; Friberg, 2016). I asked about Building Group's use of temporary agency workers in the group interview with the regional management:

[20] Even though not a member of the EU, Norway is part of the Agreement of the European Economic Area (EAA) that governs that Norway, together with Iceland and Liechtenstein have the same rights and obligations as the EU-members in the EU-single market (Government.no, 2021).

Rasmus: So you take in extra [labour] when needed. How do you do this? Through staffing agencies?

Tomas: In this region, we've got good collaborations with our competitors, in the sense that we borrow employees from each other. And I should point out that this is legal. We loan each other craftsmen when needed. If we're on a peak, we borrow from another company. The thing is though, we'd rather not make use of temporary or borrowed staff at all, because there's never the same commitment from the guys. So, we've decided that we…if any,…make use of a maximum ten extra guys, and subcontract everything else, as a means of getting the budget together.

Rasmus: So you don't use staffing agency workers at all?

Tomas: We used to do it but it didn't work…If there's a need for extra workers, then it's better if we say that we for example mount the kitchen ourselves, and then divide the work tasks. I mean, the worst scenario is to mix too much. That happened last year at a project site and it was bad. Then there's a poor atmosphere among the workers, a bad product, and it costs us too much money. It didn't work out.

Tomas, regional manager, Building Group

Rather than contracting temporary agency workers through staffing agencies, they make use of (industry) internal labour market solutions (Fellini et al., 2007). Building Group has developed a system with their competitors in which they exchange, and borrow employees from each other for shorter periods of time. Yet, as Tomas said, they would rather avoid temporary workers at all, since they feel that temporary workers are less committed, and also because on the whole it tends to be more expensive.

Hence, despite the overall management strategy of externalising work, there is hesitation and scepticism towards temporary workers because of the management's perception of them as lacking commitment, when compared with directly employed craftsmen. This signals both tensions and contradictions in the restructuring of work, and it indicates not least that the regional management—when they speak of external solutions—imply the externalisation of work and use of subcontractors rather than

external flexibility solutions based on temporary work arrangements through staffing agencies.

Consequently, higher levels of industrialisation have led to a more fragmented structure of the building sector, with specialised trade contractors acting as subcontractors, and thus having an overall restructuring effect on the labour market. To increase their organisational flexibility, that is, their general capacity to adjust the production in an uncertain environment, the regional management of Building Group and Green Constructions claim that they use both internal and external flexibility solutions with the intention to downsize directly employed craftsmen, and thus keep labour costs down. Yet, there are hesitations towards the use of external solutions through temporary recruitment from staffing agencies. Rather, it appears as if such forms of external flexibility solutions are rejected and undermined in the current subcontracting regime of construction management. Instead, both Building Group and Green Constructions, to a larger extent, externalise work towards subcontractors.

The limited use of staffing agency workers was suggested to me already at an early stage of data collection. In the weeks before my first interview with Tommy from the trade union Byggnads, in an initial contact with Kompetensföretagen[21], the staffing industry's national trade association, it was explained to me that contrary to other sectors, there is a limited involvement of their members in construction work. When I asked why, considering the evident need for temporary arrangements also in construction, the response was that there are no flexible forms of employment in the building sector, since it is rigidly regulated through collective agreements. To me, it was quite a remarkable response. How was it that the building sector, which appeared to be dependent to a large extent on temporary arrangements, did not have any flexible forms of employment? Also, the interpretation of flexibility was intriguing since it contrasted flexibility with collective agreements.

[21] Kompetensföretagen is the trade association for companies involved in the recruitment and staffing of personnel. The conversation took place over the phone, and Kompetensföretagen was at that moment not interested in an interview, since they did not think that their participation would be relevant for the study.

As autumn continued and I spoke to Tommy at Byggnads and later also to Building Group's and Green Constructions' regional management, the image given by Kompetensföretagen appeared to be at least partly correct. Pointing to the fragmented structure of the building sector, and the demand for flexible solutions from building companies, I asked Tommy about the use of staffing agency workers in the building sector.

> Rasmus: Considering this, how widespread is the use of staffing agencies in the Swedish building sector?
>
> Tommy: Proper staffing agencies, tied to collective agreements, is not a big thing. I mean, we're 9000 active members in this region, and I would guess that, together with the foreign workers, we're about 13 to 14,000 employed in the building sector. A couple of hundred of these are working through staffing agencies.
>
> Tommy, trade union representative, Byggnads

Even though Tommy referred to Byggnads' members only, this response indicates the limited presence of staffing agencies in the sector. The image shared with me by the representative from Kompetensföretagen seemed to be at least partly correct, in the sense that relatively few workers are hired through staffing agencies in the building sector. Even though Tommy told me that there are regional differences in the use of staffing with the south of Sweden experiencing less compared to other regions, it appeared as if it was more or less a marginalised phenomenon.

However, the statement that the side-lining of staffing agencies resulted from a lack of flexible arrangements in the building sector, in turn a result of rigid labour market regulations and collective agreements, was contested by Tommy. Rather, building companies reject staffing agencies, and seek alternative arrangements for other reasons, he argued. This became clear as I problematised the statement of the marginalised involvement of staffing agencies, by pointing out that throughout much of the rest of the EU, the staffing industry took advantage of the social space created in the labour market with the inclusion of new member states in 2004/07. Moreover, due to employers' demand for flexibility and the large supplies of cheap labour available from CEE, staffing agencies have come to enjoy

a key role in the supply of labour throughout much of Western Europe's building sector (Fellini et al., 2007; Friberg, 2016).

Tommy confirmed this development, and said that the events that played out throughout the EU, happened also in the Swedish building sector during the early years of the new millennium. For a number of years, Byggnads was involved in negotiations, blockades, and court rulings connected to the labour arbitration court[22]. Similar developments took place also in other Nordic countries, and illustrate the extra-institutional pressure conceptualised by Arnholtz and Andersen (2018).

The conflict happened despite the staffing agreement from 2000 (Bergström et al., 2007) that intended to regulate the hiring of temporary workers through staffing agencies. Much of it appears to have been connected to the enlargement of the EU, the Laval-case, and the free movement of labour as discussed in Chapter 2. The major building companies (some more than others), made use of the situation and interpreted the collective agreement in their own favour, said Tommy. This often led to situations where Byggnads found out that workers worked next to each other on the same project sites, but with different salaries. Since this was a new situation—or rather, a case of exploitative interpretations of collective agreements—which previously did not exist in the Swedish labour market, it created new conflicts between employers and Byggnads, most of which had to be settled in the labour arbitration court.

Another, yet central actor in conflicts like these, are the staffing agencies themselves (Peck & Theodore, 2002). In an interview with Flexigroup, one of the leading staffing agencies in construction work in Sweden, I was told about the company's difficulties with regards to establishing themselves in the building sector. Their presence in the south of Sweden was scarce, not because of the lack of flexible arrangements, but due to competition from smaller and more local staffing agencies. It was suggested that the local agencies, founded by former builders with good contacts and knowledge of the industry both locally and regionally, had an upper hand and advantage to Flexigroup, with personal and private

[22] The labour arbitration court, Arbetsdomstolen (AD) in Swedish, is a special court of justice that has existed since 1928, where disputes between employers and employees are settled (Kjellberg, 2009).

relationships with both contractors and subcontractors in the region. This is in accordance with Thiel's (2010) argument of informally developed contractual relations in the building sector, which results in business clusters and long-term contractual relationships based on acquaintance (2010, p. 464). The local staffing agencies thus have different possibilities, and more flexibility, to work out various arrangements—both formal and informal—with building companies and trade contractors in the region. According to Tommy at Byggnads, these local agencies rarely play by the book, and rather use their contacts to establish informal agreements.

Furthermore, the CEO of Flexigroup also mentioned the staffing agreement that connects staffing agency workers with collective agreements. The staffing agreement had not only legitimised the presence of the staffing industry to the Swedish model of industrial relations (Bergström et al., 2007), but also smoothened previously inflected relations between the staffing industry and the trade union. The inflected relations were a result of the many conflicts described by Tommy, and it was clear that the explanations of the conflicts would differ, depending on whose version you heard. A more judicial summary would explain the conflictual status as a result of what were, on the one hand, different interpretations of the staffing agreement; and on the other, Byggnads' (at the time) relatively strong position in the labour market.

It also appears as if there was a somewhat conservative attitude in the industry among employers towards staffing agencies, and not least towards the workers that had been hired through staffing agencies. As expressed by one of the subcontractors in the study, there is an image that those working for staffing agencies do it because they have failed to get employment elsewhere. Hiring someone through a staffing agency is a risk, as you do not know the quality of work, or whether or not the person gets along with other stakeholders and so on. There are thus indications that the reluctance to make use of temporary staffing agency workers, is not only a matter of costs.

Byggnads' traditionally strong position in the labour market was a result of their high membership, and therefore also their possibility to influence the negotiations of collective agreements. It was possible to have a high presence at construction sites, which in turn increased the possibilities to discover and report complaints. The CEO at Flexigroup was of the

opinion that Byggnads used their strong position to work against staffing agencies in the early years of the millennia, despite the staffing agreement between the employer association and the central blue-collar trade union organisation, LO, which Byggnads is a member of:

> What happened was that they often blocked our activities. First, we need to send in MBL 38[23], that we're placing Kalle, Nisse, and Niklas and Petter with the following social security number to company x for two weeks. And this is something we're obliged to do. Always. Which makes sense. But Byggnads of course called for a negotiation. So we end up in a local negotiation, and in those negotiations, Byggnads would come up with anything to why company x shouldn't hire our workers—I mean anything. They could say that there was an elephant in the project site [so the work must be stopped]. Anything really. So it's impossible to agree in the local negotiations, which in turn forces a central negotiation. This is supposed to happen as soon as possible, but obviously Byggnads made sure that it didn't. And when it finally happened, they'd say that now there's a blue elephant at the project site. So again, we can't reach an agreement and from there it goes up to AD, which is also supposed to happen quickly. But when it's brought up half a year later in AD, Byggnads' let it go and said ok –you're free to make use of the hired workers. But I mean – then it's too late and not important anymore.
>
> And we can't use the same negotiation in a new situation. So it was the same thing every time. So we couldn't access the sector. Because every time we sent out this MBL 38, we're blocked. So we didn't get anywhere during this period.
>
> CEO, Flexigroup

It is evident that the CEO is of the opinion that it took a lot of effort for Flexigroup to establish itself in the building sector. It is also clear that their presence was not appreciated by Byggnads, who had been against the central staffing agreement between the employer's organisation and LO in

[23] MBL 38 refers to the co-determination act 1976:580 that regulates the labour law in a workplace. It aims to promote the employee's co-determination of working conditions and opens up for collective influence in the workplace. Section 38 regulates specifically that the employer need to initiate negotiations with the trade union when taking in temporary staff externally (SFS, 1976:580).

the first place. This opposition was confirmed by Tommy, who admitted that there was a fierce struggle with Flexigroup when they tried to establish themselves in the labour market. The disagreements denoted the relative interpretation of collective agreements, and whether workers hired through staffing agencies were to be connected to the special staffing agreement or the general collective agreement for builders. Flexigroup and the employers saw the general agreement as more advantageous, while Byggnads was of the firm opinion that if the workers were employed through a staffing agency, they ought to be paid accordingly.

Despite the previously infected relations, now, both Byggnads and Flexigroup share somewhat common ground. Rather than fighting staffing agencies, and practices of hiring through a third party, Tommy told me that he sees a potential ally in staffing agencies connected to collective agreements. I interpret his change of heart as a direct result of Byggnads' weakened position in the labour market around 2006-2007, in turn; a result of the verdicts in the European Court of Justice (ECJ) on the free movement of labour. In other words, the power-balance in the labour market has shifted, and changed the trade union's perception of staffing agencies. Rather than as a threat to the Swedish model, the staffing industry has become a last resort ally in the battle against precarious and temporary employment not covered by collective agreements.

However, this alliance has made the staffing agencies less attractive for employers. As noted previously, the regional manager for Building Group told me that they preferred not to use temporary staffing agency workers, both because of what they considered as a lack of commitment among workers, and also due to higher costs, when compared with subcontracting. Also, the regional manager implied that it impacted and disordered the work organisation. In the discussion with Lars, the construction manager at Building Group, on the transformation of bricklaying and other trades, I took the opportunity to dig deeper in this matter. Our conversation departed from the difficulties many companies experience in maintaining a large workforce of permanent employees.

> Rasmus: So hypothetically, you'd have to have an economic turnover large enough to keep several project sites going, and in different stages of the building process, so that they'd overlap and bricklayers can be slotted around?

Lars: Yes, something like that. But look, we took a strategic decision. Imagine to have even 50% of our own employees, and cover the rest through bought services. We tried it and… To mix too much doesn't work out, so we rather do either or. On some projects we use our own [workers]. And in some we externalise everything. That which is included in the traditional building part of the process that is. And I think it looks somewhat similar in other companies. There might be small differences depending on strategies, philosophies, and so on, but overall I'd say that's where we're currently at.

Rasmus: Ok, I think that's really interesting. In this system, or way of thinking, there doesn't seem to be any room for staffing agencies for example? Because...

Lars: [Interrupts] I mean there are staffing agencies in construction… And we've tried it, but the equation didn't really come together. Because the difference, as we buy things now… I'm not sure how clear it was, but we buy negotiated packages. At the project site you visited for example, the subcontractor bought the basement as a package. And the difference with staffing is that you buy the hours. And that's… I mean then it's hard for us to keep the costs down. And as I told you already, we're measured by the numbers, and margins are small in this business. Believe it or not. So we need to be aware of the costs at all time. And that's what we've realised. We secure our budgets if we buy packages. Staffing agencies are mostly used when you've got your own base of core workers, and realise that the schedule doesn't hold, and you quickly need someone. And that's also when the budget is easily stretched.

Lars, construction manager, Building Group

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, a sequential production process encourages companies to implement organisational structures based on the externalisation of work towards subcontractors (Bosch & Philips, 2003). To combine, and have a fifty-fifty approach, does not work out according to Lars, and as I understand it, this is so due to several different reasons: it creates tensions between groups of workers, it unease site managers and foremen as they experience difficulties in how to approach their work tasks, and also that it is more financially advantageous to go all in on subcontracting (Druker et al., 2021).

Consequently, if you do not have a core workforce from the start, there is no point in hiring extra workers through staffing agencies either. Instead, the companies buy the specific stage of production from a subcontractor on fixed price. To buy 'packages' is not only cheaper than to buy 'hours' from staffing agencies as a complement to one's own workforce, but it also shifts the responsibility—including employment relations—towards the subcontractors. To fully externalise work through subcontractors is therefore cheaper and more flexible than combining different modes of organisation, with one part outsourced and another performed by a core workforce that is occasionally also filled up with staffing agency workers.

Hence, low levels of workers hired through staffing agencies results from high levels of subcontracting. This has undermined the temporary staffing model in which workers are billed per hour. Compared with the many alternative arrangements, and the abundance of cheap labour available from CEE, where subcontractors pay package-prices, the billing per hour that staffing implies becomes a more expensive alternative.

A combination of the inclusion of the staffing industry into the Swedish model of industrial relations with collective agreements, and the subsequent enlargement of the EU in 2004/07, have thus marginalised staffing agencies as an external, and flexible solution in the Swedish building sector. Together with the relatively bad reputation that staffing agency workers seem to have in construction work, it limits staffing agencies' share of the market. In other words, the kind of flexibility that building companies seek, primarily dominated by incentives of cost-reduction, is hard for staffing agencies to meet.

5.4 Uncertainties and calculated risks in subcontracting

So far, I have shown that industrialisation, a volatile product market, and access to cheap foreign labour plays a key role in Building Group's and Green Constructions' decision to implement organisational structures based on subcontracting. This follows a general trend in the EU. Yet, even though Sweden was one of few countries that that had allowed CEE

workers to move freely without restrictions[24] already in 2004, it was not until 2013 that posted workers needed to be registered with the Swedish Work Environment Authority (Nyström, 2020, p. 26). Hence, the number of formally registered posted workers surged in 2014 (Byggföretagen, 2020c), but it is difficult to say whether this reflects an increased use of posted workers, and whether the figures during the first decade from 2004 were inaccurate.

Nonetheless, the use of posted workers has increased since 2014, and one explanation of the relatively late (from a global perspective) development of work organisations dependent only on subcontracting in Sweden, was that most building companies up until the financial crisis in 2008 still had a fairly large share of their own directly employed workforce. This was so despite the fact that subcontracting had been present in the Swedish building sector for a number of decades already. Consequently, due to a higher share of directly employed craftsmen, there was not as much manoeuvring space for the externalisation of work and use of subcontractors as there is today. Also, regulations, quality standards, and relatively strong trade unions gave authorities a generous overview of the sector, which prevented attempts of social dumping through the contracting of foreign subcontractors at lower prices.

In the group interview with Building Group's regional management, they also pointed to quality standards and aspects of social dumping as to why it took longer time for foreign companies to become established in the Swedish building sector, compared with other countries.

> Tomas: We've got a good production process [the Swedish], with high education-levels within the sector, we've developed the products thoroughly, and we've got an overall good structure for the industry. There's quality in the workforce you know… Plus, clients want a good quality end-product. Obviously, costs are still important, but only if it doesn't compromise the quality.
>
> Roger: Yes, and I mean it's [to contract foreign labour] only about wages. Nothing else. It's easy to trick oneself into thinking that you can shop on a 30% discount [and get the same quality]. It's never about quality, that's

[24] See for example (Galgóczi et al., 2011) for more on this.

not why you choose the foreign option. Straight up labour costs, and only that.

Tomas, regional manager, and Roger, procurement manager, Building Group

That Swedish building companies portray their *own industry* as of a better quality of work compared with foreign companies is in itself not an explanation to why the use of foreign labour accelerated later in Sweden than in other countries. However, as noted previously, the Swedish building sector is from an international perspective characterised with high productivity, high-quality production and high education levels (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, p. 183).

In combination with what Roger, the procurement manager says, it explains a lot in the sense that most foreign companies are subcontracted primarily because they are cheaper, and therefore also used predominantly for less skilled work tasks. I return to this in the following chapter, but this explains the connection between increased subcontracting and the presence of foreign workers in the Swedish building sector. Additionally, ambitions to reduce production costs through subcontracting rather than to build themselves demonstrates a shift also in responsibilities, as both employment- and managerial responsibilities these days lie with the respective subcontractor. In other words, the general contractor only coordinates the work, and makes sure that there are no obstacles or delays that hinder the production process.

Except for the quality versus cost aspect, Roger, the procurement manager indicated also that the shift to a construction management-role is a big transition from previous ways of organising work. According to him, it is not only Building Group, but all major companies in Sweden that to some degree are currently learning by doing things like this. He said that there are endless stories of foreign subcontractors that more or less failed to deliver as promised, which led to stretched budgets, and a need to find last minute replacements to clean the mess up, and move forward with the work.

Thus, subcontracting involves uncertainties, but not only in relation to foreign subcontractors. Drahokoupil and Fabo (2019) note that outsourcing inherently involves aspects of uncertainty as the control over

production is shifted from one actor to another. I argue that this shift of control manifests in calculated risks made by the building companies. Such calculated risks are characterised by a potential compromise of quality in relation to price, that the work will not be finished in time, and that subcontractors will not manage to deliver on budget.

What the procurement manager told me about learning-by-doing illustrates this. It refers to the trade-off between quality and costs, and according to him, it results from subcontractors outbidding each other in the procurement processes (Thörnqvist & Woolfson, 2012). I could tell in interviews with the site managers from both Building Group and Green Constructions that it was something they would rather not discuss: how these calculated risks potentially affect the flow of production, and also the quality of the work. The procurement manager on the other hand, went as far as questioning the quality of many of the buildings that are currently constructed (in general, not necessarily by Building Group):

> Rasmus: So how do you guarantee the client quality when you buy the work from subcontractors?
>
> Roger: You can't, and it's of course a huge problem. Then again, not many houses fall apart, so it seems to work. But I think it's hell for…
>
> Tomas: [Interrupts]. It also depends on what type of work it is. There's more and less qualified work, and the pre-fab installers for example are often specialists and competent no matter where they're from. What's worrying is when we use for example painters to mount kitchens as we currently do [referring to a foreign subcontractor firm] in one of our project sites. That is, we provide the kitchen, they mount it. It's a typical example of when the work does not hold the quality we would want to. I was out there on the site and it looked like shit to be honest, and that's something they [the subcontractor] have to fix. That's obviously not good for the process, because it takes time, and disrupts production, and so on.

Roger, procurement manager, and Tomas, regional manager, Building Group

The discussion demonstrates that subcontracting is contested, particularly in regards to subcontractors that use posted workers, and that it involves

challenges for the building companies, which in turn creates uncertainty. It also reflects the managers' different positions in the organisation, and that Tomas has responsibility of the on-going projects in the region. Thus, that Tomas interrupts, and tries to smooth over what Roger says by focusing rather on other aspects than quality, could be explained by Tomas' position as regional manager.

Based on the issues that Tomas raises though, it appears as if, to some extent, Building Group is willing to accept lower quality in return for lower production costs. At least, there is a tendency of allowing site managers to try different, and more cost-effective solutions. In the end, it might not work out, and the flow in the production process might be interrupted, but when it works out, there is lots of financial gain. In other words, it is a calculated risk.

In relation to posted workers, the example given by Tomas, about the painting firm that was subcontracted to mount kitchens, illustrates how foreign firms gain competitive advantages since the contracting of foreign firms on the basis of low costs is prioritised by the general contractors (Lillie, 2010)—despite that it appears to involve higher risks. However, it also denotes the process in which posted workers are tied to bad quality work and perceived as less skilled than Swedish workers, because they are prepared to work for a lower remuneration than Swedish workers, including tasks they are not trained to do. More specifically, it shows how posted workers are used for specific work tasks and thus in specific segments of the building sector (Frank, 2013).

To safeguard against the high risks that subcontracting to the cheapest contender implies, both Building Group and Green Constructions make use also of a wide network of contacts and subcontractors which they have previously worked with (Thiel, 2010). This resonates with Bachmann's (2001) argument that trust might absorb uncertainties, but that there still are risks involved in any business relation. Such network-based subcontracting was emphasised by Daniel, foreman at Green Constructions:

> That's more or less how it works when you've been at it for a number of years, and you've gotten in contact with all these companies. I mean, I've worked with most of them [the subcontractors at the project site]. Listen, on this site, most of the companies are here because someone knows

> someone. Either it is the site manager who worked with them before, or if I know of them. And yes, I think it's preferable. To work with someone you've worked with before, because you sort of know what you get. It's not like we're going to work with someone we've worked with before, and we know doesn't work out.
>
> Daniel, foreman, Green Constructions

According to Daniel, a solid network of contacts within the sector provides a sense of security and control, which works as a control mechanism (MacKenzie, 2008) when other formal contract enforcements are insufficient. In a sense, this becomes an assurance against delays and extra costs. If there are delays anyway, the shared background, and previous history of working together potentially makes it easier to find a quick and smooth solution to the problem.

An example of this was the contracting of Johnny's Paint, a local painting firm that Green Constructions subcontracted for the painting of the interior of the apartments. In an interview with the firm's owner, Johnny, I was told that they engaged mostly with renovations at private residencies and other so-called ROT-work, but that they took the contract with Green Constructions because he had worked with Daniel before, on several occasions. Johnny said that the work came along fine, despite that there had been both delays and extra costs. According to him, the delays were a consequence of "too few Swedish subcontractors". However, because he knew the foreman from before, there was good communication with the site management, and the problems that arose could be solved. I asked him why he thought it was problematic with foreign subcontractors and the use of posted workers:

> Rasmus: Do you mean that it's harder to communicate [with the posted workers] or that they work differently?
>
> Johnny: I mean, things are not done the way you'd want to do it yourself. They [posted workers] don't work or think the same way as us, and that's a downside of course. I mean, I know it's because it's all done in sequences, and because the prices are pushed lower and lower. That's how it's done on all project sites. The work has to flow.

Rasmus: What happens if it doesn't flow?

Johnny: We lose money.

Rasmus: You as subcontractor?

Johnny: Yes, usually it's us. I mean, we try to negotiate it, but the site management has their budget, and it always ends up with heated discussions. That's why I normally don't do projects like these. It's easier in here now because we know each other, but normally there's a discussion about hours where I demand 100 but get 50. I'm pissed off because I don't get what I think I'm entitled to, and the site manager is pissed because he too has to cut his budget. And that's where you lose morale, and what you usually think is fun about the job. But in here, with Green Constructions, it works out fine as I said, because we know each other from before.

Johnny, Johnny's Paint

Johnny emphasises repeatedly that this project is a special case for the firm, since he knows the foreman as "a sensible guy" from before. Both parties reason the same way and view their history of working together as somewhat a guarantee in case of unforeseen events. Again, trust, also through informal agreements, and based on credibility and reputation, manifests as a key for the contractual relationship. This is in line with Thiel's (2010) argument that the building process involves a continuum of 'unforeseens', and that building companies and trade contractors therefore work with people they know, and have worked with before, to achieve a sense of trust and security (2010, p. 463).

Johnny identified also that it is crucial for the production to 'flow'. With this, he meant that it is important to avoid queues, which create situations where one subcontractor cannot proceed with the work as planned, because another subcontractor has been delayed (Eccles, 1981). This is also what the foremen of both Building Group and Green Constructions emphasised as their core responsibility: That all subcontractors knew what to do, and that they were able to do it at the time allocated for the specific task.

Yet, Johnny's hesitancy to engage in larger projects witness that this is rarely the case. He says that the sequentialism results in an often-

fragmented production process, where too many subcontractors rely on what others do, which in many ways are both harmful and costly. Particularly, he indicates that delays, misunderstandings, and conflicts are more common when there are too many subcontractors that have posted workers involved in a project.

In addition, the way Johnny spoke of posted workers was common among also other respondents in this study. The notion that "they don't work or think the same way as us" demonstrates practices of 'othering'. That is, how social actors construct groups and collective identities as similar and different than themselves and how this shapes their understanding of both themselves and the constructed other (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, pp. 187-188). This othering was apparent throughout the study, not only with regards to foreign workers, but as already indicated, also when talking about temporary staffing workers, and how they lack the same commitment as directly-employed craftsmen, for example. This denotes also the tension between the increased reliance on an external workforce and the hesitancy towards the skills of external actors. I argue that this is explained by the collective identity of the builder that builds on embodied principles of craft-knowledge, pride, and a relatively autonomous aspect of the labour process, and in which others—external actors not affiliated to the organisation—have to prove themselves and that they 'have what it takes' to a further degree (Styhre, 2011).

With regards to posted workers specifically, they were often grouped together by the informants in this study as 'Eastern European workers' or 'Polish workers', despite them often originating from different EU-member states from both Central and Eastern Europe. In this way, posted workers are distanced from Swedish workers, and ascribed distinct attributes and characteristics based on prejudices and stereotypes of their origin. Bearing in mind that subcontractors who use posted workers are contracted because they are cheaper, and that they therefore are used for specific work tasks that require less skill, further contributes to this process. It generates a narrative of foreign and Eastern European workers – 'the Polish worker' – as less committed, sloppy, or even less skilled than their Swedish counterparts. I return to this and the segmentation of posted workers into specific parts of the production below, in Chapter 7.

5.5 Chapter summary

Organisational change in the Swedish building sector manifests through increased levels of subcontracting. Subject to industrialisation, the volatility of product markets, and institutional change in the labour market, both Building Group's and Green Constructions' ambition with the externalisation of work is to achieve greater organisational flexibility. In this chapter, I show that even though both Building Group and Green Constructions have implemented a variety of strategies, including both internal and external flexibility measures, the externalisation of work and the use of subcontractors is preferred due to lower production costs. At the same time, the use of subcontractors effectively undermines and marginalises other strategies, such as staffing. In other words, low levels of staffing agency workers result from high levels of subcontracting, which highlight also the difficulties that the staffing industry experiences in meeting the kind of flexibility sought for by Swedish building companies.

Nonetheless, although it is desirable to achieve organisational flexibility, subcontracting involves uncertainties. Trustworthiness is therefore important, and as a result, Building Group and Green Constructions to a large extent make use of subcontractors they have previously worked with, or know of. This does not mean that these subcontracting arrangements are free from risks, rather the opposite; just like other arrangements that build on price, they are based on calculated risks in relation to a subcontractors' ability to deliver a quality end-product, in time, and on budget. Thus, subcontracting is based on a combination of price and acquaintance.

In the next chapter, I demonstrate further how subcontracting arrangements based on price involve transnational recruitment and posted workers. I show that arrangements based on price and anticipations of low production costs generally involve higher risks, but also the separation of mental and manual labour. This contrasts with arrangements based on acquaintance, which are characterised by a domestic workforce and more of an independent labour process.

6 Variations of subcontracting in construction management

It is one of the first days of summer and Mathias (the site manager), and I, walk slowly back to the project site from a restaurant. Mathias lights a cigarette and there is a moment of silence. We have had lunch with the kitchen supplier and the client, following a meeting in the morning where details were discussed for both kitchens and bathrooms. It is striking how frequent these kinds of meetings take place, an inevitable consequence of the number of suppliers and subcontractors involved at every stage of production; particularly since the supplier in this case does not mount the kitchen themselves. Instead, Green Constructions has bought the installation from another subcontractor, Lunar Group. It makes the meetings extra important and all details must be crystal clear in order to avoid misunderstandings, and ease potential uncertainties with regard to the subcontractors' abilities to deliver a quality end-product, within the agreed timeframe, and on budget.

In this chapter, I build on the conceptualisation of the different forms of subcontracting introduced in Chapter 3: Capacity, specialisation, and supplier subcontracting. As mentioned already, capacity subcontracting refers to arrangements in which subcontractors are hired for manual labour only, as a means to increase the capacity of the general contractor's workforce. In specialisation subcontracting, the work involves little or no separation between mental and manual labour. Much of the control of the labour process is therefore transferred to the subcontractor. Finally, in supplier subcontracting, the work is subcontracted to a supplier firm that is in full control of the production. In what follows, I show that subcontracted work is arranged in specific ways dependent on a combination of price, acquaintance, and the work organisation of the

respective actors. I argue that all forms of subcontracting involve calculated risks as a result of the shift of control of the labour process. Yet, the different forms involve different levels of risk-taking, and there are thus also different control mechanisms tied to each form of subcontracting.

In addition, I show that the uncertainty which specifically capacity subcontracting implies, results in a fourth form of subcontracting. This is what I have named *masked staffing*. More precisely, masked staffing refers to a particular form of capacity subcontracting, in which trade contractors are subcontracted according to principles of staffing. I demonstrate that masked staffing develops as a consequence of the absence of subcontractors' site management, and I argue that this non-presence results in inadequate communication, which in turn generates more uncertainty, and potential conflicts. To compensate for the inevitable lack of management, the general contractors' site management in turn steps in and leads the work, according to principles of staffing.

6.1 Capacity, specialisation, and supplier subcontracting

I attended two meetings during my visit at the project site that first day of summer. The one in the morning with the kitchen supplier and the client, was followed by another meeting in the afternoon with the management of a painting firm. Thinking about it in retrospect, I realise that the two meetings cover important aspects of that which I set out to investigate in this research, namely, why and in what situations certain forms of subcontracting are used.

During the stroll back to the project site from lunch, I asked Mathias why they decided to go with Lunar Group rather than allowing for the kitchen supplier, Stonehill, to mount the kitchens themselves. He said that it was "because they presented the lowest offer" and indicated that it was preferable because it made it possible to use Lunar Group also for the rest of the interior instalments. It is, in other words, not only cheaper to buy subcontractors through packages as aforementioned, but it also reduces the number of actors involved at the same stage of production, which in turn

minimises risks of interruptions in the flow, and of unforeseen events, queue situations, and potential extra costs (Thiel, 2013).

That Lunar Group was subcontracted based on price and that neither Mathias nor any of the foremen had previous experience of working with them, shows that the agreement between Green Constructions and Lunar Group can be conceptualised as capacity subcontracting (Neo, 2010). In addition, all but two of Lunar Group's workers were foreign. The transnational recruitment illustrates what the regional management from Building Group said in the group interview, that foreign labour is used primarily because it is cheaper and not necessarily because their expertise is demanded. In this case, the workers from Lunar Group were Polish, although Lunar Group is a Swedish company. This, in turn, is an indication of Lunar Group's reliance on posted workers, which in turn shows how they also hire workers through recruitment firms based abroad.

Just like the other two external forms of subcontracting, specialisation, and supplier subcontracting, capacity subcontracting involves the relocation of the mechanism that governs production (MacKenzie, 2002). This mechanism refers to the twofold nature of internal control in an organisation (Thompson & McHugh, 2002). On the one hand, it refers to monitoring and surveillance, and on the other, to the coordination of work. The transfer of control from the general contractor to the subcontractor means that Green Constructions' site management is no longer responsible for managing the work on site, and that the control of the labour process through surveillance and monitoring is externalised to Lunar Group. It is thus Lunar Group itself that is expected to manage the work on a daily basis, while Green Constructions' site management merely coordinates the work.

I discussed site management with Daniel, one of the foremen at Green Constructions. He said that his job was primarily to be on top of things, to make sure that unforeseen events and queue situations are avoided, and to prevent potential interruptions of the flow. I asked him what he appreciated most from being a foreman, and he explained that it is not one specific thing but rather a general feeling of having responsibility.

> I guess, overall, it's tied to the variety of things it implies. It's not the monotone work of standing and screwing plaster boards all day you know,

> but you rather have an overarching responsibility with different tasks. One day you're dealing with the economics of the whole project with the site manager, and then all a sudden you're out there in the downpour with the lads mounting electrical wires. It's all about the tempo and the variation of tasks you know.
>
> Daniel, foreman Green Constructions

My feeling was that Daniel appreciates taking responsibility. His background as site manager in a smaller firm confirmed this, and the wish to move up in the hierarchy also at Green Constructions was something he shared with the other foremen that I interviewed in the study. Just as Alex at Building Group had expressed it, he "was not interested in being just a builder for forty years".

Daniel's background and experience were also part of the reason for the division of labour between him and Andreas, the other foreman at the project-site. Daniel was more in the office, while Andreas was out on the site, dealing with the usual questions, misunderstandings, and helping out where and if needed. Daniel told me that to be in the office entails more strict coordinating working tasks: The phone is constantly ringing with drivers announcing their late arrival with deliveries due to traffic jams, or asking for directions, and with subcontractors eager to know whether or not the timetable holds. Overall, he told me, their role as foremen was very different as a result of Green Constructions' construction management-role.

> Rasmus: In what sense has your work description changed? If that's what you mean?
>
> Daniel: Yes, it's a huge difference. It has changed in the sense that there is a lot less leading; less monitoring of production so to say. Now it's more coordination. If something doesn't work, we'll just bring it up with their [the respective subcontractor's] foreman or management, and then it's up to them you know. So our job is a lot more coordination than what it used to be.
>
> Daniel, foreman Green Constructions

Rather than the traditionally multifarious role of the foreman, it is more strictly focused on coordination these days. In a sense, it entails more white-collar work tasks. Yet, the division of labour between the two foremen also shows that there is still a need for the foremen to be flexible in their work, and to help out where needed, even though the work has been externalised to a subcontractor.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Daniel had previous experience of working with the painting firm they contracted, Johnny's Paint. Even though he said that he merely arranged for the initial contact between the site manager and the firm, he told me that he preferred to work with people he knew. In the case with Johnny's Paint, he knew not only Johnny but also some of the painters who had been at the firm for a few years. This facilitated an even smoother communication between the stakeholders. Moreover, in comparison with the subcontracted workers from Lunar Group, the painters were all employed by Johnny's Paint.

I will return to the work organisation of subcontractors more in detail in Chapter 7, however, I emphasise that a major difference between Johnny's Paint and for example Lunar Group is that the painters involved at Green Constructions project site were directly employed by Johnny's Paint, while the workers that belonged to Lunar Group were externally recruited. That is, even though also Johnny's Paint externalised parts of the work to a subcontractor, his was still an integrated work organisation in comparison with Lunar Group's, who rely solely on subcontractors and do not have any directly employed craftsmen themselves. I mention it here since I distinguish between the three forms of subcontracting not only by identifying whether an arrangement is based on price or acquaintance, but also dependent on the work organisation of the respective firm.

This was apparent in an interview with a self-employed carpenter, Johan, who in recent years has been working almost exclusively for Building Group as a kitchen-fitter. In the interview, I asked him how he organises his work.

> Rasmus: So, in this project we talked about, you said there are 180 apartments or something? That's a normal size of a project no? Like four or five floors, spread over two bodies?
>
> Johan: Yes, spot on.

Rasmus: So how long would that take to finish? Can you do that yourself?

Johan: Ok, well, first of all, in this case with Building Group, the kitchens are bought from Nordic Kitchen, who I've been working with a lot, and we're only supposed to mount it. Since there are 180 apartments, it means that both I and my colleague are working on it for about nine months. That includes the summer vacation and everything, and we're striving to keep the tempo I mentioned before, of five apartments in six days, where I mount one kitchen a day. Fully complete… Plus the rest of the interior of the flat of course – wardrobes, sliding doors, bathroom fittings, showers, and so on. … Find someone else who does that!

Rasmus: It's a high tempo in other words?

Johan: Yes, and that's why they want us, you know. They know that we do it both fast and good.

Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

Just like Green Constructions buys kitchen and cupboards from Stonehill, and then subcontract Lunar Group for the mounting of it, Building Group bought kitchen and cupboards from Nordic Kitchen, and bought the mounting of it from JK Kitchen & Carpentry as a package. In other words, for a fixed price, Building Group expects a certain amount of tasks to be completed within the given time frame.

Yet, even though it is the same kind of work tasks in both instances, the two arrangements contrast with each other. More specifically, while Lunar Group is contracted due to their low price, and thus what I conceptualise as capacity subcontracting (Neo, 2010), Johan tells me that he is contracted because of the quality of his work. According to Johan, his proficiency was a result of him specialising in kitchen-fitting:

Johan: I'm not a carpenter at the moment. I'm not. I'm a kitchen fitter really. I never say that I'm a carpenter, because you can't ask me to go outside and install roof trusses and put on roof tiles. I've got no bloody clue out there to be honest. I know what's going on inside the house, but on the outside … And I think, this is the development the last twenty years you know. People specialise. As I did. You specialise in kitchen fitting, floors, or whatever, and obviously, some are still general carpenters. But as

> Building Group told me, they don't want their carpenters to install kitchens. Because that's something they do once a year, or maybe twice. And first of all, it's about pace and time, right? I'm sure I can do it three or four times faster than Building Group's carpenters. And the final product is a thousand times better too. That's why you specialise right, because as we usually say: Time is …
>
> Rasmus [interrupts]: Money!
>
> Johan: Haha, right.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

I argue that in contrast to the capacity subcontracting arrangement between Green Constructions and Lunar Group, JK's agreement with Building Group is a form of specialisation subcontracting (Neo, 2010). To specialise in kitchen fitting has made him better equipped— compared to other, more general carpenters—because he does it on a daily basis, and the routinisation makes him faster without having to compromise on the quality of his work. Thus, the quality of his work makes him competitive to fight off other firms that recruit cheaper labour from abroad.

Johnny from Johnny's Paint reasoned in a similar manner. He was well aware that his competitive advantage was the quality of his work, and the trustworthiness of his organisation. That was also the main reason to why he was keen on keeping an integrated work organisation, to employ painters he knew he could trust to deliver, and if he occasionally was forced to externalise parts of the work, he only used firms he knew from before. Hence, both quality and a solid network of trustworthy contacts is key for both Johnny and Johan to stay competitive (Thiel, 2010).

In addition, specialisation has facilitated both Johnny and Johan's ability to develop good relationships with some of the site managers at Green Constructions and Building Group respectively. According to Johan, he barely has to negotiate prices anymore. In most cases, he gets what he asks for. I asked him more about this, and why that is the case.

> Rasmus: I'm thinking, what is it that makes you confident you'll get the deal, when there are many others that'll do it for less? I mean, why do they want you?

> Johan: I know why they choose us. They choose us because we're fast, effective, we always do what we've said we're going to do. Plus, we leave minimal re-finishing work. I know that Building Group could have saved around 200,000 SEK[25] by using someone else on one of the projects where we're involved, I mean I'm absolutely convinced of that. I know that their business manager wanted someone else, but the site manager and foremen said that those 200k had to be fetched from somewhere else, because the site management wanted us.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

This illustrates how general contractors balance between price and previously shared experiences of working together when deciding who to subcontract. It reasons well with what Green Constructions foreman, Daniel, said, that almost all subcontractors at the project site had worked with at least parts of the site management before. Even though there are firms like Lunar Group that presents cheaper solutions, Building Group decides to work with JK Kitchen & Carpentry because they know that JK delivers as promised. In a way, they trust JK's work organisation.

In specialisation subcontracting, the trustworthiness thus manifests through that which I previously conceptualised as incentive control (MacKenzie, 2008). To make use of network-based subcontracting is a way to try to control production by minimising risks, while at the same time developing relationships between the contractual partners through mutual dependency, and potential future collaborations. If JK delivers a quality product in time, for a reasonable price, they show Building Group that working with them is preferable in comparison to a financially more advantageous arrangement with a company like Lunar Group that would involve higher risks. This is so because in arrangements of capacity subcontracting, general contractors try to avoid interruptions in the flow through opportunity control, that is, formal control mechanisms like sanctions or fines that follow from contractual agreements (MacKenzie, 2008).

For example, if a subcontractor does not hold their promise to finish on time, or if the quality of the end-product is less than satisfying, eventual

[25] 200'000 SEK is more or less 20'000 EUR.

extra costs have to be paid by the subcontractor. However, such opportunity control through sanctions and fines works badly in the building sector because of the sequential building process (Eccles, 1981). If there are delays, or if the quality does not meet the expected requirements, it is too late to do anything about it in the sense that the flow is already interrupted. In other words, the fact that both site management and subcontractors say that they prefer to work with people they trust, shows that incentive control through networks is preferable to opportunity control that results from arrangements based on price. Formal control mechanisms are obviously also apparent in specialisation subcontracting, however, rather than being at the mercy of these, the contractual partners have the possibility to rely on the mutual investments in their relationship instead.

One final point is that, while Johan from JK Kitchen & Carpentry is dependent on his proficiency in the arrangement with Building Group, Lunar Group is attractive for Green Constructions primarily because of the use of posted workers and the possibility of reducing labour costs (Lillie, 2010). Subsequently, Lunar Group and other trade specialists externalise work to increase their organisational flexibility, and rather than having a permanent workforce of their own, they either recruit CEE workers at low costs through recruitment firms abroad, or contract trade specialists that make use of posted workers. The reason to why Lunar Group is contracted on price, and Johan from JK on trust and proficiency, is thus to be found in the ethos of their respective work organisation. Hence, I argue that specialisation subcontracting depends by and large both on the general contractor's trust with the subcontractor and the subcontractors work organisation.

What the two arrangements have in common though, is the package solution that were mentioned by both Mathias, site manager at Green Constructions, and Lars, construction manager at Building Group. Through the externalisation of work, the responsibility for the hourly wage is shifted towards the subcontractor. There are in other words lots of labour costs to save for building companies if a subcontractor is willing to produce it more cheaply (Druker et al., 2021).

Tommy from Byggnads agreed with this analysis, but pointed out that rather than to rely on yet other subcontractors and transnational

recruitment to reduce labour costs, many trade specialists had decided to make their employees redundant only to encourage them to start their own business, either as self-employed or with a few employees, and with a verbal agreement of future business opportunities:

> Tommy: For example, one of the largest demolition companies down here dismantled their company totally, well, not their company but their organisation – by releasing all their employees. Then they encouraged those who could, to start their own [demolition] business, with a verbal agreement that they would continue to work together on future projects. And not as self-employed, but as small firms. That way, the newly started firms could employ the rest of the former employees who could not start their own business. So the original demolition firm now has several small firms with three or four employees to choose from as subcontractors for different projects. And this is done carefully, so that they don't have to subcontract many different self-employed demolition firms, which would raise suspicions. Instead, it is proper subcontractors that were contracted.
>
> Rasmus: And why did they do this?
>
> Tommy: They didn't want to have any employees you know. With this arrangement, they were a lot more flexible than previously… I think the major aspect is the employer responsibility. That's what's driving them the most… I think, as long as there's work it doesn't matter you know. But it's more to do with when there's no work – if they don't have any employees there's no one to be responsible for, no costs when there's no work you know.
>
> Tommy, trade union representative, Byggnads

In other words, the strategies and ambitions to achieve greater organisational flexibility are similar among both building companies and trade specialists. Through the externalisation of work and the use of subcontractors it is possible to scale down the size of the organisation without limiting production capacities. By operating in this manner, trade specialists also have the possibility to adapt to potential market fluctuations and to avoid harmful effects if there were to be less demand for their products.

Additionally, such strategies have allowed suppliers from the manufacturing industry to come in as subcontractors in the construction industry. I identified this third form of subcontracting, *supplier subcontracting* (Neo, 2010), during a visit to the project site run by Building Group. In a discussion with the foreman, Alex, I asked him about one of the subcontractors, Concrete Solutions. I had seen their logo on a jacket that belonged to one of the Lithuanian workers, and asked what they were contracted for. Alex told me that Building Group had contracted Concrete Solutions for the production and delivery of the concrete frame, that is, the body of the building. Sometime after the visit, I was puzzled as I realised that if Concrete Solutions was a manufacturing company, how come they had construction workers at project sites? I therefore googled the firm to learn more, and to see if they were interested in participating in the study.

I learnt that Concrete Solutions is a concrete firm that manufactures so-called prefabricated concrete elements. These are delivered from their factory in Sweden and installed on project sites all over the country. While based in the manufacturing industry, Concrete Solutions offer also what they call "total solutions", which includes both the projection, delivery, and the installation of the prefabricated elements. I asked Niklas, their project manager, more about this when we met for an interview:

> Rasmus: So, these total solutions, or packages that you offer building companies, they're popular because it's smooth for the customers? In the sense that if there are problems it's not theirs, but yours as subcontractor?
>
> Niklas: Yes, more or less. Our customers prefer total solutions, so we decided to work that way. And this means that we in turn hire installation teams that we know from before, or if our customers have preferences to work with a specific installation team, we try to meet those preferences.
>
> Niklas, project manager, Concrete Solutions

Concrete Solutions achieves organisational flexibility by taking on additional work, in this case the mounting of concrete elements, even though they do not have any craftsmen of their own. But if they are able to offer packages which includes also the manual labour at the project site, it makes them more appealing as subcontractors from the general

contractors' point of view, particularly considering the current subcontracting regime of construction management, in which companies often lack craftsmen of their own.

In other words, just like capacity subcontracting, also supplier subcontracting is a form of contractual arrangement that builds primarily on price. To be able to take on projects at such low prices, subcontractors (both trade specialists and suppliers) acquire dis-integrated organisational structures and rely primarily on an external workforce.

It is thus possible to distinguish the two arrangements based on price, that is, capacity and supplier subcontracting, from the form of subcontracting that builds primarily on proficiency and previous experiences of working together, namely specialisation subcontracting (Neo, 2010). Such arrangements rest on trade specialists possibilities of upholding the quality of work, rather than a dis-integrated organisational structure as in capacity and supplier subcontracting. As will be discussed further on, this is best done by keeping an integrated work organisation with directly employed craftsmen whom you trust to do a good job, but as indicated, it does not exclude the fact that firms with integrated organisational structures make use of external flexibility measures (Kalleberg, 2001). For example, even though they are an integrated work organisation, with directly employed painters, Johnny's Paint also makes use of various external flexibility measures to temporarily increase their general capacity. Similarly, so as not to risk his good relationship with Building Group, Johan from JK Kitchen & Carpentry sometimes in turn contracts other kitchen fitters, also self-employed, whom he knows from before, as a means to be able to take on work that he would otherwise not manage due to limited capacity.

For the time being, there are two major points I want to make. First, the three forms of subcontracting mentioned here all involve a shift in the control of the labour process (MacKenzie, 2002). Rather than the general contractors' foremen, the subcontractors are themselves responsible for the monitoring and surveillance of the work. The foremen from the general contractors merely coordinate work activities and make sure that there are no unforeseen events and unnecessarily long queueing situations. This division also illustrates the twofold nature of the control of the labour process (Thompson & McHugh, 2002).

Second, as a consequence of the shift in control, there are elements of uncertainty and risks (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2019). The significance of trust therefore increases, and both building companies and trade specialists rely on social control mechanisms as a means to guarantee that both parties uphold obligations and responsibilities towards one another. In capacity and supplier subcontracting this manifests primarily through opportunity control, that is, formal control mechanisms of contract enforcements, such as sanctions and fines, while incentive control and a mutual dependency of relational specific investments is the major social control mechanisms in specialisation subcontracting (MacKenzie, 2008).

In what follows, I show that there is a varying degree of risk depending on the form of subcontracting. More specifically, because opportunity control through sanctions and fines works badly in the building sector in the sense that it does not prevent interruptions in the flow, I argue that capacity subcontracting entails higher risks than other forms of subcontracting, with the consequence that alternative ways of managing uncertainty develops. Of particular significance is the site management's increased tendency to lead and monitor the subcontracted workers, rather than to only coordinate work tasks.

6.2 From external to internal subcontracting: Masked staffing

The many levels of subcontracting, shifts in responsibility, and the mix of Swedish and foreign workers on project sites are all intriguing and central aspects in an analysis of the organisation of work in the building sector. The arrangement between Green Constructions and Lunar Group symbolised this. It was intriguing not least because all but a couple of Lunar Group's workers were foreign, and Lunar Group itself did not have any management on site, as all subcontractors should.

I was also puzzled when I tried to contact Lunar Group. Their web-site was unclear, as it did not give any information on the structure of the company. The only way to contact them was to fill in my details, leave a message and wait for them to reply (which they never did despite several

attempts). However, as I continued to browse the web, I found out that Lunar Group was actually a renowned trade contractor in the building sector, a member of the employers' association, and with collective agreements. I understood that they were not only contracted by Green Constructions due to low costs, but probably also due to their reputation.

At the same time, I had also read in public media about the many disclosures of unserious actors in the building sector (Olsson, 2017; Spängs, 2014). These entail testimonies of how subcontractors take advantage of general contractors' difficulties to uphold obligations according to principles of entrepreneurial joint liability; that is, the responsibility to control that the work progresses as it should, that those who perform the work are connected to collective agreements and that they can access safety equipment; and finally, that it is not subcontracted to unserious or even criminal actors. The presence of these actors in the Swedish building sector was alluded to on numerous occasions during the study, in interviews and in more informal discussions. Was this the case also with Lunar Group?

After my second interview with Tommy from Byggnads, I realised that it was not. It did however appear as if capacity subcontracting oftentimes did not work as intended. In fact, from the examples given by Tommy, I understood that there was also a fourth form of subcontracting. In our first interview, Tommy had said:

> There is this big group of foreign contractors – acting more or less as staffing agencies. Take Baltic-group for example. Not sure which project it was, but a fairly normal project where they were contracted to put up plasterboards, inner-walls and such, but don't have their own machines. Or material. But it's still a subcontractor. The thing is, it actually isn't. It's a staffing agency. And this, this solution… I mean, I don't see staffing agencies as an issue. Rather, well – as long as they're connected to collective agreements, they're not an issue. But subcontractors functioning as staffing agencies, it is these that are the big problem.
>
> Tommy, trade union representative, Byggnads

What Tommy explained could have been the normal procedure of subcontracting where a contractor externalises a specific sequence of the building process to a trade specialist—in this example a foreign company.

However, as Tommy points out, when subcontracting, it is the subcontractors themselves that are responsible for not only providing the manpower, but also for bringing their own machines, shopping their own material, and having their own management on site. In other words, as subcontractor, you have your own work organisation in place at the project site. If subcontractors only provide manpower, and if the workers use the general contractor's machines, and do not have their own management on site (as in the example given by Tommy with Baltic-group) – then by law, it is not a subcontractor, but merely a staffing agency.

In the year between the first and the second interview with Tommy, I tried to map the different stages of production on the project sites that I visited. I detailed what sequences were subcontracted to whom, and a key part in this was trying to pin-point who was responsible for what. This was not easy, as it had been contradictory in interviews and discussions, with different actors saying different things. Also, it had been difficult to get straight-forward answers on whether or not subcontractors had their own management, and whether or not had their own tools, and such. I had a feeling that both regional managers and site management had steered the conversations in other directions, to avoid answering such questions.

Nonetheless, when I went through the interview transcripts, I compared what Tommy had said with what Anton: the foreman and temporary site manager at Green Constructions; had told me. Tommy had said that: "when they don't have their own machines or material, it's not a proper subcontractor". Anton on the other hand, had not been as straightforward:

> Rasmus: So are you responsible for providing material even for the work that you've subcontracted?
>
> Anton: Yes, well, it depends. If we have our own people yes, but if we buy through a subcontractor we just don't buy the hours but also the material. So it depends. But yes, in general, our job is to make sure nothing goes wrong. Take for example… It's quite general, but if I go out there [to the project site] there's always loads of questions about literally anything. Then I have to get back up in here to check it up, solve it or come with solutions. Which means that I'm definitely the spider in the web. And if someone can't do their work because someone else isn't finished, then I'll

> have to talk to them and try to solve it. So there's a lot of mediating from my side.
>
> And you know, it's pretty complicated. Our task [when buying the services] is not to control and manage, but it is easy that it goes down that road. The painters for example, they have their own group-foreman, so I really don't have to talk to them. And I shouldn't talk to them about financial matters and such, but it's easy that we go down that road. Either they come to us rather than turning to their own management, which in turn are supposed to come to us. And that happens quite a lot I think.
>
> Anton, foreman, Green Constructions

In this somewhat diffuse answer, Anton actually answers two questions that highlight an important aspect of subcontracting. He says that yes, the service they buy from a subcontractor includes both material and "the hours" (manpower)—but then he quickly gets into the problems of managing versus coordinating the subcontracted workers. Considering that Green Constructions does not employ the subcontracted workers, they are not allowed to manage them either, as previously mentioned. The subcontractor is obliged to have their own group leader on site, who can communicate and coordinate the work with the foreman from Green Constructions. From what Anton told me, it seems like this division of labour is not always clear cut. Rather, it appears as if the site management that belongs to the general contractor sometimes also manage and monitor the subcontracted workers on a daily basis. It was also this which Tommy explicitly told me again in our second interview:

> Rasmus: Last time we met we discussed staffing, and I was surprised by the limited presence of the staffing industry in the building sector. However, if I understood you correctly, you argued that the staffing principle is still used, but that it is used with subcontractors?
>
> Tommy: Yes, well I mean you drew the conclusion yourself. Many of these subcontractors are masked staffing agencies. Then of course, there's plenty of proper subcontractors, with on-site instalments of pre-fab materials. But I'd say that it's not much bigger than proper staffing [through staffing agencies]. And this grey-zone activity, that's the big thing. When there's

> no on-site management, no responsibility, and they don't have their own material, or tools.
>
> Tommy, Byggnads

The subcontractors that Tommy refers to as masked staffing agencies, and the specific subcontracting arrangements they represent, is what I conceptualise as masked staffing. It is a form of capacity subcontracting, but rather than external subcontracting like the other three forms, it is that which Neo (2010) refers to as internal subcontracting. Compared with capacity, specialisation, and supplier subcontracting, which are all business relations, masked staffing is merely labour contracting. In other words, employment disguised as subcontracting.

In masked staffing, the subcontractor is thus a broker of labour, and, as pointed out by Tommy, a broker of labour with similar characteristics of a staffing agency. The difference is that staffing agencies are authorised to supply manpower, which subcontractors are not. The broker relation between the general contractor and the subcontractor is therefore also unregulated, and by operating it this way, both parties side-step legislation on collective agreements that has been arranged in place specifically for staffing agencies. This relates to the analysis on the limited use of staffing agencies in Chapter 5; and that the inclusion of the staffing industry into the Swedish model of industrial relations (Bergström et al., 2007), within the collective agreements with regards to staffing, have made it more favourable for building companies to make use of external flexibility measures *other than staffing*—such as buying production from subcontractors instead. Thus, masked staffing is an example of how building companies find new, alternative, and more flexible ways of coping with fluctuations in the demand for labour, while maintaining overall control over production. In a sense, this phenomena increases *both* the general contractor's *and* the subcontractor's organisational flexibility (Streeck, 1987).

To understand how masked staffing has developed, I suggest that we scrutinise the uncertainty that results from the shift of the control of the labour process in subcontracting arrangements in general (MacKenzie, 2008), and more particularly, in capacity subcontracting. So far, I have demonstrated that the inherent uncertainty in outsourcing and the

subsequent removal of intra-organisational control mechanisms that outsourcing implies, results in the implementation of inter-organisational control mechanisms. These are trust-based control mechanisms that are both formally and informally regulated; formally through opportunity control and contract enforcements such as sanctions and fines, and informally through incentive control and relational-specific investments (MacKenzie, 2008). Depending upon the form of subcontracting, one or the other of the mentioned control mechanisms dominate. Opportunity control dominates in capacity and supplier subcontracting, while incentive control is the primary control mechanism in specialisation subcontracting.

It is also through arrangements that rest on the former strategy, in which masked staffing has developed. Because of the insufficiency of opportunity control in the building sector, where fines and sanctions have little value or effect on an already interrupted flow of production (as a result of sequential building processes), the site management of general contractors are prone to *step in and also lead* production on a daily basis. That is, as a result of *the insufficiency* of inter-organisational control mechanism, the general contractor turns back to and makes use of that which is normally thought of as intra-organisational control mechanisms.

This tendency is in turn a direct result of the general contractor's obligation towards the client of delivering a finished product in time (Thörnqvist & Woolfson, 2012). As Anton, foreman and temporary site manager at Green Constructions had told me, he is the spider in the web, and despite the fact that it is the subcontractors that need to make sure that there is enough manpower engaged on the project sites, and despite the fact that it is the subcontractors that have both employment and managerial responsibilities, Green Constructions is still accountable towards their clients in terms of the end-product being delivered on time. There is thus a tendency, based on incentives and pressure among foremen, to lead also the subcontracted workers.

Yet, this tendency results not only from the general contractor's obligation towards the client of delivering a finished product in time, but it also indicates that the site management oftentimes has a lack of confidence in the subcontracted workers, and the subcontractors' way of organising work. The doubt that the site management experiences, is particularly evident in relation to less-skilled work tasks, such as the casting

of concrete or the mounting of plasterboards. None of these work tasks require specific training or certificates, and can therefore be carried out by a wide range of the labour populace. Since capacity subcontracting is based primarily on price, the nature of the work facilitates also the recruitment of manpower in the sense that it is easy to identify cheap labour in the labour market. This is illustrated if we turn back to the group interview with Building Group's regional management. The regional manager gave an example of a foreign painting firm, who had been subcontracted to mount kitchens.

> There's more and less qualified work, and the pre-fab installers for example are often specialists and competent no matter where they're from. What's worrying is when we use for example painters to mount kitchens as we currently do on one of our project sites.
>
> Tomas, regional manager, Building Group

His example highlights how an excess supply of cheap labour in the EU-labour market, due to social and economic variation among the member states, facilitates contractors hiring workers not necessarily on their merits, but rather because they are cheap. And since they are not hired on merits, both foremen and site manager are wary about the quality of the work, and whether it will be finished in time or not.

It is important to note that the regional manager states that the pre-fab installers are competent no matter where they are from. Yet, his point is that their work is only skilled as long as they perform work tasks that they are trained for and have experience from. The regional differences of social and economic stability in the EU, thus demonstrates that there are incentives for Polish painters for example, to come to Sweden to mount kitchens for relatively low wages—a job they are not trained to do. However, they are willing to do this because, as noted by Thörnqvist and Bernhardsson (2015), it is an opportunity to bring relatively good money home and secure a more stable future (Thörnqvist & Bernhardsson, 2015, p. 34).

Consequently, economic incentives due to regional variations in social and economic stability in the EU, in combination with Lillie's (2010) conceptualisation of 'spaces of exception' and how companies that import

cheap labour through posting gain competitive advantages, explains why a majority of the workers involved in masked staffing are foreign workers. Also, it highlights the fact that foreign workers are willing to come to Sweden to work with less-skilled work tasks even though they might have specific training and education for other forms of construction work in their home countries. This segments foreign workers into low skilled work in the Swedish building sector (Frank, 2013), since Swedish workers reject such terms and demand higher wages and better working conditions. Segmentation based on wage differentials potentially also creates tensions in the labour market between different groups of workers, and it is in regards to this that processes of 'othering' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) are relevant. In this case, how the othering works to construct the narrative of 'the Polish worker' that performs predominantly low-skilled work for low remuneration.

Also, up until 2018 it was possible for employers to evade Swedish collective agreements by posting workers from other EU countries to Swedish project sites for shorter periods of time. This was so because the 1996 Posting of Workers Directive (EC, 96/71) was written in a way that did not recognise the Swedish model with collective agreements, but was rather thought to guarantee posted workers minimum wages in the destination country. However, there are no minimum wages in the Swedish labour market, and to control to what extent subcontractors and posted workers are connected to collective agreement on all project sites is difficult, because it demands a high presence from trade unions (Byggmarknadskommissionen, 2021b).

The new amending directive from 2018 (EC, 2018/957) is however written on principles of 'equal pay for equal work at the same place'. This in turn ties into another issue, since this dictum is based on Swedish collective agreements, which requires that there are domestic workers at the specific project site according to which wages can be based. Due to the use of subcontractors, many general contractors do not have any craftsmen of their own on project sites, which thus makes it difficult to guarantee standardised wages. Hence, the combination of the externalisation of work and the free movement of labour results in opportunities for Swedish building companies of accessing relatively cheap labour, which can be organised in alternative ways.

6.3 When and why is masked staffing used?

In this section, I scrutinise masked staffing further and show when and why it is used, arguing that it can be conceptualised in two ways, and that it has two dimensions. First, masked staffing is what Mintzberg (1978) identifies as an inadvertent emergent strategy, in that it develops as a result of what the site management sees as the short-comings of a subcontractor's work organisation, and because of a fruitful institutional environment. In this case, it becomes a way of organising work that gradually develops even though it was not intended in the first place (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 945). Therefore, depending on the context, masked staffing can thus be conceptualised both as an emergent and deliberate strategy.

A year or so after my first visit to Green Constructions' project sites, I was back at one of them to see how the work had progressed, for a few more interviews, and to attend a scheduled follow-up meeting between the site management and the kitchen supplier, Stonehill. For the site management, it was a stressful time. The project was planned to finish in just a few months, with the first tenants ready to move in, but the project was far from finished, with on-going façade work on the outside of the buildings, and various installations being carried out inside the apartments.

It was obvious that there were difficulties located with the proposed timetable, and I noticed that there were also more tensions than previously. The site manager and the foremen were notably irritated, particularly with Lunar Group that had not been able to fulfil their promises and obligations. Lunar Group's foreman, Peter, had not been present at the site as promised, which had actualised a negative effect on the communication between him and Green Constructions' site management. Rather than Peter acting as the link between the site management and the Polish workers hired by Lunar Group, the communication was forced to take place directly with the Poles, out of which only a few spoke English, or with help from the two project-based Polish carpenters, Krystian and Karol, who were hired by Green Constructions.

On this day, Lunar Group's foreman Peter was present, because the site manager had requested that he attended the scheduled meeting with

Stonehill. According to the site manager, this was preferable since it was Peter who was responsible for how the work progressed, and therefore he could answer possible questions from Stonehill about the delay, or how to move forward. The site manager himself did not plan to attend, but had delegated it to his foremen, since it was mostly they who were in contact with the workers from Lunar Group anyway. Considering their alleged division of labour, Daniel was the one attending the meeting while Andreas was out on site.

An hour or so before the meeting, the representative for Stonehill called and said that he was running late due to traffic. I took the opportunity and asked Daniel some questions over a cup of coffee, but our conversation was interrupted by Peter from Lunar Group who knocked on the door.

> Peter: He's supposed to be here at 11am right?
>
> Daniel: Yes.
>
> Peter: Is there still time for me to go and buy those extra floor drains then?
>
> Daniel: Well he said that… (Daniel looks at his phone). He just called actually, let's see... No, it wasn't him. Anyway, he said he'd call when he was on his way and his coming from up north… But… Yeah, go ahead. There's time.
>
> Peter: And it was two of those drains that I was going to get right?
>
> Daniel: Yes. Go ahead, I'll keep him here.
>
> Peter, Lunar Group and Daniel, Green Constructions

I got the feeling that Peter was stressed as a result of the delay, and that Lunar Group had not been able to deliver as promised. He was therefore keen not on missing out on the meeting. The floor drains he referred to were for replacing a few that had been damaged during the work in some of the apartments, and according to Daniel, an example of the various issues they had encountered with the Lunar Group: Sloppiness and lots of extra work, which repeatedly led to delays.

I understood from speaking with Daniel that there was a lot of latent frustration with Peter and the group of Polish workers hired by Lunar Group. The actual reason for the discontent was the lack of communication with Peter, as a result of his absence from the project site.

> Rasmus: Which subcontractors have not worked out as planned in this project?
>
> Daniel: Well, the brick-layers I guess. And the carpenters inside! I mean, there's nothing wrong with the lads, but the day-to-day management hasn't worked. And that's basically because they haven't had any management on site. It's quite a stretch for them to drive [from their head office] and…
>
> Rasmus: This is Lunar Group you're talking about now? You mean that they don't have any foreman on site?
>
> Daniel: Exactly. Their office is pretty far away and now since we've started pushing them they're here maybe twice a week. So these days he's here now and then, but previously it could go months without seeing him here.
>
> Daniel, foreman Green Constructions

Peter's absence from the project site forced Daniel and the other foreman Andreas to manage and lead the work inside the apartments on a daily basis. In a sense, as a result of Lunar Group's dysfunctional work organisation, their work descriptions as foremen changed back to what it used to be when the work was done by Green Constructions and their own directly employed craftsmen. Peter's absence led to a situation where the workers recruited by Lunar Group did not have enough instructions of what to do, and the work had therefore been sloppier than usual, with misunderstandings, and delays.

Daniel told me that he ideally wants a dialogue with the subcontracted workers, not just 'to give orders' and telling them what to do, "by pointing with the whole hand". To have a dialogue is how he usually works, and what he as foreman expects from his relationship with subcontractors. It is also what his work description entails: To coordinate the work with independently working subcontractors—not to manage them. However,

the developments with the subcontracted workers from Lunar Group bear witness to how his work descriptions as foreman change, and how the coordination of the work based on a dialogue is replaced by a management style like that which Haakestad and Friberg (2017) describe as a more authoritarian management style, or 'management by pointing', and which they describe as intimately bound to the insecure and precarious working conditions of posted workers in the Norwegian building sector (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017, pp. 16-17).

He also wishes for a dialogue because they all have different tasks, he says. This implies the recognition of different skill levels among the fragmented workforce on the site, and that the subcontracted workers possess specialised knowledge about specific parts of the production that he might not be familiar with. But also, that it is logistically necessary as a means to be able to finish on time. This reflects the objective of the ideal production process (Thiel, 2013), and that the 'flow' which according to the regional management is the major reason for the externalisation of the production in the first place, needs to be left uninterrupted.

I mentioned previously in this chapter that I conceptualised the arrangement with Lunar Group as capacity subcontracting, since they were contracted based on price. It appears as if this was also the intention, as well as the expectation from Green Constructions' site management: That Lunar Group was going to have their own management on site, and that the daily management, including the day-to-day communication, was thought to take place through Peter, Lunar Group's own foreman on site. Yet, as it played out, Peter was only present occasionally due to commitments elsewhere, on other projects in the region, and as a result, Green Constructions' site management had to step in and lead the work instead. The point I want to make is that even though Lunar Group was subcontracted on the basis of capacity subcontracting, it turned out to be more or less *masked staffing*. It shows that subcontracting arrangements involve a mix of planned and unforeseen events (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). In short, had Peter been present on a daily basis, there would have been no need for Green Constructions' foremen to manage the subcontracted workers from Lunar Group. However, his absence forced the subcontracted workers and the site management to develop alternative ways and make use of different tactics to handle the situation. This also

illustrates Hyman's (1987) conceptual differentiation between strategy and tactics: Strategy is long-term planning, and tactics are arrangements that guarantee the efficiency of everyday activities (Hyman, 1987, pp. 27-29).

More specifically, the subcontracting arrangement in this case developed into masked staffing as a result of a failed capacity subcontracting arrangement. Here, I draw on the argument by Arnholtz and Andersen (2018), of how the meaning and use of formal rules are never self-evident. Rather the opposite, they are always conditioned by actors that legitimises the meaning of the rules incrementally. Extra-institutional pressure thus changes the structural pre-conditions for how to use posted workers. In other words, masked staffing is in this instance conceptualised as an emergent—rather than deliberate strategy—because it develops as a result of a failed subcontracting arrangement. It is a way of organising work that gradually develops even though it was not intended in the first place (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 945).

However, masked staffing can also be a deliberate strategy. After my second interview with Tommy from Byggnads, in which he told me that he shared my analysis of masked staffing, I reviewed what I knew of the various subcontractors involved in the two cases for my study. While re-reading the transcript from the interview with the site manager for Green Constructions, I realised that he had already accounted for practices of masked staffing the first time I visited the project site, when he described the contracting of the subcontractor responsible for the concreting of the basement: Polonia Concrete.

In an attempt to obtain clarity about Green Constructions work organisation I had asked him who was doing what, which subcontractor that was used for what, and why? He had showed how the production could be divided into stages and explained that there was more or less what he called subcontracting boundaries between the different stages of the production. One such boundary was between the excavation work and the concreting of the basement, where the subcontractor responsible for the concreting could not start until the subcontractor doing the excavation work was finished. However, while explaining, and even though he made it clear that they were both subcontractors, he also referred to the basement as something Green Constructions did themselves. At the time, I had not

yet conceptualised masked staffing, and was not aware of the arrangement with Lunar Group, or how events had developed. But to make sure that I understood subcontracting properly, I asked him what he meant when he said that they did the concreting themselves. How did it differ from the excavation work, considering that the two types of work were both subcontracted?

> Rasmus: Ok, so what's the difference between the excavation where you take in a subcontractor and then the basement, which you say that you do yourself, even though you take in a subcontractor?
>
> Mathias: Well, in this case, we buy the excavation from Excavation Experts. They have their own foremen here on site, who runs their workers on the excavation work, the sewage and so on. We buy those who concrete the foundation on the other hand, from another subcontractor, Polonia Concrete, but in this case, we step in with the management of their guys, so to speak.
>
> Rasmus: You mean that your foremen manages them?
>
> Mathias: Yes, exactly. We go in with our guys and manage Polonia's workers. But we've still bought them on a fixed price.
>
> Mathias, site manager, Green Constructions

I am somewhat glad that I did not understand what he told me at the time, because if I had understood how sensitive it was, in terms of possibilities to avoid collective agreements, I am not sure I would have asked him about it in such a direct manner. Nonetheless, while re-reading the transcript from the interview with Mathias, I realised that it was this which I and Tommy from Byggnads had discussed in our discussion on masked staffing. The description given by Mathias shows how the work is organised differently in the two subcontracting arrangements: while the arrangement with the Excavation Experts follows principles of subcontracting in that they bring also their own management, Polonia Concrete is merely labour contracting, or employment disguised as subcontracting (Neo, 2010).

Organised in this manner, Green Constructions maintain full control of the labour process, and thus minimises uncertainties that subcontracting normally involves. They also reduce labour costs substantially, since they bought the labour power on a fixed price rather than by the hour, which would have been the case if they had used temporary workers from a staffing agency. In addition, the package price they agreed with Polonia Concrete was probably more advantageous than what a Swedish firm could have offered, since Polonia Concrete is a Polish firm, and they therefore pay their workers according to Polish standards. Hence, their labour costs are lower, which makes them more competitive (price-wise) than their Swedish counterparts (Lillie, 2010). Moreover, the possibility to lead and monitor the work on a daily basis, with the increased control of production it implies, enables Green Constructions to guarantee the quality of the end-product for their clients. In other words, the arrangement with Polonia Concrete makes Green Constructions achieve greater organisational flexibility, while retaining day-to-day direct quality control.

What Mathias told me shows that the subcontracting of Polonia Concrete contrasts with the arrangement with Lunar Group, and that the former is an actual example of masked staffing as a conscious and deliberately organised work formula, based on a strategic decision, with the aim of increasing their competitiveness (Streeck, 1987). In other words, it is that which Mintzberg and Waters (1985) have termed a *deliberate emergent strategy*. Deliberate emergent strategies are illustrated through masked staffing, where the general contractor's site management might have to step in and lead the work to avoid delays. It builds on a mix of centralised and decentralised decision-making, in the sense that it is the upper echelons of the management in a building company that sets the structures for the overall work organisation; but it is the site management that (in collaboration with subcontractors), decides how to go about the work. In other words, the site management on a local level has manoeuvring space (flexibility) to decide which subcontractors to work with, and whether there is a need for extra carpenters and so on (Löwstedt et al., 2018). As a process-strategy, masked staffing thus contrasts with previous forms of work organisation in the building sector that were grounded on more planned strategies and even more centralised notions

of control, as illustrated in the continuum of strategies provided by Mintzberg and Waters (1985).

The development of masked staffing echoes also Hyman's (1987) argument that strategies above all are conditioned by capital. Still, all strategies, whether deliberate or not, are shaped through the interplay between the bureaucratic machinery of organisations and the wider institutional environment (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 941). As argued by Thiel (2010), in his study of building companies in the UK, contractual relationships are often informally regulated as a result of de-regulation (2010, p. 444). In this case the de-regulation refers to the free movement of labour and services in the EU that provides Swedish building companies and foreign employers with the opportunity to increase their competitiveness and organisational flexibility through alternative and new forms of work organisation (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a). However, even though the context is different, the driving forces that Thiel (2010) identified are the same. Namely, the indeterminate nature of building contracts, the many unforeseen events, and the problem of the accurate monitoring of work at the project sites all contribute to the informally re-negotiated practices of organising work (2010, p. 463).

The two arrangements with Lunar Group and Polonia Concrete thus reflect how everyday tactics and behaviour in project-based organisations influence and shape wider organisational behaviour (Löwstedt et al., 2018). Tactics used on a local level to overcome unforeseen events and other problems are used also in other instances or in other projects by the site management, and therefore also incrementally influence strategies more generally in a company.

6.4 Chapter summary

Construction management in the Swedish building sector involves a variety of subcontracting arrangements. In this chapter, I have identified four of these. Three of them—capacity-, specialisation-, and supplier subcontracting—are all separated by a combination of price, acquaintance, and the structure of the respective work organisations. In addition, I have discussed the uncertainty and calculated risks that the different

arrangements involve, and I have shown that the inter-organisational relations are regulated by social control mechanisms as a means to minimise extant risks. However, the different forms of arrangement involved also entail different risk levels and are therefore regulated by different social control mechanisms.

Based on this, I have shown that the uncertainties in capacity subcontracting specifically, have led to the development of an alternative form of subcontracting, which I name *masked staffing*. I argue that masked staffing can be conceptualised in two ways. First, as an emergent strategy, which has developed gradually as a result of a failed capacity subcontracting arrangement. In this manner, masked staffing is a result of an alternative form of work organisation that has gradually developed even though it was not intended in the first place. Secondly, masked staffing can also be conceptualised as a deliberate strategy, that is, a conscious form of organising work based on a strategic decision, which is driven by the company's striving for increased competitiveness and increased organisational flexibility.

In what follows, I show how the subcontractors involved in this study also externalise work and that they in turn *contract other subcontractors*. I draw on the three conditioning factors of the current subcontracting regime of construction management, and show that the subcontractors' work organisation is differently structured as a result of the specific subcontractor's competitive advantage; or more specifically, whether they are contracted by the general contractor because they are cheap, or because of notions of quality.

Finally, I show that those with an integrated work organisation, who are contracted primarily because of the quality of their work, are more exposed than others in the current subcontracting regime, and that as a result they are forced to externalise work to *yet other subcontractors* and implement dis-integrated structures to increase their competitiveness.

7 Subcontracting among subcontractors

As has already been seen from the outset of this study, with the identified research problem of increased subcontracting and construction management, I have recognised that long chains of subcontracting are key in trying to understand the Swedish building sector. In many ways, these long chains of subcontractors are something that both general contractors and subcontractors try to avoid, because it increases risks and uncertainties, and therefore also makes it more difficult to uphold contractual agreements. At the same time, the current subcontracting regime of construction management encourages the externalisation of production, because it implies financial and organisational advantages. In what follows, I demonstrate how also subcontractors are pressured to restructure their work organisations.

More specifically, in this chapter I focus on the organisation of work among subcontractors and show how they experience the increased competition that results from on the one hand, industrialisation, and on the other, from the use of posted workers which makes it possible to reduce production costs (Lillie, 2010). Accordingly, subcontractors also make use of yet other subcontractors as a means to stay competitive.

By drawing on the four identified forms of subcontracting in the previous chapter, I show that the downward pressure potentially has harmful effects for not only the quality of end-products but also for the quality of work and the tradition of craftsmanship in the Swedish building sector. This is epitomised not least by the changing character of self-employment in the current subcontracting regime of construction management.

7.1 Increased competitiveness and pressured prices through the posting of workers

In previous chapters, I have shown how Swedish building companies seek to increase their competitiveness primarily through the externalisation of work, manifested in different forms of subcontracting. As indicated, this way of organising work is by no means limited to the major building companies and general contractors, rather the opposite. Just like Building Group and Green Constructions, the subcontractors involved in this study organise their work (at least partly) through other subcontractors.

Throughout this dissertation I have argued that subcontracting is an essential part of construction work, as a result firstly of the immobility of the industry and the dependence on geographical location as compared to other industries (Cremers, 2011), and secondly due to the occupational culture and relative autonomy of the labour process; while finally there is the sequential production process that requires specialised labour (Thiel, 2013). However, in this chapter, I show that for trade specialists, who act as subcontractors, the externalisation of work is primarily a consequence of institutional and regulative change, with increased competitive pressure that has resulted from the posting of work.

Through the creation of the EU-single market and the subsequent enlargement in 2004/07, competition has increased as companies make expanded use of the competitive advantage that posted workers imply (Lillie, 2010). The possibility of using posted workers in the Swedish building sector pressures not only prices, but also the companies themselves to restructure and organise work differently. This has taken place across most trades in the construction industry. In an interview with Johnny from Johnny's Paint, who was a subcontractor used by Green Constructions, we spoke about foreign companies and posted workers, and their role in the Swedish building sector.

> Rasmus: Is it common with posted workers also among painting firms, like there is foreign labour in the other building trades?

> Johnny: Yes well, I get plenty of calls from firms who offer to recruit people [from abroad]. And they cost barely nothing... I mean, a foreign painter costs more or less half, which means they're pretty competitive.
>
> Johnny, Johnny's Paint

Even though the building sector traditionally has been sensitive to volatilities and economic fluctuations, and companies have always looked for flexible and efficient solutions, (and as a result often dropped prices), the competition these days is different. On the one hand, there are foreign companies working almost exclusively towards the Swedish building sector as a result of the competitive advantage implied by posted workers; and on the other, there are also Swedish companies that use recruitment firms who specialise in the posting of foreign workers to the Swedish building sector.

Martin, a self-employed painter who has previously worked with Johnny, shared this view, but talked more about differences in quality and price with regards to foreign workers, rather than the increased competitiveness. He thought that the foreign painters in the last 15 years or so had improved in quality, but that pricewise the pendulum had moved in a more negative direction. That is, the foreign companies these days charge even less than when they first became established in Sweden. He shared a story from a job he had completed a few years earlier, where he had worked in a villa that required minor refurbishment.

> I had a look around, and went back home to calculate the costs. I phoned him [the customer] later the same day and told him that it would cost 50'000 SEK including everything. Two weeks later, he called me back and said that he'd got a better offer elsewhere, from someone who would do it for half the price. I did another round of calculations, and asked him if I'd got the right details you know, because 25'000 SEK covered more or less only the material—not my pay—not the costs for driving, and so on.
>
> Martin, MLP

Martin told me that the other offer was indeed from a foreign firm, willing to do the same work for less pay. Nonetheless, he also told me that there was an unexpected twist to the story.

> Rasmus: What happened?

> Martin: Well, two months later, the customer called me up again, and asked if I was still interested in the job, because the other firm had done such a bad job it had to be done all over again. I said, sure I can do it—but I'll charge you the same price as I offered the last time. So he (the customer) ended up having to pay 25'000 SEK more than he originally would have haha.
>
> Martin, MLP

Martin's point is that this shows that even though the quality has improved since the mid-1990's, when Polish workers first became established in the building sector (Frank, 2013), it is still a calculated risk to contract firms with dumped (or dropped) prices, since 'you don't know what you'll get'. However, he does not feel too affected by the increased competition, because he thinks that there will be a continuous demand for his services anyway.

The 'you don't know what you'll get' reasoning bears resemblance to the calculated risks by the regional management of both Building Group and Green Constructions. However, even though they express similar opinions with regards to calculated risks, I argue that the regional management's reasoning is based on different grounds when compared with Martin's. This is epitomised not least by the regional manager at Building Group, who pointed out that quality work is tied to whether workers are qualified or not, rather than where they come from or what nationality they are. Consequently, Building Group and Green Constructions build their reasoning around calculated risks on strategic decisions that aim to maximise short-term profits. The financial advantages make it worth the gamble and thus they go for the cheapest option available, even though this potentially means that they end up using posted workers that lack training for the specific work tasks they are assigned to do. This in turn possibly results in extra costs and delays, but it is still worth the risk, considering how much cheaper it is.

Martin's reasoning, on the other hand, is typical of how the workers in the study talked about foreign workers. Many of the respondents draw boundaries based on processes of 'othering' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002), to separate themselves from foreign workers and the characteristics that the segmentation of posted work results in. This can be seen as a way to protect

the collective identity of the Swedish builder that embodies craft-centred management principles of relative autonomy and influence in the labour process, and thus contrasts sharply with the lower quality and lower paid work, correlated with the neo-Taylorist management principles that posted work has come to represent (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017).

Hence, the 'you don't know what you'll get' argument denotes tensions and conflicts that spring from a fragmented and diversified workforce in the building sector, and it indicates how structural labour market transformations and new forms of work organisation have real effects upon the work situations of many craftsmen in the building sector.

In addition, despite Martin telling me that he has little worry for the future, and that there will always be a demand for quality paint-jobs, prices have inevitably been continuously pressured, which in turn has increased the pressure also on Swedish trade contractors to restructure their work organisations. Considering that Johnny had made clear it was much cheaper to hire foreign workers, I asked him why he had not done it.

> Rasmus: So why don't you use foreign workers? Or have you, before?
>
> Johnny: No, and it's because I can't speak with them you know. Plus they're not trained as we are, and also because our trade union says no. We've got a tough trade union, tough as nails really. But sure, I could potentially recruit these guys [foreign workers] anyway… But you know, the clients don't want them either, or I should say that my clients don't want them, so it doesn't work that way either really.
>
> Johnny, Johnny's Paint

Like others with him, Johnny says that there is a risk in contracting firms with dumped prices, because in his view, foreign painters work in different ways from Swedish painters. Consequently, he thinks it is too big of a risk. The lack of communication with the recruited workers complicates things, and he fears that it can lead to delays and extra costs. In addition, there is a risk that he will get in trouble with the trade union, because even though he might follow regulations in the recruitment procedure, it is hard to guarantee that the foreign firm plays by the book, and according to Johnny, this potentially also jeopardises his reputation with his clients.

The unfolding situation between Lunar Group and Green Constructions that I described in the previous chapter illustrates what Johnny says. Lunar Group's decision to make use of externally recruited workers from Poland is a way for Lunar Group to, on the one hand, take on work that they otherwise might have had to reject due to a limited capacity, and, on the other, to make use of the competitive advantage made available through political regulation in the labour market (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a). Yet, the lacking communication, and the subsequent delay, was a risk that both Lunar Group and Green Constructions were willing to take, that is, it was a calculated risk, since the business relation was built on Lunar Group's potential to provide cheap labour.

Johnny clearly reasons in a different manner, and recognises the importance of not endangering the relationship with his clients, at least not in the case with Green Constructions, considering that his firm was subcontracted primarily because of their previous acquaintanceship with the site management and because of the quality of their work. This does not necessarily mean that Johnny's Paint is less flexible than Lunar Group. Yet, it indicates how different circumstances make it important for companies to have a variety of strategies and solutions at hand. In other words, there are external constraints to an organisations' manoeuvring space, which compels companies to develop a broad range of strategies (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

For trade specialists and smaller firms acting primarily as subcontractors, it is even more important, since strategies above all are conditioned by capital, and therefore also efficiency (Hyman, 1987; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). More specifically, a smaller firm might not have the same margins as big companies, considering either financial capital, the size of the workforce, or a limited network of contacts. This makes them more vulnerable to economic fluctuations and therefore potentially also more prone to take on a construction management role.

In what follows, I show how subcontractors in different manners tackle limitations and constraints as a result of increased competition. I demonstrate that not all subcontractors involved in this study externalise work. Yet, I also show that they all to a certain extent make use of external solutions. This reflects Davis and Cobb's (2010) argument that globally, integrated processes of trade, financialization and technology development

all encourage dis-integrated structures and outsourcing, or as in this case, subcontracting.

7.2 Same pressure, similar ambitions, different work organisation

Subcontractors handle uncertainty that springs from increased pressure and competitiveness in a variety of ways. What the subcontractors involved in this study have in common, is that they all to a varying extent rely on the externalisation of labour as a means to increase their general capacity.

The degree of externalisation is tied to the specific strategy a subcontractor chooses, and strategies in turn are externally constrained by the organisational field, and internally by a company's objective of generating profit while also delivering a quality end-product (Johansson, 1997).

This means that the respective subcontractor's strategy reflects also their competitive advantages. This becomes visible if we depart from the four forms of subcontracting arrangements identified in this study: 1) capacity, 2) supplier, and 3) specialisation subcontracting, and 4) masked staffing.

Capacity subcontracting and masked staffing

Subcontractors contracted on capacity arrangements, but also those involved in masked staffing, have in common that their principal competitive advantage is price. To put it simply, they are contracted primarily because they have the lowest production costs, in turn an outcome of their strategy to make use of external labour recruited from abroad. For example, the subcontracted workers that belonged to both Lunar Group and Polonia Concrete were posted workers. This shows that the access to cheap labour makes it possible for them to increase their general capacity and take on more jobs than otherwise would have been possible, without increasing the amount of directly employed workers and increase their costs. In other words, the strategy to rely on the externalisation of work in their business relation with Green

Constructions, provide both Lunar Group and Polonia Concrete with the organisational flexibility they strive for in a competitive industry (Streeck, 1987).

That processes of restructuring and the use of subcontractors are prevalent also among trade specialists does not exclude the fact that they also use other strategies, in other business relations elsewhere. Since I did not access any representatives from either Lunar Group or Polonia Concrete, I cannot say much about their work organisation as a whole. Yet, in relation to this study, they were contracted by Green Constructions based on price, and through interviews with the site management, I still gained insight into at least parts of their work organisations. In an interview with one of Green Constructions' foremen, Andreas, we discussed to what extent also the subcontractors involved on the project site in which he worked made use of subcontractors.

> Rasmus: How does it work here, on this site? Are the subcontractors predominantly big companies that in turn take in smaller firms when they need it, or how does it work?
>
> Andreas: Yes, well both. For the most extensive parts of the production, the subcontractors are relatively big. The pipe layers for example, but also Lunar Group… I mean they're 50 or 60 in total you know.
>
> Rasmus: At this site?
>
> Andreas: No, no, in total I mean. But 30 of them were here at one point. So half the firm was here you know.
>
> Rasmus: Ok, so they have done it themselves? And not made use of other subcontractors?
>
> Andreas: Yes, but it changes you know. The subcontractors constantly adjust their workforce. It can be calm for a couple of weeks, and after a while it's way too much, and then they have to adjust the workforce to solve eventual problems.
>
> Andreas, foreman Green Constructions

According to Andreas, it is common practice for subcontractors to make use of external solutions in times of need, but that the major subcontractors also have a large share of their own employees on site. Yet, as with the case with the 30 workers from Lunar Group, we know that all but a few were Polish, which implies that rather than employed by Lunar Group, they must have been posted to the project site by companies or recruitment firms from abroad. We also know from before that the reason as to why Peter, Lunar Group's foreman, was absent from the project site was because of Lunar Group's commitments at other sites. From this, we can draw a few conclusions.

First, it shows that Lunar Group makes use of external solutions to temporarily adjust their workforce in times of need. Nonetheless, rather than just simple outsourcing—that is, the contracting of another subcontractor to perform a specific job that is part of their contract with Green Constructions—these external measures imply merely the contracting of extra manpower. Such numerical flexibility measures (Kalleberg, 2001) are based on principles of staffing as previously accounted for, rather than a proper business relation (Neo, 2010).

Thus, just as Lunar Group is contracted by Green Constructions on principles of capacity subcontracting, which in practice turned out to be masked staffing, they themselves also contract others on similar grounds. Unfortunately, my limited access to Lunar Group's work organisation prevents me from a further analysis; however, it is reasonable to think that their external recruitment is based on one out of the following two scenarios: either Lunar Group recruited posted workers through a foreign recruitment firm based on principles of staffing, or, they themselves also recruited foreign workers according to principles of masked staffing. In addition, since they are contracted due to their low price, it also means that trustworthiness is secondary for Green Constructions in their decision to contract Lunar Group. This in turn encourages subcontractors like Lunar Group to continue to externalise work, since they know that they are measured by price rather than the standards of their work.

Supplier subcontracting

There are certain similarities between capacity and supplier subcontracting in the sense that both type of arrangements rests on price as the reason to why the specific subcontractor is contracted. Nonetheless, in contrast to capacity subcontracting, the specific company that is contracted in supplier subcontracting is involved also in the manufacturing industry, and they therefore structure work differently.

For example, because Building Group's supplier of the pre-fabricated concrete elements, Concrete Solutions, predominantly produce concrete elements of various types, but still offer also the installation of the pre-fab elements, their work organisation is differently structured than the subcontractors contracted on capacity arrangements, who do not have their own production. In other words, subcontractors involved in supplier subcontracting have diversified their strategies and provide both products and services, compared with those involved in capacity subcontracting that provide only services.

In the interview Niklas, the project manager from Concrete Solutions, I asked about the competition among the suppliers of concrete elements, and whether or not it would be more profitable to relocate the production abroad rather than recruit external installation teams.

> Rasmus: So what does the competition look like? I mean, since I started with this study, I've seen plenty of transports with pre-fabricated concrete elements on trucks registered in the Baltics for example. Do these transports belong to foreign companies primarily, or are there also Swedish companies that have factories in the Baltics?
>
> Niklas: I mean both really. There are factories, or companies that have factories both in Sweden and abroad… And this is not the whole picture, but still: There are limitations to road transports, in the sense that there can only fit so much on a truck. Also, these elements are heavy you know, and considering that it's expensive to drive longer distances, there are advantages for us if we can cut the costs on transports, so that's one thing. If the transports are heavy for example, we have the advantage with shorter distances… And, if the project involves only shell-walls, where you fill up with concrete on-site, then you can load the truck with quite many walls you know, without increasing the cost so much.

> Rasmus: Ok, but you mean it wouldn't be more profitable for you to relocate the production abroad then?
>
> Niklas: Sure I mean there is money to be made by moving abroad. There are many companies that reorganise their production like that, because it's cheaper I mean, with the reduced labour costs… and it's all about being as effective as possible, really. Also in the design phase of the project you know, to find flexible solutions for the client I mean. For example, even though there are products that might cost more per square meter, it is potentially cheaper in total if we can build more effectively.
>
> But, to answer your question. No, I think it's more reasonable to think that we continue to buy the mounting, and the installations, and all that stuff, with the use of foreign labour, rather than to relocate the whole production abroad. In fact, this way the labour costs are even cheaper, even though it potentially also generates extra costs.
>
> Niklas, project manager Concrete Solutions

Therefore, Niklas agrees that yes, there are profits to be made by moving the production abroad, and this is also what other concrete manufacturers have done—at least to a certain extent. However, even though it might reduce production costs, there are also other solutions he says, which are equally efficient and even more profitable. Here, he refers to the possibilities of offering the 'total solutions' he previously mentioned, where Concrete Solutions take on installation responsibilities at the project sites—even though they lack their own manpower to do so. The possibilities to recruit workers from CEE to Swedish project sites at relatively low costs, projects the external recruitment as more favourable in comparison to the relocation of the production to the Baltics for example.

In other words, Concrete Solutions' strategy is explained within the context of the wider possibilities that their control of the means of production implies. That is, compared with the subcontractors contracted on capacity subcontracting arrangements, Concrete Solutions are to a greater extent in control of the use and redistribution of resources (Johansson, 1997). This does not mean that subcontractors involved in capacity subcontracting, such as Lunar Group, do not control their means

of production. It merely means that they have not diversified their strategy and thus base their competitive advantage solely on access to cheap labour. Hence, Concrete Solutions' competitive advantage and that which increases their organisational flexibility is that they are involved in two industries, and they thereby act as both supplier and subcontractor towards Building Group. It is also this that makes them more trustworthy than those contracted on capacity arrangements, even though both type of subcontracting arrangements rely on the same control mechanisms (opportunity control) (MacKenzie, 2008).

However, as Niklas acknowledges in the previous quote, external solutions potentially also generate costs, and it therefore involves both risks and uncertainties. I asked him to expand on this:

> I mean communication is key. Let's say there are a few holes that are meant for sockets that accidentally have been drilled in the wrong place, and therefore need to be fixed before the painters arrive. Then the wisest thing really is to talk to the painters and the electricians and see what's wrong. And sometimes it's our mistake, because we've proceeded from the details we got from the project and design phase you know, but things often change during the production process because the electricians had their say, and then somewhere along the line there was a mistake. And that's where you usually have conflicts you know, about whose responsibility it is.
>
> Niklas, project manager Concrete Solutions

What I understand here from Niklas, is that despite scenarios like those with interruptions in the flow and conflicts between workers and the management, they are well equipped to handle situations that arise from unforeseen events because they are involved throughout the production process; from a very early stage and also because they overlap several of the different sequences of the production. In addition, Niklas himself is in constant contact with both the client and the externally recruited installation team.

> I'm the client's contact if there are any misunderstandings. And I'm in contact also with the installation team and their foreman. So I mean, no,

> we don't have anyone at the site on an everyday basis, but it is mostly dealt with over the phone anyway. Plus, I'm down there once a week so…
>
> Niklas, project manager, Concrete Solutions

Niklas is in regular contact with both site management, and the foremen from the installation teams that are responsible for the mounting of the pre-fab elements. In comparison with for example Lunar Group and their foreman Peter, who was present only occasionally, and mostly after Green Constructions' site management complained about his absence, Niklas is present more often. In fact, he is almost in daily contact with either the site management or the responsible subcontractor. Considering the work load such frequent contact implies, I asked him also how many projects he worked with simultaneously.

> Niklas: Let's see… We've got more or less four projects running at the moment, two of them are just about to finish, but still in production phase so to say.
>
> Rasmus: And that's more or less normal, two to four projects at the same time?
>
> Niklas: Yes, well you can say that we ideally would want to deliver one and a half projects so to speak, depending on the size of the project and so forth. I mean then obviously we attend meetings for upcoming projects. For example, at the moment I have three upcoming and I recently also just finished another one
>
> Niklas, project manager Concrete Solutions

As Niklas emphasises, communication is key for the effectiveness of their arrangements, but I argue that it also shows the efficiency of their work organisation (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), and as mentioned previously, that it improves their trustworthiness in the eyes of the clients. Let me expand on this further.

Admittedly, Concrete Solutions' strategy implies that they disregard the potential advantage it would mean to relocate the production abroad, in the sense that it would have lowered production costs. Yet, with the limited capacity and costs involved in the transport of the pre-fab

elements, they choose an alternative strategy, with one foot in the manufacturing industry and another in the construction industry. This way, they have the opportunity to offer the 'package solutions' or 'total solutions' that Niklas describes, where they take on also the installation of the pre-fab elements. In addition, this arrangement also requires a close presence and regular contact with both clients and subcontractors involved in the production, and therefore minimises unforeseen events and potential conflicts.

Hence, even though both capacity and supplier subcontracting rely on opportunity control to uphold obligations and responsibilities, and even though the subcontractors engaged in this type of arrangement are primarily selected according to price, the different ways of organising work are based on different levels of trustworthiness towards the general contractors.

Specialisation subcontracting

Specialisation subcontracting (Neo, 2010) is the form of contractual arrangement that I identified between Johnny's Paint and Green Constructions, where Johnny's Paint was subcontracted to paint the interior of the apartments.

As already argued, specialisation arrangements are based on trust and acquaintance rather than price only. They thereby involve also less risks and uncertainties, since the contractual relationships are upheld by incentive control, which minimises risks as it develops relationships between the contractual partners through mutual dependency and potential future collaborations (MacKenzie, 2008).

This was evident in the first meeting between Green Constructions and Johnny's Paint. It followed another meeting in the morning, which I had also attended, and before the meeting Green Constructions site manager, Mathias, had told me: *"-This will be more fun, painters are always more fun"*. Not that all painters are necessarily fun, but the atmosphere was different compared to the other meeting I had attended that morning, with the kitchen supplier and their other client.

In the meeting in the morning, Mathias repeatedly tried to find easier, simpler, and cheaper solutions than what was suggested by the architect in

the blueprint. As an observer in such meetings, I noticed a lot of frustration from Mathias, oftentimes smoothened over by a joke before moving on to whatever was next on the meeting-agenda. The frustration was a result of different views on how to approach multifarious situations, where Mathias quite often commented on what he thought was an over-scrupulous approach by the architect, with special skirting boards or handles to cupboards for example. In these cases, Mathias preferred standard models that were more accessible (with suppliers), and thereby also easier to replace if damaged while mounted. This was a way to exercise damage control, while preventing delays and extra costs further down the line in the production process. Moreover, I interpreted these happenstances as results of his experiences and dealings in his role as site manager.

It was potentially also a result of their different backgrounds as white- and blue-collar workers respectively, where Mathias drew on his experiences from project sites over the years as both builder, foreman, and now site manager, while (as I understood it) none of the other two actors—the representative for the kitchen supplier and the client from the municipal housing company—had any experience in building themselves. This was in contrast with the meetings with Johnny's Paint, which were much more relaxed and straightforward. Even though it was the first time that Mathias and Johnny had met, and the deal was yet to be done, they used a lot of jargon; similar to what usually goes around project sites, which I have previously conceptualised as somewhat typical for the building sector, and characterised by a working-class masculinity (Thiel, 2007).

It was clear that they were confident in their roles, that they shared the same social class with both a background as craftsmen and experiences from construction work, and that they therefore also had similar expectations of each other. They tested each other with stories from the weekend, the intensity of work, and with wisecracks and laughs. The different atmosphere was partly explained by the presence of the foreman, Daniel, who had mediated the contact and who knew Johnny from previous projects. In other words, they knew what to expect from each other, and what to expect from the meeting. This was in sharp contrast to the meeting in the morning, which was characterised by formality and

with underlying conflicts, rooted in a lack of understanding and respect for each other's expertise.

The meeting in itself was also quite straightforward. Johnny arrived twenty minutes late but it was straight down to business. Johnny is in his late fifty's to early sixty's, and made quite an impression. He was tanned, with a couple of gold rings on his fingers, a gold necklace, and a shiny watch on his wrist. His shirt had a few buttons undone, and he exuded a self-confident impression. Both he and Mathias knew exactly what they were doing, in what direction they wanted the meeting to go, what price they were willing to pay, and, not least, *what the price ought to include*. This was also somewhat epitomised by the final handshake between Mathias and Johnny after the deal was negotiated, where they met exactly in the middle of their original demands, as if they both knew and followed a readymade template of negotiations. Again, it was facilitated by their shared trust in Daniel, who vouched for them both, but it could also probably be related to their mutual respect for each other, as a result of their common background as craftsmen.

I argue that this demonstrates how companies that are contracted on specialisation arrangements (Neo, 2010) have to compensate in different ways, for not being able to compete pricewise with those contracted on capacity arrangements. Rather, those in specialisation arrangements are reliant on the quality of their end-product, and of the trustworthiness of their work organisation as their competitive advantage.

All of this is of particular relevance with regards to Johnny's Paint. When I interviewed Johnny around six months after the meeting between Mathias and him, at Green Constructions, he stressed repeatedly that he normally tries to avoid new building projects for several reasons.

First of all, on projects like these, it is usually difficult to compete on financial grounds he said, and secondly, there are always unforeseen events that lead to headaches, conflicts, and extra costs. However, as he knew the foreman from previous work, he felt as if it was worth a try. I was interested to learn more about this, and specifically about his relation to Green Constructions:

> Rasmus: I mean, I don't know too much about your history with Green Constructions, but I thought it was pretty clear that both you and the site

manager knew exactly what you did in that meeting, and what you were after in the negotiation?

Johnny: Yes, definitely. He knew exactly what I was after, and I knew where he was at. So yes, the communication with them is really good.

Rasmus: What role did your history of working with Daniel play, in the fact that you got the contract, I mean?

Johnny: Well, yes, it mattered, but also the price. Even though you're friends you know, it is always the price that matters most.

Rasmus: And where are you there, competitive-wise with other painting firms I mean?

Johnny: Well, we just have to wait and see haha. It's a bit of a gamble also you know.

Rasmus: Ok, so you mean that you're potentially willing take on more jobs with Green Constructions? Or others like these, also with other companies?

Johnny: No, we're gonna stick with Green Constructions. And we're sticking with one project at a time. Not more than that. But when the lads at Green Constructions have finished where they are now, they're gonna start with two more, similar projects. So I guess what we're hoping for, is that we can land one of those. That's what we think at the moment anyway.

Johnny, Johnny's Paint

According to Johnny, the acquaintance is important in the sense that it is easier to reach agreements, as well as easier to avoid conflicts that arise about whose responsibility is what, as work progress. Yet, he stresses that price is pivotal in any agreements, and that it is crucial whether or not you are prepared to meet the requested price that matters. In this case, it was pricewise not ideal since projects like these often involve delays and extra costs. Yet, he knew Daniel from before and considering the incentive for future opportunities with Green Constructions, it was still worth a go (MacKenzie, 2008).

This reasoning reflects how Johan from JK Kitchen & Carpentry talked about his relationship with some of the site managers at Building Group. He felt that they wanted him because they knew they could trust the quality of the end-product, and thus also minimise extra work and extra costs.

In the case with Johnny's Paint, in addition, a larger building project was something Johnny had been interested in for quite some time, because he had to increase his number of employees as a result of the economic boom.

> Johnny: Look, we've got almost 30 employees at the moment, so I feel like we need something big. We were only 22-24 something like that a couple of years back, and in one way we've always been around 30, but previously I took in extras also so… But now it's our own guys, so in a sense that forces us to take on bigger projects.
>
> Rasmus: Because if you don't they'll [the painters] move on to another firm you mean?
>
> Johnny: Yes, but I usually don't experience that because I don't let them go you know. It's important to care for those you have and you know do a good job. And that also means that they trust me to keep them busy.
>
> Johnny, Johnny's Paint

Because of the building boom, the organisation of Johnny's firm had grown, and the contract with Green Constructions was thus of extra importance for him, not to risk that he had to let some of his employees go, or running the risk that they quit. This highlights on the one hand the tradition of autonomy and mobility among construction workers (Thiel, 2013) but on the other it also bears witness to Johnny's strategies to navigate in a competitive market. More specifically, because it is the quality of the end-product that is his competitive advantage, he cannot rely on just any painter; he needs to make sure that his employees are skilled enough and that they can deliver a bespoke product, so that extra work, extra costs, and damage to his reputation is avoided.

In winter 2018, when I conducted the interview with Johnny, the building boom reached its peak. He told me that he had previously not

had as much work at any point in time during his 30 years in the painting sector. Nonetheless, I was still surprised when he told me that he had more or less 150 different contracts running parallel at the time of our interview.

> Rasmus: 150!?
>
> Johnny: Yes, more or less. I mean, some of the lads run 8-10 jobs parallel, like smaller things you know, for housing facilities and such, and that which is more or less service jobs. Then there's the new building project with Green Constructions, where a lot of the fellas are at. But those that are on service-jobs, they have their phone full of jobs you know.
>
> Rasmus: And those on service jobs, they work alone?
>
> Johnny: Yes, one man per car. And they have it all digitally, in their android. So they go straight from home in the morning to the different jobs. And you know, it's not everyone but almost all of the lads have different jobs running parallel, so they go to one place to spackle, and then on to the next place to spackle, and then to a third and paint door frames, and that's how it comes along you know.
>
> Johnny, Johnny's Paint

From what Johnny says, it is clear that the contract with Green Constructions is an exception, and that the majority of the contracts they have are for smaller jobs and that which he refers to as service-jobs—renovations and 'ROT-jobs' at private residencies. In addition, to maximise and to increase the general capacity of the firm, about a third of his employees have their own car, with which they go directly from home in the morning and head to work on a number of parallel jobs. Such internal flexibility solutions (Kalleberg, 2001) make it possible to increase the general capacity of production, and to take on more jobs than what otherwise would have been possible. This bears witness to the variety of strategies that subcontractors need to have at hand as a result of an increasingly competitive market.

Increased competition and pressured prices have forced Johnny to sometimes also externalise work and make use of subcontractors. In such cases, he normally subcontracts another painting firm, about the same size

as his own, and sometimes also self-employed painters, he says. Occasionally, he has also hired temporary workers through staffing agencies, as an external flexibility measure (Kalleberg, 2001). This is despite his own reservations, because just like the regional manager at Building Group, he thinks staffing agency workers lack the same commitment when compared with his own employees. Again, processes of 'othering' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) are apparent also in regards to staffing agency workers, even though such processes appear to build on a will to distance oneself from a poor character that contrasts the notion of the Swedish builder and the embodied craft-centred principles, rather than the prejudices and stereotypes based on a person's origin, as is often the case with posted workers.

Because of his scepticism he has during recent years hired painters through the same local staffing agency only, since he knows those who run it and who therefore can give him more assurances as compared to other, national and international staffing agencies. This shows how incentive control (MacKenzie, 2008) is at play also in regards to staffing agencies. Nonetheless, on occasions he has actually hired one or two of the temporary staffing agency workers as permanent employees after a while. I asked him to expand on his scepticism towards staffing workers, and the ironical twist of how it is that he ended up employing some of them.

> Johnny: I see staffing like this: If you can't get a job at a painting firm, it means you're not the best painter either. That's why you end up at a staffing agency instead. I think that's a reasonable way to see it, because a skilled painter always has jobs.
>
> Rasmus: So those at staffing agencies are there because they can't get a job elsewhere?
>
> Johnny: Yes, pretty much. Then, I mean, I've found a few hidden gems over the years. Not sure how they ended up in staffing though. An older man—my age. What a rock he was. He'd been self-employed, but gotten in contact with the staffing agency and jumped on that train. Then when I met him I hired him almost instantly. Now he's gone though, moved up north I think, so I had to take in a couple of younger guys instead.
>
> Johnny, Johnny's Paint

Johnny thinks that staffing is a convenient solution in theory, and on occasions, when he has managed to build a good relationship with local staffing agencies that he trusts, it works okay also in practice. However, because he sees a risk with the use of temporary staffing workers, he most often subcontracts parts of the work to another firm, rather than temporarily expanding his workforce in times of need.

This was also how they organised their work strategy at Green Constructions' project site, where Johnny's Paint took in another painting firm to do preparation work such as to spackle. They had originally not planned to do so, but because the subcontractor that plastered the interior of the apartment was delayed (Lunar Group), Johnny's Paint had to adjust their schedule. Hence, they decided to take in another painting firm that they have collaborated with before but only to spackle, in preference to keeping the work organisation intact but making use of an *external flexibility measure* such as a staffing agency. This shows the difference between the externalisation of production to a subcontractor; that is, outsourcing (Purcell & Purcell, 1998) and external flexibility measures (Kalleberg, 2001), such as staffing.

I asked Johnny why they, in this particular case, decided to externalise parts of the production to another firm rather than to make use of temporary workers through a staffing agency.

> Look, I take in three guys from a staffing firm… And let's say there's work for three days, but then on the fourth day there's nothing… Or like this: If I externalise it to a firm, then they've promised to finish the work within let's say four weeks. Plus, they are skilled workers, painters you know – which is not the case if I go with a few extra guys through staffing.
>
> Johnny, Johnny's Paint

Johnny reasons in a similar manner as Lars, the construction manager at Building Group, when I asked him why they would rather externalise the production than to hire manpower through staffing agencies. That is, if possible, it is always cheaper to buy packages, or in other words, to externalise parts of the production, to a subcontractor. To buy temporary labour by the hour is more costly, and something that easily stretches the budget.

Hence, increased competition pressures also Johnny's Paint to externalise parts of the work to other painting firms. However, unlike firms that have already adopted dis-integrated organisational structures, and therefore have price and the access to cheap labour as their competitive advantage, externalisation for Johnny's Paint involves more risks since they rely on the quality of their work to a further extent. It is also such tensions that reveal why they on occasions have made use of other external flexibility measures (Kalleberg, 2001) such as staffing, rather than subcontractors—to increase their competitiveness, while maintaining their work organisation intact.

In addition, as Johnny himself is pointing out, they predominantly work towards private clients, and only to a limited extent towards the building sector with residential apartment buildings. It is in other words doubtful whether it would be financially sustainable to maintain an integrated work organisation, if they were to take on further contracts like that with Green Constructions.

7.3 Self-employment and construction management

Tensions between price and quality, and the reliance on acquaintance to acquire new contracts is crucial also among self-employed craftsmen. As mentioned previously, Johan's firm JK Kitchen & Carpentry was subcontracted by Building Group because they had worked together on previous occasions.

Johan is close to his fifties, and he has worked as a carpenter for over 30 years. At the time of our interview, he has been self-employed for about six years, and he tells me that even though notions of independence with regards to work had nurtured a dream of self-employment for a long time, he would not have taken the plunge if his former employer had not encouraged him.

> I mean there's a reason that I started my own firm. The company that I worked for, for about four and a half years, they restructured their organisation and asked if I'd thought about being my own. They suggested

> that I'd start my own firm, but still work for them, in the sense that I'd get all my contracts from them. And sure, if they hadn't suggested it, I'd probably not have done it. But I don't regret it a single bit.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

Johan has always enjoyed the idea of 'being his own boss', yet, he is also quite straightforward in that he would not have made the decision if it was not for the encouragement and guarantees that his former employer gave him. Again, this highlights the importance of a large network of contacts, and also that the network consists of people you know well, and who you can trust (Thiel, 2010).

Also, it indicates the effect of the F-tax reform in 2009, which was intended to facilitate and encourage self-employment by removing legal obstacles for the self-employed to have only one client (Thörnquist, 2015). More specifically, it indicates how companies have made use of the changed legislation in order to escape both financial costs and employer responsibility by dismantling their work organisation.

This was also what Tommy from the builders' trade union had told me, about the transferring of risks towards self-employed workers. In particular, it illustrates how trade specialists and smaller firms mimic the larger building companies' strategies in times of economic boom, by releasing their own personnel—only to encourage them to start their own business and thereafter contract them as subcontractors—as a means to avoid employer responsibility and taxes when the economy contracts. I told Johan about this and asked him how things played out when he was encouraged to start his own firm, and what he thought of it.

> Rasmus: So, when your contract was terminated, and they promised you future contracts, was this a verbal agreement?
>
> Johan: Yes, exactly. And look, we were twelve employees in this region, and they offered three of us to continue to work with them, but as self-employed. The others were let go, which upset the trade union and all hell broke loose… But there were different reasons for this [to why not everyone was offered contracts]. Some because they didn't do what they were supposed to, and others because they're just not good enough. Plus you know, it's not easy to get rid of people today. In fact, it's hard as hell.

> That's why I'd never employ anyone myself. And the building sector is different today you know, it's better to have people temporarily for a while, and then when there's no more work, it's not your problem you know.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

It is clear that Johan considers good work ethic and craft-based knowledge as crucial to construction work, and that he thought that it was the quality of his work that was the reason to why he was one out of the three who had been offered future contracts. This does not only signals how he as a carpenter builds his identity on the collective notion and embodiment of craftsmanship (Mills, 1951) but in addition how his social position in the labour market as self-employed carpenter influences his political and ideological views on work (Peterson et al., 1988). That is, rather than problematising his former employer's strategy to restructure and dismantle the work organisation through redundancies, and the insecurity such employer strategies might have for employees in the building sector, he buys into the argument that there is no room to have employees 'not doing what they ought to do' and indicates that he thinks it is too difficult to terminate employment contracts in today's labour market.

At the same time, he also indicates that it is the quality of his end-product that he relies on for future contracts (MacKenzie, 2008). Quality and the building networks are the main references for Johan and others like him, and because he is specialised in kitchen fitting, he says that he can work faster, better, and also more carefully than other non-specialised firms. As noted in Chapter 6, Johan himself even goes as far as saying that he is not so much of a carpenter these days, but rather a *kitchen-fitter*. That Johan specialises in kitchen-fitting reflects not only his strategy to fight off competition from other (cheaper) contenders, but also the development of the building sector with increased industrialisation, specialisation, and a more sequential production process (Thiel, 2013).

In the interview with Johan, we engaged quite a bit in discussions on how he thought that he could maintain the quality of his products and services and thus also his reputation. He admitted that even though he had a good relationship with a few of the site managers at Building Group, the tension between quality versus price pressured him more and more.

According to him, it is increasingly difficult to maintain the quality of the end-product as Building Group gradually demands a higher work tempo.

> Yes it's all about speeding up time and keeping costs to a minimum, definitely. I mean, what I 'm expected to do has increased drastically only during the four years that I have been working with Building Group. For sure. I mean we used to do… We're supposed to do six apartments in seven days. That's the tempo they're asking of us. If it's three apartments you've got four days to do it. But when we started with this, it was more like six apartments in eleven days. So, the tempo and the expectations have gone up. Definitely. And if the tempo goes up, there's a big risk that there'll be more mistakes done. That's how it is.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

That the tempo is higher than what it used to be means that Johan has had to speed up his work, but as he says, to work faster means to jeopardise the quality of what he is doing. This in turn puts him in a delicate position, because, again, he knows that it is the combination of fast work and quality work that is the best way for him to resist against (mostly foreign) competitors that are prepared to do the same work at lower rates. As a result, he has occasionally externalised parts of his work to other self-employed carpenters that he has known from before and through acquaintances.

He stresses that he normally does not take on a job when he has enough work anyway, but at the time of the interview, he had recently accepted jobs as he felt he did not want to risk Building Group turning to someone else, and thus also risking his close relationship with some of their site managers. On this specific occasion, he (in his own words) *hired* another Swedish self-employed kitchen fitter, Bogdan, a former colleague that he knows from before, and whom he trusts to do quality work. Still, on these occasions, he often feels as if he is 'in over his head'.

> Rasmus: So when you use one of the guys you've hired in turn, do you feel like you're gambling with your reputation?
>
> Johan: I wouldn't say my reputation is at stake because the guys we take in they're good. Really good. But yes, that's one of the occasions where I

> feel there's too much at stake, since I'm not doing the work myself, and therefore can't control it to the same extent.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

Just like Building Group, Green Constructions, and other subcontractors in this study, Johan also feels that there are risks involved in externalising the work to someone else (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2019) even though it is someone he knows. This is partly due to the higher risks which the externalisation implies for Johan, compared with the larger firms. That is, Johan is more dependent on a specific contract than his larger counterparts due to his, in comparison, more limited revenue. In other words, Johan's limited access to resources in comparison with a larger firm also limits his manoeuvring space (Johansson, 1997).

Still, despite this, the stakes are higher when he subcontracts parts of the work to other self-employed kitchen-fitters; the control mechanisms are much the same as those between him and Building Group. They are based to a large extent on incentive control, and the dependency that the contractual agreement between him and Bogdan builds on. However, it is also different in the sense that the relationship develops also out of benevolence, as Johan identifies with Bogdan's situation as self-employed (MacKenzie, 2008).

Despite the fact that he acknowledges that externalising work runs a risk, he was clear in our interview that the alternative to externalise work and employ someone was out of the question, *"-except maybe a family member"* he said. This is so since according to him this course of action would involve an even bigger risk, in the sense of building up too much costs that could potentially ruin him in an economic downturn.

Considering that he told me that he *hired* the other self-employed carpenter, Bogdan, I was curious what he meant by it. Did he externalise the work to Bogdan or did he hire him temporarily? Johan stressed that those he subcontracts are all self-employed, but I have, since this exchange, observed that on his company's Facebook page he and those he temporarily recruits refer to different jobs as a collective effort, through comments such as *"good job everyone involved!"* Some of the comments were in English, which signals that he externalises work also to foreign self-employed carpenters; and that to a certain degree, they are deemed to have

worked together on a project, or at least to have worked under Johan's lead.

That they potentially worked under his lead, or that there is at least some kind of hierarchy between them, was strengthened by another comment on the Facebook status, by one of the foreign self-employed. A picture of a big circular saw in a half-ready kitchen at a project site, was captioned *"thanks for the loan boss"*, under which Johan had answered *"No worries, but take care of it!!"*

Since I made these observations after our interview, I have not been able to ask him about this specific incident. However, we touched upon such scenarios already in the interview, when I asked him about those that he in turn subcontracts at times when there is too much work.

> Johan: Yes, I hire other self-employed carpenters, which we write on us.
>
> Rasmus: Like your employees you mean?
>
> Johan: Yes, in a sense. But I mean, they're not really ours. Rather, they are self-employed. And there's this case, which was revealed half a year ago or something, by Building Group. But you know, we thought we did as we were told… That we're supposed to do it the way we did you know. I mean, considering that they're under us [the self-employed carpenters], and work for us at Building Group's project site, we thought that they'd be [registered] under us too. But no, apparently not. All a sudden they're employed by us!
>
> Rasmus: So you had to pay taxes and such?
>
> Johan: Yeah but luckily that didn't happen. We sorted it out with Building Group, and now they've got their own tags and all that.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

As he presented it to me, the other self-employed carpenters had been registered as employees rather than as separate firms when they were in turn hired by Johan, even though they were actually self-employed and paying their own taxes. This is an example of that which I previously referred to as false-self-employment (Thörnquist, 2015), but in this case I

was told that it was a mistake, which was due to unclear directives and a lack of information.

For Johan, and perhaps also for Building Group, it could have been an unfortunate and expensive mistake if the tax authorities had discovered it. Instead, it was discovered through Building Group's own routine checks.

> Rasmus: So that's what's usually referred to as false self-employment right? They work as employees but they're actually responsible for pensions and taxes and such?
>
> Johan: Yes, correct. But luckily there's someone at Building Group who checks the register at the different project sites every now and then, and who discovered that there were four guys registered on my firm, even though I don't have any collective agreement. So then I had to inform them about what was going on and we sorted it out.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

No matter if it was intentional or not, and no matter whose mistake it was, it shows how easy it is to fiddle with the register, despite ID-06 and the fact that all workers on site are registered to a company (ID06, 2018). What happened also shows how important it is for the general contractor to occasionally double check the register, to control and make sure that no one makes a mistake breaking employment or tax laws.

Insufficient control and an abundance of informal work and subcontracting arrangements in the building sector is not Johan's main focus. For him, what matters most is to maintain a steady flow of contracts, and make sure that he delivers according to what is agreed. However, increased competitiveness and a higher work tempo makes this gradually more difficult. According to Johan, also Building Group and the other general contractors are aware of the problems that the increased tempo implies, but that -*"it's an economic reality they have to adapt to"*. He continues:

> I mean, eventually it is going to reach a level where they're not going to be able to speed up the production anymore. At the same time, I experience it as if Building Group is keen about the finished product. You won't believe how many inspections there are before the final inspection. You

> know when I've installed the kitchen, the foreman is there to see if everything is in order. Then, after the heating and ventilation workers have been there, and the tiler also, the foreman is back, and then for the whole apartment there's another inspection.
>
> There's so much control… At the same time, that's why they choose us. They know that we're up for it. And they know how it'll look when it's finished.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

Johan is aware of the increased expectations that follow from a higher tempo, but he also says that if Building Group are interested in maintaining a quality end-product, which he reckons they are, there is a limit to how fast they can build. For him, a fair amount of inspections signals their continuous interest in delivering a good quality end-product to their clients, but that even more inspections are close to impossible. That is also why they still use him, he believes: because they would rather keep the number of inspections down even though there are cheaper alternatives.

The additional control mechanisms that the extra inspections after each stage of production implies, effect Building Group's work organisation in the sense that it implies more work for the foreman performing the inspections. As I showed in Chapter 6, this sometimes leads to situations where the foremen also manage subcontracted workers (masked staffing). This might well be true when there are foreign workers Johan says, however, for him, this is not an issue. Inspections are merely inspections he says, and it is not like the foremen lead the work, and any deadlines are agreed upon before he starts.

However, he acknowledges that the intensification of inspections impacts his work in the sense that it limits possibilities and manoeuvring space when planning the work, and thus also his influence on the work. The combination of high levels of industrialisation, the downward pressure of prices, and the eagerness among building companies to rationalise production even further implies less autonomy and less possibilities for Johan to maintain his independence and decide how to work, where to work, and at what pace. It creates a situation where he as

self-employed sees benefits in making use of that which pressures him in the first place, namely practices of externalisation of work—despite the fact that such subcontracting risks compromising the quality of his end-products.

Consequently, even though Johan states that the best thing with being self-employed is the freedom it implies to decide when to work, he also acknowledges that there are external constraints (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) to his independence. That is, in spite of the signal autonomy and independence implied in one's being self-employed, the increased tempo, and the changing expectations from general contractors have made Johan consider a number of future options. He told me that he misses the everyday meetings and small talk with private clients, the occasional invite for a cup of coffee, and the fact that the customer demands his expertise and suggestions, which is normally the case when working for private clients.

> Sometime soon, I think I want to work only for private clients again, because frankly, I enjoy it. Renovations and all that you know. I get to use my brain for once! I mean, with Building Group and them, it's more of a monotone job you know. It's the same. It's like you go to the same place day in and day out for a couple of months. If I'm at someone's home you never know what happens. So, my plan for the future is to continue with Building Group for a couple of years more, like two years max. Then I'm going to get out and work only for private clients.
>
> Johan, JK Kitchen & Carpentry

Johan has over time understood that what he anticipated from self-employment is no longer possible while working with building companies. In the current subcontracting regime of construction management, the Swedish building sector is influenced by neo-Taylorist work practices, which are visible through the intensification of inspections and the general contractor's overall influence on subcontracted work (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017). Thus, there is no room for the kind of autonomy and independence that is so central to the tradition of craftsmanship (Mills, 1951) in the building sector, and on which Johan and others like him have built their collective identity as builders.

In contrast, Martin, the self-employed painter who has previously worked with Johnny's Paint, but who now has his own firm and only works for private clients, argued that he has maintained much of his independence. Like Johan, Martin, who is also in his fifties, stressed that he does not mind a heavy workload as a self-employed worker, since he is more in control of his own work than if he was employed somewhere else. Rather, the greatest challenge from Martin's point of view is the increased competition from firms that dump prices (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a). As I understood him, this was what he thought was the potential downside of self-employment; that it was potentially harder to compete pricewise, because no matter how fast he worked, his fixed expenses were the same. In other words, it is not possible for him to go lower than his foreign counterparts.

Then again, he was not too worried. He repeatedly said that there is always going to be painting jobs, and up until the point of our interview, his vast number of contacts from his previous work at project sites had been enough for him to fiscally survive. Plus, the story with the re-painting of a villa, where he was rejected by a customer who later got in touch and wanted him to do the job anyway, had assured him that a quality end-product is that which matters most.

> We want to do it right you know. Again, I don't primarily do it for the money, I want it to be good, and something that I can take pride in.
>
> Martin, MLP

Like Johan's, Martin's attitude also represents the ideal type of craftsmanship as explained by Mills (1951). He takes pride in the quality of his work and just like Johan, he knows that this is his best reference for future contracts, which is particularly important as he is self-employed. Nevertheless, what distinguishes Johan from Martin as self-employed is that Martin works for private customers doing mainly renovations, while Johan work for building companies with newly constructed houses, where the building process is much more industrialised and rationalised.

In addition, the shift from craft centred to neo-Taylorist work practices and management principles in the Swedish building sector illustrates also processes of deskilling and the degradation of work (Braverman, 1974).

First of all, the increased tempo that Building Group demands from Johan—that is, from six apartments in eleven days to six apartments in seven days—shows that Johan is dissociated from his own labour process in the sense that he has little manoeuvring space in organising the work. He either accepts the terms or looks for another contract elsewhere.

Secondly, there is a tangible separation between conception and execution. Rather than Johan's personal judgement based on previous experiences (as in the craft-centred tradition), the planning of the work is done by the general contractor. From what I observed in the meeting between Green Constructions' site manager and the kitchen supplier, Stonehill, such planning is carefully done in a systematised and rationalised manner by the management of general contractors, whilst being driven by the objective of minimising costs and thereby maximising profits.

Third, this shows how the level of industrialisation and specialisation in the building sector has shifted the control of the labour process from the worker, (in this case Johan), to the general contractor and the kitchen supplier. As noted by Johan himself, when he said that he looked forward -*"to use my brain for once"*, this shift of the control of the labour process involves also aspects of deskilling (Graham, 2006).

Consequently, there are indications of less autonomy among the self-employed in the building sector due to both industrialisation and the use of neo-Taylorist management principles that follow (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017). Moreover, the group of self-employed craftsmen working towards residential housing as subcontractors are diverse; both in terms of skill and to what extent they control their means of production. That is, it is questionable as to what extent self-employment is *authentic self-employment* and not just practices of false or bogus forms of self-employment (Thörnquist, 2015). This is of particular relevance with regards to the foreign one-man firms that operate to a large extent in the Swedish building sector under conditions similar to those of wage-labour rather than anything else.

With regards to deskilling, the current subcontracting regime of construction management, which persistently stimulates general contractors to strive towards higher levels of industrialisation and specialisation, makes craft-based knowledge redundant at project sites.

This was indicated by Karlsson (1982) already four decades ago, but with the access to cheap labour from the economic periphery of the EU, such processes have been amplified (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a). As I have shown in previous chapters with the conceptualisation of masked staffing, the labour process in construction work is thus less independent and less autonomous, and to a further extent characterised by neo-Taylorist principles, dependent on cheap and unskilled labour, increased control and supervision, and not least upon the separation of conception from the execution of the work (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017).

7.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have analysed the effects of construction management among subcontractors. I have argued that an industrialised and rationalised building sector, characterised by increased competition as a result of political de-regulation in the EU-labour market has driven organisational change and pressured trade specialists to externalise work to an increasing extent.

More specifically, I argue that general contractors as a result of access to cheap labour see financial incentives to renegotiate the trade-off between the two contrasting objectives of quality versus price. In a situation where price gets the upper hand on quality, the trustworthiness of a subcontractor's work organisation also becomes secondary and stimulates the externalisation of work even further. In particular, these tensions encourage and favour subcontractors that already organise their jobs based on the externalisation of work and have cheap labour as their competitive advantage. At the same time, it also marginalises those companies that compete primarily on the quality of their work and therefore wish to maintain in-house resources and integrated work organisations.

Self-employed subcontractors are particularly exposed to this development, and, in addition, the current subcontracting regime of construction management implies a shift away from craft-based knowledge and instead towards neo-Taylorist management principles. More specifically, I argue that craft-based knowledge is marginalised on behalf of new forms of work organisation contingent on subcontracting, which

impacts also the manoeuvring space for self-employed craftsmen. Such subcontracting is predominantly of a transnational character, which not only reveals a segmentation of posted workers into specific sections of the Swedish building sector, but also exposes processes of deskilling and the overall degradation of work.

8 Conclusion: Dynamics of organisational change in the Swedish building sector

In the introductory chapter to this dissertation, I write about Safida Montage, NCC's daughter company based in Warsaw, Poland that acted as the mother company's own staffing agency between 2015-2021. The establishment of Safida Montage aimed to improve the recruitment of foreign labour to NCC's project sites in Scandinavia, and would not only make NCC more competitive but also improve the possibility of making sure that foreign labour was tied to collective agreements when posted to Sweden (NCC, 2018). However, Safida Montage was dismantled in early 2021 due to diminishing profitability, in turn as a consequence of the shrinking demand for staffing services (NCC, 2021). Notably, it was not the demand for foreign labour that decreased. Rather, and similar to what I have demonstrated in this study, NCC has experienced a re-organisation of work in the sense that both they as well as other Swedish building companies have chosen to externalise work in packages and turned to subcontractors instead.

The chain of events that led NCC to shut down Safida Montage and their staffing activities in Poland, hence bears witness to that which I have analysed in this study: how Building Group and Green Constructions' work organisation have come to rely on a range of subcontracting arrangements in their ambition to achieve organisational flexibility. I have shown that such subcontracting is indicative of the possibilities for contractors and subcontractors to shift costs and responsibilities downwards to yet other subcontractors in the Swedish building sector,

while it also reveals tensions in the labour process and the changing character of work.

In this, the final chapter of this dissertation, I conclude that the Swedish building sector faces a set of challenges in relation to the organisation of work, driven by short-term goals of profitability as companies re-prioritise the trade-off between quality and price in favour of price. I depart from the initially posed research questions to this study and answer them by pointing to the restructuring of work in the current subcontracting regime of construction management. I situate my arguments in the era of financialized capitalism and argue that the structural transformation implies that strategic decisions about how to organise work are based on a specifically rationalised logic of profit maximisation.

Secondly, I emphasise that there are practices of masked staffing in the Swedish building sector and accentuate how and why such contractual agreements are tied to low-wage competition in combination with the Swedish model of industrial relations, and specifically the system of collective agreements.

To conclude, I draw on current debates in relation to the Swedish building sector to show how this study contributes not only to research on the organisation of work, but also more specifically to a growing body of scholarship on the Swedish building sector. My contribution centres the plethora of subcontracting arrangements in the Swedish building sector and explores the structural transformations that such restructuring imply. By doing this, I identify tensions and contradictions, and hence potential opportunities for further research on the challenges that lie ahead.

8.1 The restructuring of work in the Swedish building sector

This study set out to investigate recent trends of subcontracting in the Swedish building sector. To do this, I formulated an overarching research question that was followed up by three sub-questions. Here, I return to these initially posed research questions, to draw out some concluding arguments. The principal research question was: *Why and in what way are*

Building Group and Green Constructions subcontracting work in accordance with the regime of construction management? In posing this question, I was interested in analysing the structural conditions of the Swedish building sector to find out what it is that stimulates building companies to externalise work and make use of subcontractors.

A central aspect of this is the influence of new forms of capital accumulation based on principles of financialization (Cushen & Thompson, 2016). By drawing on empirical data from the two cases in this study, I have demonstrated how organisational restructuring and the implementation of new forms of work organisation based on the externalisation of work results from reluctance among companies to invest in human resources, machines, and building material. That is, I show that the structural transformation of the Swedish building sector needs to be understood as based on a specific rationalised logic of profit maximisation (Thompson, 2013). More specifically, this profit maximisation includes companies treating labour strictly as expenditure and unnecessary costs, rather than as an investment.

I argue that such logic is apparent with regards to construction work and the Swedish building sector, in which current EU labour market regulation, high levels of industrialisation, and uncertainties with regards to future product markets further encourage Swedish building companies to make use of temporary solutions through subcontractors and not least, cheap labour from abroad. Thus, notions of financialized capitalism facilitate the understanding of the conditions in which the top-management in Swedish building companies re-prioritise the trade-off between quality and price, and gradually turn to the cheapest subcontractors despite uncertainties with regards to the ability of delivering a quality end-product in time.

More precisely, in a situation where strategic decisions about how to organise work build on notions of minimising expenditure, this new model is advantageous within the confines of a slim organisation (that engages primarily with the coordination of work) rather than taking on building risks, and where the majority of production costs, risks, and eventual responsibilities can now be outsourced and shifted towards subcontractors (Druker et al., 2021).

Work organisations like these also facilitate companies engaging in several projects at the same time, which in turn reinforces the striving for reduced production-times, and thus also pressure subcontractors and workers to increase their work-tempo. In other words, under current circumstances, short-term solutions through temporary subcontracting arrangements are more beneficial than long-term investments in the company through the recruitment of new employees, machines or building materials. This is displayed not least through the case of Green Constructions, where almost all new recruits are tied to white-collar positions in the company, which reflects the company's role as coordinator of work in construction management.

This relates to, and becomes particularly visible with regard to one of the sub-questions posed in this dissertation: *How is organisational flexibility manifested in Building Group's and Green Constructions' work organisations?* I define organisational flexibility as a "general capacity of enterprises to reorganise in close response to fluctuations in their environment" (Streeck, 1987, p. 290), and in relation to the argument above, this is relevant because if the principal objective of capitalist enterprises are profit, the best way to attain this goal is to control the means of production. That is, to have the possibility to restructure the organisation of work.

Furthermore, I argue that the two cases of Building Group and Green Constructions manifest how organisational flexibility has become a value in-itself in the current subcontracting regime. The strategic decisions to externalise all parts of the production demonstrates the influence of the principles of financialization, and it shows how companies (in their search for organisational flexibility) adhere to a logic of profit-maximisation that accentuates short-term goals of increased profits and revenues, through reduced production times and increased work tempo. Consequently, organisational flexibility is no longer about the capacity to handle sudden and unexpected events through a restructuring of the workforce, but rather solely about cost-cutting and the removal of unnecessary costs. Accordingly, organisational flexibility is not so much about efficiency with regards to quality anymore, but rather centres on increased pace, work-tempo, and profit maximisation. As a value in itself, organisational flexibility has become a rationalised myth (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) based on institutionalised and isomorphic behaviour that mirrors how

strategizing and organising work follows a specific rationalised logic of financialized capitalism.

This is visible in both Building Group's and Green Constructions ambition to adopt new forms of work organisation based on the externalisation of work. I have demonstrated in my analysis how this manifests in three distinct types of subcontracting arrangements: Capacity-, specialisation-, and supplier subcontracting (Neo, 2010). Despite the organisational flexibility such arrangements imply though, in terms of possibilities for profit maximisation, the subcontracting also involves uncertainties and a loss of control over production. In other words, at the same time as subcontracting increases organisational flexibility for the companies, there are still elements that jeopardise the potential profit maximisation. This part of the analysis is highlighted by another of the initially posed sub-questions: *How and with what strategies do companies, including both general contractors and subcontractors, handle risks and uncertainties that follow from construction management? What do such strategies look like?*

I argue that the companies involved in this study manage such uncertainties in primarily three ways. First, both contractors and subcontractors work with people and firms they have either worked with before, or which have been recommended by someone they trust. The main reason for this is that formal control mechanisms, such as contract enforcement through sanctions for the contractual partner that cannot keep their commitments, are ill-suited for the construction industry due to a sequential production process. That is, delays or mistakes in one sequence of the production lead to delays in the sequence that follows, in turn delaying the overall time-schedule, increasing costs, and generating increased stress and potential conflicts at the project sites. Financial reimbursements are in such scenarios less forceful as control mechanisms, since the production is delayed anyway (Thiel, 2010).

Second, I have demonstrated that inter-organisational control through incentives and expectations for future projects are more desirable than formal and legally binding contractual mechanisms. Yet, despite this, I also show how contractors in this study turn to firms they do not know directly because of their low price. This is so despite the imminent risk of delays and the extra costs that such subcontracting implies. That is, through the

use of posted workers, companies may come to construct a more financially lucrative offer (Lillie, 2010).

Consequently, through a growing awareness of the imminent risks involved in such subcontracting, the general contractors have tended to increase their on-site control through more frequent inspections, which in turn increase the workload for the foremen. Rather than only final inspections, the foremen sometimes perform weekly inspections. The escalation of inspections thus results from the greater risks that building companies engage in while maximising short-term profits; however, at the same time, the greater number of inspections subsequently generates an amplified workload for foremen.

Third, to better handle risks and uncertainties inherent to the externalisation of work, companies on occasions also take over the day-to-day management from subcontractors (masked staffing). In this study, I have demonstrated that this is either a result of a failed capacity subcontracting arrangement, that is, when the foremen are forced to step in and lead the work because a subcontractor does not fulfil their contractual commitments and thus they lack their own foreman—or only occasionally have their own foreman—on site. However, I show that it is sometimes also a deliberate strategy from the general contractor to make use of subcontractors on principles of staffing, as a means to avoid collective agreements and thus minimise expenditure while maintaining control of the labour process.

With regards to the last sub-question: *What are the effects of tensions and concerns in relation to work caused by dis-integrated organisational structures for subcontractors in construction management?* My analysis has shown that the many possibilities to make use of cheap labour from CEE, and specifically practices of masked staffing, impact construction work in the sense that it changes the character of work and craftsmanship. More specifically, new forms of work organisation, which are contingent on transnational subcontracting, highlight how subcontractors in the Swedish building sector experience pressure to compromise on quality aspects of their production. Rather than the quality of the end-product, general contractors increasingly focus on price and an increased tempo of production instead, which in turn reproduce incentives for subcontractors to externalise their production, either as a tactic to keep up with the

increased tempo, or as a way to make use of the competitive advantage that the use of posted workers implies (Lillie, 2010).

The prioritisation of pace and routinisation at the expense of quality is harmful for craftsmanship (Braverman, 1974) as unskilled labour and routinised work are legitimised in the Swedish building sector. The increasing amount of inspections and day-to-day management indicates shifting practices from traditional and craft-centred management, which builds on a relative autonomy and in which workers rely on their own craft-experience, towards neo-Taylorist inspired management systems instead, where there is little room for autonomy and independence in the labour process (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017). This is epitomised not least through the changing pre-conditions of self-employment in the Swedish building sector, where processes of degradation of work bring to the fore distinctions among the self-employed. Such distinctions are manifested through informal work practices, such as false self-employment (Thörnquist, 2015), but also through decreasing demands for craft-based knowledge and how this results in tensions between the ideology of work and the actual work activity that self-employed craftsmen engage in.

8.2 Construction management and masked staffing

This study has shown that Swedish building companies make use of a range of subcontracting arrangements in the organisation of work in their ambition to achieve organisational flexibility. I have identified four forms of subcontracting, out of which three: capacity, specialisation, and supplier subcontracting are external forms of subcontracting (Neo, 2010). The fourth form, for which I have suggested the term *masked staffing*, is referred to as internal subcontracting even though it involves an external business relation. With this conceptualisation I contribute to research on the organisation of work in the sense that it highlights how rather than the relocation of the control mechanism that governs the production towards the subcontractor (MacKenzie, 2002) as in the other three forms of

subcontracting, control is kept intact with the general contractor in masked staffing.

Subsequently, the general contractor not only coordinates work activities as in the other three forms of subcontracting, but also leads the work on a daily basis. This includes the monitoring and surveillance of the labour process. Hence, masked staffing refers to arrangements that include the externalisation of work to subcontractors, but which build on principles of staffing. Rather than subcontracting, masked staffing is simply unauthorised brokering of labour.

The emergence of practices of masked staffing are best understood in the context of the Swedish model of industrial relations, with the system of collective agreements. More specifically, the development of managed flexibility (Coe et al., 2009) in which staffing agencies are connected to collective agreements through a compromise between the social partners in the labour market, which has stimulated both Swedish and foreign companies in the building sector to look for other and cheaper solutions for organising temporary demands for labour.

With institutional changes in the labour market, including the free movement of labour, as well as the provisioning of goods, capital, and services within the EU-single market, opportunities to externalise work to foreign subcontractors were revealed. Considering then industry-specific characteristics such as far-reaching industrialisation and specialisation, but also volatilities in the product market and an industrial environment in which companies are hesitant to tie-down too many resources with future projects (Druker et al., 2021), the externalisation of work through subcontractors has marginalised the need for proper staffing agencies in construction work.

It is in this context, theorised as a specific subcontracting regime, that arrangements of masked staffing are identified. I detected two forms of masked staffing in the analysis of the data for this study. The first is conceptualised as an inadvertent emergent strategy, and the second as a deliberate emergent strategy (Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). As an inadvertent emergent strategy, masked staffing is the result of a failed capacity subcontracting arrangement. In other words, it follows from the shortcomings of subcontractors to fulfil their commitments, for example in relation to management and day-to-day leading of work at the

project site. Instead, like in the 'Green Constructions' case, Green Constructions' site management needs to step in and lead the work even though it is externalised to Lunar Group, and even though Lunar Group as subcontractor is expected to have their own management in place.

On the other hand, as a deliberately emergent strategy masked staffing is a conscious and purposely chosen form of organising work, based on a strategic decision to become more competitive and increase organisational flexibility, while retaining direct control over production. It builds on the notion of centralised and decentralised decision making in a company, in the sense that the upper echelons of management set the budget and decide the overall strategy for the company (to externalise all parts of the production to subcontractors) while it is the site management that decides which subcontractors to work with, and how to spend the budget. Hence, just like the arrangement between Green Constructions and Polonia Concrete, Green Constructions' site management has manoeuvring space and controls how the day-to-day work at the project site is organised (Löwstedt et al., 2018).

Subsequently, masked staffing is distinguished from the other forms of subcontracting in that it is merely labour contracting and employment disguised as subcontracting (Neo, 2010). Also, there are two overall motives for companies to engage in masked staffing. Firstly, masked staffing entails the possibility of maintaining full control of the labour process despite the externalisation of both employer responsibilities and production costs. Secondly, labour costs are reduced substantially since the 'subcontracting' is purchased on a fixed price, compared with paid-by-the hour rates as is the case with temporary staffing workers. In other words, masked staffing becomes a way to achieve organisational flexibility while also retaining day-to-day quality control. This also shows that strategies of work organisation are conditioned by capital (Hyman, 1987) and that contractual relationships in de-regulated labour markets (in this case the EU-single market) are prone to be informally regulated. This is of specific relevance to the building sector due to the indeterminate nature of building contracts, unforeseen events in the production process, and difficulties for the site management to monitor work at the project sites (Thiel, 2010).

With the newly added contribution of masked staffing, this study demonstrates that at the same time as current labour market regulations in the EU generate employment opportunities for vast numbers of foreign workers in the Swedish building sector, it also provides Swedish building companies with opportunities to organise potentially unregulated and cheaper work, through subcontractors. Yet, while drawing on the four types of subcontracting arrangements that I have identified in this study, I do not exclude that there are also other types of subcontracting, and other ways to distinguish the organisation of work in the Swedish building sector. On the contrary, my findings indicate that subcontracting arrangements incrementally change due to extra-institutional pressure (Arnholtz & Andersen, 2018) as companies seek organisational flexibility in an industrial environment saturated with economic insecurity. It is therefore also likely that future research interested in work organisation, management systems, and control in relation to the labour process in construction work will identify yet other ways in which work is organised through subcontractors. Specifically, control and management systems are fruitful analytical concepts as vantage points, considering how high levels of industrialisation in the building sector impact the labour process; as well as the potential impact upon Swedish building companies' work organisation due to the impact of production systems that aim to shorten production times and minimise resources tied to manpower.

Hence, control and management systems are fertile grounds for analysing intra-organisational relations. Yet, to understand when, how, and why different forms of subcontracting arrangements are used, and to understand the inter-organisational relationships between the contractual partners that follow, I draw on the notion of social control mechanisms, to help distinguish Building Group's and Green Constructions' strategies in handling the uncertainties and risks that the externalisation of work implies. I show in my analysis that there is a varying degree of risk-taking dependent on the form of subcontracting arrangement with reference to the trustworthiness of different subcontractors. In this regard I identified three control mechanisms at work: Opportunity control, incentive control, and benevolence (MacKenzie, 2008). Again, such control mechanisms are specifically relevant, considering the informal regulation of contractual relationships in the building sector (Thiel, 2010).

Opportunity control signals formal and legally binding control mechanisms that are obligatory in a contractual agreement and becomes the dominant control mechanism in arrangements based on capacity subcontracting, where subcontractors are hired primarily because they are cheap. In other words, they have price as their competitive advantage. This is so because these subcontractors organise their work based mainly on foreign labour, either directly or indirectly recruited through yet another—foreign—firm; but as argued already, formal contractual enforcements are ill-suited for the building sector because of the combination of the indeterminate nature of building contracts and the sequential production process (Thiel, 2010). Accordingly, even though a company is financially compensated by a subcontractor that does not deliver a quality product on time, such interruptions of the 'flow' inevitably involve delays in the overall timetable. Hence, despite greater uncertainty, I have demonstrated how Building Group and Green Constructions have taken calculated risks in contracting with subcontractors due to their lower prices.

With incentive control, I have emphasised how potential future contracts and collaborations regulate inter-organisational agreements. This is more apparent in subcontracting arrangements that rest on acquaintanceship or reputation with a higher level of trust. In contrast to the subcontractors involved in capacity subcontracting, these have quality rather than price as their competitive advantage. Incentive control thus dominates in those arrangements referred to as specialisation subcontracting.

Lastly, benevolence emphasises norms, empathy and the fact that we sometimes choose to trust contractual partners because we identify with their situation. Even though benevolence is potentially part of larger firms' arrangements, it is in this study primarily found in arrangements between smaller firms and firms based on operations that involve self-employment.

In this study, I have displayed also how Building Group and Green Constructions increasingly renegotiate the trade-off between quality and price in favour of price, despite the greater uncertainty this implies for the production process. In some instances, the uncertainty is compensated by the use of masked staffing, however, it still pressures those subcontractors that have quality as their competitive advantage to reduce production costs

as a means to stay competitive. Such cost-cutting is primarily done either through organisational restructuring by externalising work, and thus a loss of control over the labour process, or through increased work-tempo. Either way, it jeopardises their competitive advantage and makes it more difficult to uphold the quality of work. Subsequently, and based upon this notion, I argue that firms with quality as their competitive advantage are more exposed than others as a result of the externalisation of work in the current subcontracting regime of construction management.

8.3 Identities at work: Current debates and future implications

Despite initial fears of an economic downturn and decreasing global investments due to the covid-19 pandemic, the Swedish building sector seems to have recovered and the construction rate for the coming years is currently predicted to be higher than the years preceding the pandemic (Byggföretagen, 2021).

One probable explanation of the limited impact of the pandemic on the construction industry is the financial aid that Swedish building companies received from the state during much of 2020 and 2021. Like that given to other sectors, this aid was thought to continuously stimulate the national economy and prevent a potential financial recession. Hence, while others have been prevented from going to their workplaces, construction workers have continued to work more or less as normal during the pandemic (Jeppson, 2020, p. 5).

According to reports, based on the number of bankruptcies since the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, the construction industry as a whole is one of the industries that has managed the pandemic's pressuring effect the best in a Swedish context (Niklasson, 2020). This is somewhat surprising considering the industry's reliance on posted workers and that some of the EU-member states closed their borders during a few months when the virus raged at its worst. However, Sweden's borders remained open and it appears also as if many posted workers overstayed as a result of closed borders in their home countries. That construction workers

remained active on project sites, despite restrictions in other sectors of the labour market shows the key role of construction work in society (Druker et al., 2021). At the same time, it also indicates potential vulnerabilities for construction workers as they continue to work and are more exposed to the virus. Particularly posted workers (as well as other also illegal migrant workers) are forced to make decisions based on 'precarious dualities', that is, a choice between avoiding being exposed to the virus but risk unemployment in the host country where they often rely on their job also for accommodation and other social services, or continue to work in the host country even if it means inadequate safety measures for example (Berntsen & Skowronek, 2021, pp. 10-11).

Hence, even though work has proceeded more or less as usual, there are indications on an EU-level of too few measures to ensure the safety for specifically posted workers (Rasnaca, 2020). Other reports witness also of increased stress and management related issues as a result of the pandemic, where especially foremen have experienced difficulties in leading the daily work due to covid-19 restrictions on project sites (Fransson, 2021). This is of potential interest for future research on the Swedish building sector, considering not least that findings in this study show how the structural transformation and new forms of work organisation impact the site management's—and specifically the foremen's work descriptions.

Already in an early stage of the pandemic there was a fear of tax-fraud and criminality with regards to the financial aid provided by the state. Due to the Tax Authority's secrecy, both the employers' association and trade unions argued that it was hard to control the conditions that resulted in government financial support ending up in right hands and with employers who genuinely needed the support, and not with firms and agencies engaged in criminal activity (Jeppson, 2020).

The ambition to prevent such working-life criminality has during recent years brought employers and trade unions together, and in early 2020 the joint effort of Byggmarknadskommissionen was launched. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this is an initiative from both employers and trade unions to map, investigate and suggest policy recommendations that promote a socially sustainable Swedish construction industry that builds standards of fair competition (Byggmarknadskommissionen, 2021a).

In September 2021, the commission published a debate article in one of Sweden's leading newspapers where they announced that they had pressed charges against twelve foreign companies for various forms of working-life criminality (Attefall & Begler, 2021). They stressed that the industry faces various challenges as a result of possibilities for foreign firms and workers to enter the Swedish labour market. Even though the authors argued that such internationalisation in general has a positive impact (in financial terms), they also pointed to potential issues of tax-fraud, violations of work environment, and exploitation of workers that manifests through various forms of bonded labour (Attefall & Begler, 2021). They argued that such fraud is systematic and pointed out that up to 30% of workers involved in construction work in the Stockholm area work illegally; predominantly in demolition, scaffolding, and also renovation work tied to the ROT deduction. Above all, they emphasised that it is foreign firms that engage in criminal activity and that this practice threatens to outcompete "honest companies through unfair competition" and that "measures need to be taken to protect a sound and fair building sector"[26]. The role of Swedish companies and their recruitment strategies were only briefly touched upon, by pointing out that due to hastened work-schedules, routines in the hiring process are not always followed.

I mention this because it denotes several tensions and conflicts identified in this study that are of interest for future research on the building sector. Firstly, such depictions portray a sector filled with unserious and criminal companies that take advantage of de-regulated markets to do whatever they please—to cheat the Swedish state and tax-payers through tax-fraud and by exploiting labour. What is more, it also contrasts with the depiction of the Nordic high-road model with quality production, fair competition and decent work (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021) that both employers and trade unions are keen on portraying. Hence, criminal activity in the building sector is portrayed as a threat from abroad, and as something new and alien to the Swedish building sector.

What these narratives fail to acknowledge is how Swedish building companies have recruited foreign workers through informal channels and

[26] My translation. The original text in Swedish: "Motverka att hederliga företag slås ut av oschysst konkurrens och värna om en sund och god byggbransch." (Attefall & Begler, 2021)

in unauthorised manners from CEE ever since the 1990's, as a means to reduce labour costs (Frank, 2013). Thus, foreign labour as a cheaper solution is and has been an integrated part of the Swedish building sector and of Swedish companies' recruitment strategies for several decades, even though the presence of both firms and workers from abroad has increased over time. The changing identity of the Swedish building sector as a result of external pressure is thus at least partly wrong, since the restructuring was initiated by Swedish companies themselves more than two decades ago, as they already then started to renegotiate the trade-off between quality and price. That foreign labour is an integrated part of Swedish companies' recruitment strategies is visible also in this study, as viewed through the practices of masked staffing, and how for example Green Constructions has deliberately subcontracted Polonia Concrete as a means to cut labour costs, while maintaining full control of the labour process.

The narrative of foreign construction workers as a threat to the Swedish building sector is neither new nor unique to current debates. In the years preceding the EU enlargement in 2004/07, originating in the French referendum on the new EU-constitution, the public debate was saturated with fears of 'the Polish plumber', and that the possibility for workers from CEE to work in western Europe would lead to unemployment among native workers (Garapich, 2016; Spigelman, 2013). As touched upon in previous chapters, the narrative of the 'Polish worker' persists in the contemporary Swedish building sector, even though it no longer necessarily implies that foreign construction workers compete with their Swedish colleagues over work. Rather, today 'the Polish worker' is used more or less as an umbrella term by both site management and the Swedish workers on project sites, while referring to foreign workers from any CEE-country. This signals processes of othering (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) and how both management and workers often distance themselves from posted workers by drawing on specific characteristics that the segmentation of posted work has come to represent (Frank, 2013); that is, the division of labour that sees foreign workers involved with less-qualified work-tasks. Such developments are evident in this study, where posted workers are engaged in predominantly low-skilled work that builds on capacity subcontracting arrangements primarily because they are cheaper than Swedish workers.

I argue that future research on Swedish construction work and specifically those with a focus on the use of posted work, would benefit from exploring how these structural transformations manifest through everyday interactions between different groups of workers at project sites. More precisely, how tensions and conflicts lead to processes of 'othering' and generate essentialist explanations of different work cultures based on constructions of ethnicity. For example, narratives of 'the Polish worker' are used to contrast either the work of, or the skill of, Swedish workers, which implies that just like the portrayal of the Swedish building sector as a role model, there is also a romantic and idealised narrative of the Swedish builder. This collective identity of the Swedish builder is based on the embodiment of craft-centred principles, a relative autonomy, and occupational pride that has been fostered by an institutional and political context in which strong trade unions through the Swedish model of industrial relations traditionally has guaranteed the worker's influence in the workplace.

With regards to this development, current debates also centre on how new forms of work organisations contingent on subcontracting, limit the number of apprenticeships in the Swedish building sector (Iverus, 2021). As noted elsewhere, possibilities for apprenticeships have played a key part in the development of a Swedish building sector along the 'Nordic high-road' with high quality production, high wage-levels and high productivity (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, p. 185). It is in other words crucial also to the construction of a collective identity that builds on skilled manual work and craft-based knowledge. Yet, strategies based on minimising in-house resources and directly employed craftsmen have potentially harmful effects on the continuous regrowth of construction workers in Sweden. Such trends are visible in Haakestad and Friberg's (2017) research on the Norwegian building sector, which demonstrates how employers thought that the externalisation of work had gone too far, and that both companies in the study and the employers' association supported measures such as apprentice clauses in public tendering (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017, p. 13). Similar initiatives have been launched at a local level in Sweden, where Skellefteå municipality recently legislated on the need for building companies who are publicly tendered to have their own apprentices (Niklasson, 2021b).

Hence, the loss or de-construction of the collective identity is intimately bound to the restructuring of work and new forms of management systems that rely to a further extent on unskilled labour and intensified supervision (Haakestad & Friberg, 2017). This breeds neo-Taylorist work practices and management principles in the Swedish building sector, and challenges not only the traditional image of the Swedish building sector branded with high-quality production and high productivity, but also the international outlook of the Swedish model and the Swedish labour market as characterised by high job-quality, high educational levels, and workers' overall influence on the labour process.

8.4 Popular summary in Swedish

Svensk byggindustri genomgår stora förändringar. Under det senaste decenniet har byggtakten varit den högsta på drygt 50 år och trots farhågor om en nedgång som en följd av Covid-19 pandemin så har svensk byggindustri kommit starkare ur pandemin än åren innan den (Byggföretagen, 2021).

Det senaste decenniets byggboom är påtaglig inte minst i storstadsområden där nya byggprojekt tornar upp i nästan varje kvarter och där stadsbilden är under konstant förändring. I många avseenden ser de flesta byggarbetsplatser ut precis som de alltid gjort med byggnadsställningar, plastemballage som fladdrar i vinden, bråte och skräp som ligger utspritt huller om buller, och med uppmaningar, rop och skratt från betongare, snickare och takläggare. Men mycket har också förändrats. Den uppmärksamme märker att det i många fall inte talas endast svenska på byggarbetsplatserna utan istället andra europeiska språk, och den som intresserar sig än mer ser att det sällan är enstaka entreprenörfirmor som ansvarar på byggarbetsplatsen, utan en mängd olika underentreprenörer ansvariga för olika delar av byggprocessen.

I denna studie argumenterar jag för att svensk byggindustri genomgår en strukturomvandling. Stora delar av produktionen läggs idag ut på entreprenad och byggföretag, stora som små, förlitar sig på underentreprenörer i större utsträckning än tidigare. Baserat på empiriskt material (intervjuer och deltagande observationer) från två byggföretag

med de fiktiva namnen Building Group och Green Constructions, visar jag hur en rad olika strategier används med syfte att öka den organisatoriska flexibiliteten, det vill säga, att snabbt kunna omorganisera och anpassa sin produktion som en följd av förändringar i konjunkturen (Streeck, 1987: 290).

Bland annat identifierar jag fyra olika former av utkontraktering, närmare bestämt kapacitets-, specialisering-, och leverantörskontraktering (Neo, 2010), samt det som jag har valt att kalla för *maskerad bemanning*. Denna fjärde form skiljer sig från de andra tre eftersom den egentligen innebär en form av intern kontraktering, alltså en bemanningsstrategi, under förevändningen att det handlar om att lägga ut arbetet på entreprenad som vid utkontraktering.

Jag visar att det skifte i styrning och kontroll av arbete, det vill säga det skifte i arbetsledning som utkontraktering vanligtvis innebär, uteblir i vissa typer av överenskommelser och att snarare än att bara koordinera arbetet som i de andra tre formerna av utkontraktering, så arbetsleder huvudentreprenören det dagliga arbetet i dessa. Detta inkluderar såväl att ha uppsikt över som att styra arbetsprocessen och innebär alltså att trots att delar av produktionen läggs ut på entreprenad till externa aktörer, så är det huvudentreprenören som styr och leder arbetet på plats. För att förtydliga: Trots att produktionen läggs ut på entreprenad, bygger alltså dessa avtal på principer om bemanning. Det är dessa jag har valt att kalla för maskerad bemanning, och maskerad bemanning används alltså som ett icke-tillåtet sätt att förmedla och bruka arbetskraft genom underentreprenörer.

Den främsta anledningen till framväxten av maskerad bemanning är att det blir billigare för huvudentreprenören att ta in den arbetskraft som behövs via entreprenadfirmor än att hyra in via bemanningsfirmor, eftersom det som köps via entreprenad köps på paketpris istället för per arbetad timme som är fallet med bemanningsföretag. I sin position som huvudentreprenör förskjuter alltså företag ansvaret för att så kostnadseffektivt som möjligt utföra arbetet till underentreprenörer, som i konkurrens med andra firmor i sin tur försöker vara så effektiv som möjligt genom att utnyttja konkurrensfördelar, ofta genom att dra ner på lönekostnader och antingen köpa in delar av arbetet via ytterligare

entreprenadfirmor, eller genom att rekrytera utländsk arbetskraft som är villig att arbeta mot lägre ersättning.

Det är i ljuset av den här institutionella kontexten som framväxten av maskerad bemanning ska förstås. Svensk byggindustri karakteriseras av en hög grad av industrialisering, vilket innebär att stora delar av produktionen flyttats till tillverkningsindustrin och att mycket av arbetet innebär att montera och installera pre-fabricerade produkter snarare än att bygga på plats. Den rationalisering av produktionen som industrialiseringen innebär ökar också andelen icke-kvalificerat arbete på själva byggarbetsplatserna, vilket i sin tur öppnar för att kunna använda mindre kvalificerad och därmed också billigare arbetskraft. Detta riskerar att påverka såväl produktivitet som kvalité på det som byggs, och sedan 2006 har också produktiviteten i svensk byggindustri sjunkit (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021, p. 186). I många avseenden representerar alltså detta ett stort avsteg från vad som traditionellt sett karakteriserat den svenska byggindustrin med höga utbildningsnivåer, hög produktivitet, hög kvalité och relativt sett höga löner.

En av anledningarna till den traditionellt sett höga produktiviteten är den svenska arbetsmarknadsmodellen, eller det som också kallas för partsmodellen där arbetsgivare och fackföreningar gemensamt förhandlar fram de avtal och regler som ska gälla på svensk arbetsmarknad (Kjellberg, 2017). På grund av fackföreningarnas relativt sett (ur ett internationellt perspektiv) starka inflytande på svensk arbetsmarknad har arbetsgivare och företag traditionellt sett tvingats öka sin produktivitet för att kunna vinstmaximera (Sorge & Streeck, 1988; Streeck, 1991).

I Sverige används inte heller minimilöner som i stora delar av EU, utan förhandlingarna mellan arbetsmarknadens parter utmynnar i kollektivavtal som reglerar bland annat lönenivåer och arbetstid. Det var inom ramen för denna den svenska modellen som arbetsmarknadens parter år 2000 förhandlade fram det första så kallade bemanningsavtalet, som avsåg bland annat arbetstagare anställda av bemanningsföretag inom byggindustrin (Bergström et al., 2007). Bemanningsavtalet innebär att personal inhyrd via bemanningsföretag ska omfattas av kollektivavtal och därmed förebygga osund konkurrens och 'social dumping'. Genom att bemanningsindustrin knöts till kollektivavtalsmodellen var förhoppningen att arbetstagare inte skulle ställs mot varandra på en

arbetsplats beroende på om de var fast och tillsvidare anställda eller tillfälligt anställda via inhyrningsföretag.

Dessutom innebär utvidgningen av EU 2004 och 2007, då tolv länder från Central-, Syd-, och Östeuropa fick medlemskap, att frågan om den fria rörligheten på EUs inre marknad aktualiseras, inte minst med avseende på de regionala skillnaderna i inkomstnivåer och levnadsstandard mellan de nya och de redan etablerade medlemsländerna (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021). Den fria rörligheten innefattar arbete, tjänster, varor och kapital och regleras av olika och till viss del motsägande direktiv. Till exempel reglerar direktivet för fri rörlighet av varor att det är de regler i ett företags hemland som gäller vid försäljning av varorna, medan det i direktivet om den fria rörligheten av arbete är mottagarlandets lagar som gäller (Arnholtz & Lillie, 2020a).

Sådana spänningar och motsättningar i lagstiftning används av både svenska och utländska bygg- och entreprenadfirmor för att vinna konkurrensfördelar genom utstationering av utländska arbetstagare i Sverige (Lillie, 2010). Utstationering av arbetare inom EU innebär för svensk byggindustri att utländska företag som vinner upphandlingar i Sverige kan välja att tillfälligt stationera arbetstagare som är anställda i annat EU land till Sverige, under en viss tidsperiod. Likadant är det möjligt för svenska byggföretag och mindre entreprenadfirmor att i sin tur rekrytera utländsk arbetskraft genom utstationering. Med tanke på de redan nämnda regionala skillnaderna i inkomstnivåer och levnadsstandard inom EU finns det dessutom uppenbara incitament för utländska arbetstagare att söka sig till Sverige för att arbeta (Arnholtz & Ibsen, 2021).

Utstationering av arbetskraft styrs av EUs utstationeringsdirektiv som reglerar till exempel både arbetstid, lön, semesterdagar och arbetsmiljö. 2018 ändrades skrivelsen kring arvode i utstationeringsdirektivet till ”lön” istället för ”minimilön” vilket innebär att det nu går att kräva att utstationerade arbetstagare ska ersättas med samma betalning som de kollektivavtalsförhandlade löner som utgår till svenska byggarbetare, snarare än de minimilöner som gäller i landet som den utstationerade arbetskraften är utstationerad från (Nyström, 2020, pp. 27-28). I praktiken är det däremot svårt att kontrollera att detta efterlevs, bland annat eftersom många av de utstationerade arbetstagarna antingen saknar

kunskap om de nya reglerna eller för att de är rädda att förlora framtida inkomster genom att ifrågasätta de förhållanden de arbetar under.

Det är med andra ord tydligt att svensk byggindustri genomgår stora förändringar som ett resultat av de nya institutionella förutsättningarna som ökad industrialisering, användningen av utstationerad arbetskraft och en tillbakapressad svensk arbetsmarknadsmodell innebär. Tillgången på arbetskraft från andra EU-länder med lägre lönenivåer och inte minst regler kring minimilöner underminerar den svenska kollektivavtalsförhandlade modellen. Istället för att företag hyr in extrapersonal via bemanningsföretag vid toppar i konjunkturen, så främjas nya former av arbetsorganisation som bygger på att en stor del, om inte hela produktionen, läggs ut på entreprenad. Med tanke också på den långtgående industrialiseringen och företagens generellt sett tveksamma inställning till att ha för många anställda knutna till sig vid en eventuell finansiell nedgång, så har andra och billigare sätt att organisera arbete utvecklas i den svenska byggindustrin.

Det är alltså i denna kontext som jag visar att maskerad bemanning har utvecklats. Samtidigt argumenterar jag för att maskerad bemanning kan förstås på två sätt och som ett resultat av en mer eller mindre medvetet implementerad strategi (Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Å ena sidan kan maskerad bemanning förstås som ett resultat av en misslyckad utkontraktering där huvudentreprenören på grund av underentreprenörens bristfälliga arbetsledning kliver in och arbetsleder det dagliga arbetet, trots att arbetet utförs av underentreprenörens anställda. Å andra sidan förekommer maskerad bemanning också som en från början medveten bemanningsstrategi bland byggföretag med syftet att minska produktionskostnader, bli mer konkurrenskraftiga och för att öka sitt kapital.

Dessutom, oavsett om maskerad bemanning används som en mer eller mindre medveten bemanningsstrategi, så vittnar det om både centraliserat och decentraliserat beslutsfattande inom byggföretagen i det avseende att det förvisso är den högsta ledningen som sätter ramarna för det handlingsutrymme som sen platscheferna på varje byggarbetsplats har att förhålla sig till. Samtidigt är det i stor utsträckning platscheferna som bestämmer vilka underleverantörer de väljer att samarbeta med och hur budgeten ska spenderas. Platschefer och arbetsledare har med andra ord

också handlingsutrymme och möjligheter att kontrollera och styra hur det dagliga arbetet på de olika byggarbetsplatserna ser ut (Löwstedt et al., 2018).

Som nämnt tidigare så särskiljer jag maskerad bemanning från de andra formerna av utkontraktering i studien eftersom maskerad bemanning i själva verket är en bemanningsstrategi och ett sätt för byggföretag att minska sina produktionskostnader genom att köpa tjänster via entreprenadfirmor till paketpris istället för att hyra in tillfällig arbetskraft med timlön via bemanningsföretag. Förutom minskade produktionskostnader, större kapitalvinster och de konkurrensfördelar som det innebär att använda maskerad bemanning så visar jag också på två övergripande motiv. För det första, maskerad bemanning innebär möjligheten att bibehålla full kontroll av arbetsprocessen trots att arbetet läggs ut på entreprenad och att därmed både arbetsgivaransvar och produktionskostnader förskjuts mot entreprenadfirman. För det andra, just produktionskostnader blir kraftigt reducerade eftersom entreprenadfirman köps på fast pris och inte per arbetad timme som är fallet med extrapersonal via legitima bemanningsföretag. Därmed blir maskerad bemanning ett sätt att uppnå organisatorisk flexibilitet samtidigt som kontrollen av det dagliga arbetet och därmed också kvalitésäkringen av arbetet som utförs bibehålls.

Samtidigt visar det också att strategier i arbetsorganisation styrs framförallt av vinstmaximering (Hyman, 1987) och att avreglerade produkt- och arbetsmarknader (i detta fall den interna EU marknaden) uppmuntrar informella överenskommelser kring de avtal som villkorar hur arbete läggs ut på entreprenad (Thiel, 2010). Detta blir särskilt intressant i förhållande till byggindustrin med tanke på den inneboende osäkerheten kring byggkontrakt där oförutsedda händelser, förseningar och arbetsledningens svårigheter att överblicka arbetet på ofta stora byggarbetsplatser riskerar att leda till extra arbete och därmed också extra kostnader (Thiel, 2010).

Framväxten och användandet av maskerad bemanning i svensk byggindustri åskådliggör hur nuvarande arbetsmarknadsregler inom EU förvisso generar stora mängder arbetstillfällen inom svensk byggindustri, men det belyser också hur svenska byggföretag får möjlighet att rekrytera billig arbetskraft under oreglerade former. Maskerad bemanning är alltså

inte bara ett sätt att uppnå organisatorisk flexibilitet, utan också ett billigare, om än inte tillåtet, sätt att uppnå organisatorisk flexibilitet.

Även om jag i denna studie identifierar fyra olika former av utkontraktering, så utesluter jag inte att det finns ytterligare andra former av arbetsorganisation inom svensk byggindustri. Med tanke på den föränderliga institutionella kontexten med fortsatt teknologisk utveckling, osäkra produktmarknader knutna till den ekonomiska konjunkturen och inte minst att den svenska arbetsmarknadsmodellen är under fortsatt press från konkurrerande EU-lagstiftning, så är det snarare troligt att både svenska och utländska företag kommer utnyttja de spänningar och motsättningar som uppstår i regelverken och utveckla nya sätt inom vilka arbete organiseras.

Det finns alltså mycket att hämta i forskning kring svensk byggindustri framöver, inte minst i användandet av underleverantörer och utländsk arbetskraft. Speciellt kontroll- och styrningssystem är fruktbara analytiska ingångar med tanke på fortsatta industrialiseringsprocesser inom byggindustrin, och också för företags möjligheter till förkortade produktionstider och att ytterligare spara in på personalkostnader.

I denna studie utgår jag emellertid också från så kallade kontrollmekanismer (MacKenzie, 2008) för att bättre förstå vid vilka tillfällen och hur och varför olika former av utkontraktering används, samt för att förstå de mellan-organisatoriska relationer som de olika avtalen och överenskommelserna resulterar i. Dessutom, genom att utgå från de kontrollmekanismer som entreprenad-relationerna bygger på, är det också möjligt att bättre identifiera de strategier som företagen använder sig av för att hantera risker och osäkerhet kopplat till utkontrakteringen.

Jag menar att riskerna med utkontraktering skiljer sig åt beroende på vem som köps in via entreprenad och vilken typ av utkontraktering det innebär. För att hantera dessa risker använder sig byggföretagen i denna studie av tre olika kontrollmekanismer: möjligheten till sanktioner genom kontrakt och lagstiftning, kontroll genom incitament för framtida projekt, och till sist kontroll genom välvilja (MacKenzie, 2008).

Den första kontrollmekanismen, möjligheten till sanktioner genom kontrakt och lagstiftning, signalerar den formella och lagligt bundna kontrollen som följer med kontraktsskrivning. Detta är den kontroll som huvudentreprenörer främst lutar sig mot vid kapacitets-utkontrakteringar

där underentreprenörer anlitas på grund av att de är det billigaste alternativet. Dessa underentreprenörer har med andra ord pris som sin konkurrensfördel, oftast för att de i sin tur använder sig av utstationerad arbetskraft som de rekryterar själva eller via en tredje part från andra EU-länder. Samtidigt är denna form av mellan-organisatorisk kontroll relativt illa lämpad för byggindustrin på grund av den tidigare nämnda inneboende osäkerheten i byggkontrakt, där oförutsedda händelser och andra förseningar inte bara drabbar en specifik del av bygget utan också de moment som följer. Med andra ord, även om huvudentreprenören kan ställa underentreprenörer till svars och kräva dem på finansiell ersättning, så innebär eventuella avbrott i ”flödet” att produktionen stannar av och att det uppstår förseningar och komplikationer i andra delar av bygget.

Att både Building Group och Green Constructions i denna studie kontrakterar underleverantörer utifrån pris trots att det innebär en större osäkerhet signalerar att de är beredda att ta kalkylerade risker, det vill säga att de är beredda på att det kan uppstå komplikationer men att det låga pris som underentreprenörerna erbjuder är väl värt risken.

Med kontroll genom incitament för framtida projekt, betonar jag att den mellan-organisatoriska kontrollen består i möjligheten för underentreprenören till framtida samarbeten och att detta blir tydligt i avtal där huvudentreprenören och underentreprenören har samarbetat eller känner till varandra sen tidigare. Till skillnad mot underentreprenörer som kontrakteras på pris, så har dessa underentreprenörer kvalité snarare än pris som sin konkurrensfördel. Denna kontrollmekanism reglerar alltså främst de avtal som jag hänvisar till som specialist-utkontraktering.

Slutligen, välvilja som mellan-organisatorisk kontroll framhåller att också normer och empati spelar roll och att vi i vissa situationer beslutar oss för att lita på den andra parten, till exempel på grund av att vi känner igen oss i den andra partens situation, eller på grund av medlidande. Även om välvilja i viss utsträckning kan vara en del av avtal också mellan större företag, så identifierar jag det i denna studie främst i överenskommelser mellan egen-företagare och andra mindre firmor.

Sammanfattningsvis visar denna studie att Building Group och Green Constructions omförhandlar avvägningen mellan kvalité och pris i favör för pris i deras beslut att lägga ut olika delar av produktionen på entreprenad, trots den osäkerhet som utkontraktering innebär. I vissa

avseenden kompenseras osäkerheten genom användningen av maskerad bemanning, men samtidigt pressar detta de firmor som har kvalité som sin konkurrensfördel till att minska sina produktionskostnader. Antingen innebär sådan kostnadsreducering att underentreprenören omorganiserar och minskar sin egen personalstyrka genom att lägga ut delar av produktionen på entreprenad, eller att de ökar sitt arbetstempo. Det förstnämnda innebär att de riskerar att tappa kontroll över arbetet eftersom de överlåter till andra att göra ett tillräckligt bra arbete och att hinna klart, vilket i sin tur leder till att deras kontroll över produktionen minskar och att de riskerar sitt rykte i förhållande till huvudentreprenören. Att öka arbetstempot är i sin tur lika vanskligt eftersom också det riskerar innebära att slutprodukten är av sämre kvalité. Oavsett vilket riskerar skiftet i avvägningen mellan kvalité och pris att äventyra deras konkurrensfördel gentemot andra billigare firmor som använder sig av utstationerad arbetskraft.

Avslutningsvis argumenterar jag i denna studie för att byggföretagens ändrade praxis i avvägningen mellan kvalité och pris sätter ett frågetecken vid inte bara den traditionella bilden av svensk byggindustri som ett föredöme i avseenden kring kvalité och produktivitet, utan det ifrågasätter också den internationella bilden av Sverige och den svenska modellen, inte minst den svenska partsmodellen, med en arbetsmarknad karakteriserad av arbetskvalité, höga utbildningsnivåer och anställdas inflytande över sitt arbete.

References

Ackroyd, S., & Karlsson, J. C. (2014). Critical Realism, Research Techniques, and Research Designs. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney, & S. Vincent (Eds.), *Studying organizations using critical realism: A practical guide*.

Adler, P. (1995). 'Democratic Taylorism': the Toyota production system at NUMMI. In S. Babson (Ed.), *Lean work: Empowerment and exploitation in the global auto industry*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Aldrich, H. E., & Pfeffer, J. (1976). Environments of organizations. *Annual Review of Sociology, 2*(1), 79-105.

Apleberger, L., Jonsson, R., & Åhman, P. (2007). *Byggandets industrialisering: nulägesbeskrivning*: Sveriges byggindustrier.

Applebaum, H. A. (1999). *Construction workers, USA*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Arbetsmiljöverket. (2021a). *Farlig arbetsmiljö och olaglig arbetskraft på byggen*. Accessed 04 May 2021 from the Swedish Work Environment Authority: https://www.av.se/press/farlig-arbetsmiljo-och-olaglig-arbetskraft-pa-byggen/.

Arbetsmiljöverket. (2021b). *Färre utländska arbetstagare utstationeras i Sverige.* Accessed 12 February 2021 from the Swedish Work Environment Authority: https://www.av.se/nyheter/2021/farre-utlandska-arbetstagare-utstationeras-i-sverige/

Armstrong, P. (1989). Management, labour process and agency. *Work, employment and society, 3*(3), 307-322.

Arnholtz, J., & Andersen, S. K. (2018). Extra-Institutional Changes under Pressure from Posting. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 56*(2), 395-417.

Arnholtz, J., & Hansen, N. W. (2013). Labour market specific institutions and the working conditions of labour migrants: The case of Polish migrant labour in the Danish labour market. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 34*(3), 401-422.

Arnholtz, J., & Ibsen, C. L. (2021). Sustaining 'High Road'Employment Relations in the Swedish and Danish Construction Industries. In D. Belman, J. Druker, & G. White (Eds.), *Work and Labor Relations in the Construction Industry*. New York: Routledge.

Arnholtz, J., & Lillie, N. (2020a). European Integration and the Reconfiguration of National Industrial Relations: Posted Work as a Driver of Institutional Change. In J. Arnholtz & N. Lillie (Eds.), *Posted Work in the European Union: The Political Economy of Free Movement*. New York: Routledge.

Arnholtz, J., & Lillie, N. (Eds.). (2020b). *Posted Work in the European Union: The Political Economy of Free Movement*. New York: Routledge.

Atkinson, J. (1984). Manpower strategies for flexible organisations. *Journal of Personnel management, 16*(8), 28-31.

Atkinson, P. (2009). Ethics and ethnography. *Twenty-First Century Society, 4*(1), 17-30.

Attefall, S., & Begler, A.-M. (2021, September 15). DN Debatt. "Omfattande fusk på byggen – tolv företag polisanmäls". *Dagens Nyheter*. Retrieved from https://www.dn.se/debatt/omfattande-fusk-pa-byggen-tolv-foretag-polisanmals/

Bachmann, R. (2001). Trust, power and control in trans-organizational relations. *Organization studies, 22*(2), 337-365.

Bélanger, J. (2006). Technology and work. In M. Korczynski, R. Hodson, & P. Edwards (Eds.), *Social theory at work* (pp. 325-355). Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press.

Bélanger, J., & Edwards, P. (2007). The conditions promoting compromise in the workplace. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 45*(4), 713-734.

Belman, D., Druker, J., & White, G. (Eds.). (2021). *Work and Labor Relations in the Construction Industry: An International Perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Bengtsson, E. (2016). Social dumping cases in the Swedish Labour Court in the wake of Laval, 2004–2010. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 37*(1), 23-42.

Bengtsson, J., Hoffmann, J., Karlsson, V., Lindholm, J., & Löfström, J. (2018, March 05). Debatt. Byggbranschen: "Utländska bolag måste konkurrera på lika villkor". *Dagens Industri*. Retrieved from https://www.di.se/debatt/byggbranschen-utlandska-bolag-maste-konkurrera-pa-lika-villkor/

Bengtsson, S. (2018, February 05). NCC Montage rekryterar i Polen för den nordiska marknaden. *Byggvärlden*. Retrieved from https://www.byggvarlden.se/ncc-montage-rekryterar-i-polen-for-den-nordiska-marknaden-119977/nyhet.html

Bennewitz, E. (2019, December 09). Kraftig ökning av utländsk arbetskraft. *Byggindustrin*.

Berglund, I. (2009). *Byggarbetsplatsen som skola-eller skolan som byggarbetsplats? En studie av byggnadsarbetares yrkesutbildning.* Stockholms universitet, Stockholm.

Berglund, L., Johansson, J., Johansson, M., Nygren, M., Samuelsson, B., & Stenberg, M. (2017). *Risker och säkerhetsarbete i byggbranschen: En kunskapssammanställning baserad på internationell forskning*. Retrieved from https://www.av.se/arbetsmiljoarbete-och-inspektioner/publikationer/rapporter/?hl=rapporter#5

Bergström, O., Håkansson, K., Isidorsson, T., & Walter, L. (2007). *Den nya arbetsmarknaden: Bemanningsbranschens etablering i Sverige*. Lund: Academia Adacta.

Berntsen, L. (2016). Reworking labour practices: on the agency of unorganized mobile migrant construction workers. *Work, employment and society, 30*(3), 472-488.

Berntsen, L. E., & Skowronek, N. (2021). State-of-the-Art Research Overview of the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Workers in the EU and the Netherlands. *Nijmegen Sociology of Law Working Paper Series, 2021*(01).

Björkman, T., & Lundqvist, K. (2013). Lean ur historiskt perspektiv. I Sederblad, P (red.) Lean i arbetslivet. In: Stockholm: Liber.

Black, R., Engbersen, G., & Okólski, M. (2010). *A continent moving west?: EU enlargement and labour migration from Central and Eastern Europe*: Amsterdam University Press.

Blauner, R. (1964). *Alienation and freedom: The factory worker and his industry*: The University of Chicago Press.

Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (2007). *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Verso.

Borg, K. (2018a, June 08). NCC lönedumpar: "Har skett systematiskt och medvetet". *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/ncc-lonedumpar-har-skett-bade-systematiskt-och-medvetet/

Borg, K. (2018b, June 08). NCC: "Vi har gjort fel och betalar tillbaka" *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/ncc-vi-har-gjort-fel-och-betalar-tillbaka/

Borg, K. (2018c, June 08). Polska arbetarna på NCC: "Vi känner oss lurade". *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/polska-arbetarna-pa-ncc-vi-kanner-oss-lurade/

Bosch, G. (2004). Towards a new standard employment relationship in Western Europe. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 42*(4), 617-636.

Bosch, G., & Philips, P. (2003). *Building chaos: an international comparison of deregulation in the construction industry*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.

Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Bresnen, M., Wray, K., Bryman, A., Beardsworth, A., Ford, J., & Keil, E. (1985). The flexibility of recruitment in the construction industry: formalisation or re-casualisation? *Sociology, 19*(1), 108-124.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*: Oxford university press.

Buckley, M. (2012). From Kerala to Dubai and back again: Construction migrants and the global economic crisis. *Geoforum, 43*(2), 250-259.

Buckley, M. (2014). On the Work of Urbanization: Migration, Construction Labor, and the Commodity Moment. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 104*(2), 338-347.

Buckley, M., Zendel, A., Biggar, J., Frederiksen, L., & Wells, J. (2016). *Migrant Work & Employment in the Construction Sector*. Retrieved from Geneva: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_538487/lang--en/index.htm

Burawoy, M. (1979). *Manufacturing consent*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Burawoy, M. (1985). *The politics of production: Factory regimes under capitalism and socialism*. London: Verso Books.

Burawoy, M. (2009). *The extended case method: Four countries, four decades, four great transformations, and one theoretical tradition*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Bursell, B. (1984). *Anläggarna: en studie av yrkesvillkor och yrkeskultur i väg-och vattenbyggnadsbranschen* (Vol. 102): Nordiska museet.

Bygballe, L. E., Håkansson, H., & Jahre, M. (2013). A critical discussion of models for conceptualizing the economic logic of construction. *Construction Management and Economics, 31*(2), 104-118.

Bygballe, L. E., Jahre, M., & Swärd, A. (2010). Partnering relationships in construction: A literature review. *Journal of purchasing and supply management, 16*(4), 239-253.

Byggföretagen. (2020a). 30 största byggföretagen 2019. Retrieved from https://byggforetagen.se/app/uploads/2020/11/30-St%C3%B6rsta-2019-1.pdf

Byggföretagen. (2020b). Förvärvsarbetande i byggindustrin. Retrieved from https://byggforetagen.se/statistik/forvarvsarbetande-i-byggindustrin/

Byggföretagen. (2020c). Utstationerade arbetstagare. Retrieved from https://byggforetagen.se/statistik/utstationeringar/

Byggföretagen. (2021). *Konjunkturrapport mars 2021*. Retrieved from https://byggforetagen.se/statistik/byggkonjunkturen-20211/

Byggföretagen (Ed.) (2020d). *Sund konkurrens i byggbranschen - En forskningsantologi*: Byggföretagen.

Byggmarknadskommissionen. (2020a). *Kriminella konkurser*. Retrieved from https://www.byggmarknadskommissionen.se/alla-rapporter

Byggmarknadskommissionen. (2020b). *Pandemin och risken för ökad arbetslivskriminalitet*. Retrieved from https://www.byggmarknadskommissionen.se/alla-rapporter

Byggmarknadskommissionen. (2020c). *Rotavdrag och en sund byggmarknad*. Retrieved from https://www.byggmarknadskommissionen.se/alla-rapporter

Byggmarknadskommissionen. (2021a). Byggmarknadskommisionens uppdrag. Retrieved from https://www.byggmarknadskommissionen.se/uppdrag

Byggmarknadskommissionen. (2021b). *Hoten mot byggnadsarbetarnas kollektivavtal*. Retrieved from https://www.byggmarknadskommissionen.se/hoten-mot-byggnadsarbetarnas-kollektivavtal

Byggnads. (2021a). Ackord – gemensamt engagemang med vinster för såväl arbetslag som arbetsgivare. Retrieved from https://www.byggnads.se/avtal/2017/ackord/

Byggnads. (2021b). *Det smärtsamma priset - Om belastning och skador i byggbranschen*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnads.se/aktuellt/2021/ny-undersokning-9-av-10-byggnadsarbetare-upplever-smartor-kopplade-till-sitt-arbete/

Byggnads. (2021c). Näta – Nätverket för kvinnor i Byggnads. Retrieved from https://www.byggnads.se/medlem/kvinna-i-byggnads/

Böheim, R., & Mühlberger, U. (2009). Dependent self-employment: workers between employment and self-employment in the UK. *Zeitschrift für ArbeitsmarktForschung, 42*(2), 182-195.

Carruthers, B. G., & Espeland, W. N. (1991). Accounting for rationality: Double-entry bookkeeping and the rhetoric of economic rationality. *American Journal of Sociology, 97*(1), 31-69.

Castells, M. (2011). *The Rise of the Network Society*. Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Christensen, N. (2018). Upprörd debatt om rotavdrag. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/upprord-debatt-om-rot-avdrag-javligt-korkat-att-avskaffa/

Clegg, S., & Dunkerley, D. (1980). *Organization, Class and Control* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Coe, N. M., Johns, J., & Ward, K. (2009). Managed flexibility: labour regulation, corporate strategies and market dynamics in the Swedish temporary staffing industry. *Journal of European Urban Regional Studies, 16*(1), 65-85.

Copes, A., & Peterson, T. (1990). Familjeföretagen och den informella sektorn: några begreppsliga och operationella problem. *Sociologisk Forskning*, 22-33.

Cremers, J. (2011). *In search of cheap labour in Europe: Working and living conditions of posted workers*: CLR/EFBWW/International Books.

Cremers, J. (2016). Construction labour, mobility and non-standard employment. *HesaMag, 13*, 17-22.

Cremers, J., Dølvik, J. E., & Bosch, G. (2007). Posting of workers in the single market: attempts to prevent social dumping and regime competition in the EU. *Industrial Relations Journal, 38*(6), 524-541.

Cushen, J., & Thompson, P. (2016). Financialization and value: why labour and the labour process still matter. *Work, employment and society, 30*(2), 352-365.

Danermark, B., Ekström, M., & Karlsson, J. C. (2019). *Explaining society: Critical realism in the social sciences*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Davis, G. F., & Cobb, J. A. (2010). Resource dependence theory: Past and future. In *Stanford's organization theory renaissance, 1970–2000*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Denissen, A. M. (2010). Crossing the line: How women in the building trades interpret and respond to sexual conduct at work. *Journal of contemporary ethnography, 39*(3), 297-327.

DiMaggio, P., & Powell, W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 147-160.

Drahokoupil, J. (2015). *The outsourcing challenge: Organizing workers across fragmented production networks* Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.

Drahokoupil, J., & Fabo, B. (2019). Outsourcing, offshoring and the deconstruction of employment: New and old challenges. In A. Serrano & M. Jepsen (Eds.), *The Deconstruction of Employment as a Political Question* (pp. 33-61). Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Druker, J., White, G., & Belman, D. (2021). Introduction. In D. Belman, J. Druker, & G. White (Eds.), *Work and Labor Relations in the Construction Industry*. New York: Routledge.

Dølvik, J. E., & Eldring, L. (2017). *Labour Mobility in the Enlarged Single European Market* (Vol. 32). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

EC. (96/71). *Directive 96/71 concerning the posting of workers*: European Commission: Employment, Social affairs, and Inclusion.

EC. (2018/957). *Directive (EU) 2018/957 of the 2018 amending Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services*: European Commission: Employment, Social affairs, and Inclusion.

Eccles, R. G. (1981). The quasifirm in the construction industry. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 2*(4), 335-357.

Edwards, P. (2010). Developing labour process analysis: Themes from industrial sociology and future directions. In P. Thompson & C. Smith (Eds.), *Working life: Renewing labour process analysis* (pp. 29-46). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Edwards, R. (1982). Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century. *Science and Society, 46*(2), 237-240.

Edwards, T. (2004). Corporate governance, industrial relations and trends in company-level restructuring in Europe: convergence towards the Anglo-American model? *Industrial Relations Journal, 35*(6), 518-535.

Eldén, S. (2020). *Forskningsetik: Vägval i samhällsvetenskapliga studier*. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.

Engbersen, G., Snel, E., & De Boom, J. (2010). A van full of Poles': Liquid migration from Central and Eastern Europe. In R. Black, G. Engbersen, M. Okólski, & C. Panţîru (Eds.), *A continent moving west: EU Enlargement and Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 115-140). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Ericson, B., & Johansson, B.-M. (1994). *Bostadsbyggandet i idé och praktik: Om kunskaper och föreställningar inom byggsektorn*. Lund: Lund University Press.

Esbati, A., & Weidby, C. (2019, November 26). Debatt: Regelverket är riggad för osund konkurrens. *Dagens Arbete*. Retrieved from https://da.se/2019/11/regelverket-ar-riggat-for-osund-konkurrens/

Espeland, W. N., & Stevens, M. L. (2008). A sociology of quantification. *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie, 49*(3), 401-436.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

EU. (2006). *Enlargement two years after: an economic evaluation*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/pages/publication_summary7550_en.htm

Eurostat. (2019). Accidents at work - statistics by economic activity. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Accidents_at_work_-_statistics_by_economic_activity#Developments_over_time

Falzon, M.-A. (2009). Introduction: Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, praxis and Locality in Contemporary research. In M.-A. Falzone (Ed.), *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research,* (pp. 1-13). Surrey, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Fellini, I., Ferro, A., & Fullin, G. (2007). Recruitment processes and labour mobility: the construction industry in Europe. *Work, employment and society, 21*(2), 277-298.

Fletcher, A. J. (2017). Applying critical realism in qualitative research: methodology meets method. *International journal of social research methodology, 20*(2), 181-194.

Frank, D. (2005). *Staten, Företagen och arbetskraftsinvandringen - en studie av invandringspolitiken i Sverige och rekryteringen av utländska arbetare 1960–1972.* Doktorsavhandling, Växjö Universitet, Institutionen för samhällsvetenskap,

Frank, D. (2009). De oauktoriserade migranterna i svensk byggnadssektor—en studie i deportationspolitik 1990—2004/The Unauthorized Migrants in the Swedish Construction Sector—a Study in the Policy of Deportation 1990—2004. *Sociologisk Forskning*, 26-51.

Frank, D. (2013). Organisationer, ojämlikhet, migration–förändringar av den etniska arbetsdelningen i svensk byggnadssektor. *Sociologisk Forskning*, 7-30.

Fransson, M. (2021, June 03). Ökad stress och mindre kontakt på bygget under pandemin. *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/okad-stress-och-mindre-kontakt-pa-bygget-under-pandemin/

Friberg, J. H. (2016). The rise and implications of temporary staffing as a migration industry in Norway. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research, 6*(2), 81-91.

Friberg, J. H., Arnholtz, J., Eldring, L., Hansen, N. W., & Thorarins, F. (2014). Nordic labour market institutions and new migrant workers: Polish migrants in Oslo, Copenhagen and Reykjavik. *European Journal of Industrial Relations, 20*(1), 37-53.

Fyrk, J. (2019, June 03). Svartjobbsfabriken del 1. *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/kriminellt-jattenat-omsatter-100-miljoner-svartjobb-falska-fakturor-och-vapen/

Galgóczi, B., Leschke, J., & Watt, A. (2011). Intra-EU labour migration: flows, effects and policy responses. *ETUI Working paper series 2009:3, update spring 2011, Brussels*.

Garapich, M. P. (2016). *London's Polish Borders: Transnationalizing Class and Ethnicity among Polish Migrants in London*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gouldner, A. (1954). *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. Glencoe: Free Press.

Government.no. (2021). The European Economic Area Agreement. Retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/european-policy/eos/id115261/

Graham, L. (2006). Manual workers: Conflict and control. In S. Ackroyd, R. Batt, P. Thompson, & P. S. Tolbert (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of work and organization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology, 91*(3), 481-510.

Gray, P. S., Williamson, J. B., Karp, D. A., & Dalphin, J. R. (2007). *The research imagination: An introduction to qualitative and quantitative methods*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Green, S. D. (1999). The missing arguments of lean construction. *Construction Management & Economics, 17*(2), 133-137.

Greer, I. (2016). Welfare reform, precarity and the re-commodification of labour. *Work, employment and society, 30*(1), 162-173.

Grimshaw, D., Willmott, H., & Rubery, J. (2005). Inter-organizational networks: Trust, power, and the employment relationship. In M. Marchington, D. Grimshaw, J. Rubery, & H. Willmott (Eds.), *Fragmenting Work: Blurring Organizational Boundaries and Disordering Hierarchies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haakestad, H., & Friberg, J. H. (2017). Deskilling revisited: Labour migration, neo-Taylorism and the degradation of craft work in the Norwegian construction industry. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 1-22.

Haglund, A. (2019). Utländska slavjobbare är ett hot mot hela systemet. *Svenska Dagbladet,* p. 8.

Hall, P. A., & Soskice, D. (2001). *Varieties of capitalism: The institutional foundations of comparative advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harris, F., & McCaffer, R. (2013). *Modern construction management*. Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

Hillman, A. J., Withers, M. C., & Collins, B. J. (2009). Resource dependence theory: A review. *Journal of management, 35*(6), 1404-1427.

Holst, H., Nachtwey, O., & Dörre, K. (2010). The strategic use of temporary agency work-Functional change of a non-standard form of employment. *International Journal of Action Research, 6*(1), 108-138.

Hyman, R. (1987). Strategy or structure? Capital, labour and control. *Work, employment and society, 1*(1), 25-55.

Håkansson, K., & Isidorsson, T. (2007). Flexibility, stability and agency work: A comparison of the use of agency work in Sweden and the UK. In B. Furåker, K. Håkansson, & J. C. Karlsson (Eds.), *Flexibility and stability in working life* (pp. 123-147). New York: Springer.

Håkansson, K., & Isidorsson, T. (2016). Användningen av inhyrd arbetskraft i Sverige. *Arbetsmarknad & arbetsliv, 22*(3/4), 47-67.

ID06. (2018). ID06. Retrieved from https://id06.se/om-oss/

ILO. (2001). *The construction industry in the twentyfirst century: Its image, employment prospects and skill requirements*. Retrieved from Geneva: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_PUBL_9221126226_EN/lang--en/index.htm

ILO. (2015). *Good practices and challenges in promoting decent work in construction and infrastructure projects: Issues paper for discussion at the global dialogue forum on good practices and challenges in promoting decent work in construction and infrastructure projects*. Retrieved from Geneva: https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_416378/lang--en/index.htm

Iverus, I. (2021, November 03). Ledarbloggen: Allas ansvar att ta emot lärlingar. *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/blogginlagg/det-ar-allas-ansvar-att-ta-emot-larlingar/

Jaros, S. (2010). The core theory: Critiques, defences and advances. In P. Thompson & C. Smith (Eds.), *Working life: Renewing labour process analysis* (pp. 70-88). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jeppson, H. (2020). *Coronapandemins stödpaket riskerar bidra till arbetslivskriminalitet*. Retrieved from https://www.byggmarknadskommissionen.se/alla-rapporter

Jessop, B. (2002). *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Johansson, E. (2021, May 18). Biometriska ID-kort nästa steg mot svartjobb i byggbranschen. Retrieved from https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2021-05-17/vaxande-databas-verktyg-mot-svartjobb-i-byggbranschen

Johansson, R. (1997). *Organisationer emellan: Om förhandlingar, makt och handlingsutrymme*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Kadefors, A. (1995). Institutions in building projects: implications for flexibility and change. *Scandinavian journal of management, 11*(4), 395-408.

Kadefors, A. (2002). *Förtroende och samverkan i byggprocessen: förutsättningar och erfarenheter*: Chalmers Tekniska Högskola.

Kadefors, A. (2004). Trust in project relationships—inside the black box. *International journal of project management, 22*(3), 175-182.

Kadefors, A., & Badenfelt, U. (2009). The roles and risks of incentives in construction projects. *International Journal of Project Organisation and Management, 1*(3), 268-284.

Kalleberg, A. (2000). Nonstandard employment relations: Part-time, temporary and contract work. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*(1), 341-365.

Kalleberg, A. (2001). Organizing flexibility: the flexible firm in a new century. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 39*(4), 479-504.

Karlsson, J. C. (1982). The Industrialization of Building and Contradictions between Site Workers. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 3*(3), 309-346.

Karlsson, J. C. (1986). *Begreppet arbete. Definitioner, ideologier och sociala former*. Lund: Arkiv.

Keister, L. A. (2002). Financial markets, money, and banking. *Annual Review of Sociology, 28*(1), 39-61.

Kjellberg, A. (2009). The Swedish Model of Industrial Relations: Self-Regulation and Combined Centralisation-Decentralisation. In C. Phelan (Ed.), *Trade Unionism since 1945: Towards a Global History*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

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

Kjellberg, A. (2019). *Den svenska modellen i fara? Fack, arbetsgivare och kollektivavtal på en föränderlig arbetsmarknad.: Statistik och analyser: facklig medlemsutveckling, organisationsgrad och kollektivavtalstäckning 2000-2023*. Retrieved from https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lup/publication/5fc82ca8-cdca-474b-aad5-52b26f587e48

Kjellberg, A. (2021). *Kollektivavtalens täckningsgrad samt organisationsgraden hos arbetsgivarförbund och fackförbund*. Retrieved from Lund University: https://portal.research.lu.se/en/publications/kollektivavtalens-t%C3%A4ckningsgrad-samt-organisationsgraden-hos-arbe-2

Koch, C. (2013). When the Blues Meet the Blue Eye. In Å. Sandberg (Ed.), *Nordic Lights. Work, Management and Welfare in Scandinavia*. Stockholm: SNS förlag.

Kompetensföretagen. (2020). *Årsrapport Kompetensföretagen 2020*. Retrieved from www.kompetensforetagen.se:

Korpi, W. (1985). Power resources approach vs. action and conflict: On causal and intentional explanations in the study of power. *Sociological Theory, 3*(2), 31-45.

Korpi, W., & Shalev, M. (1979). Strikes, industrial relations and class conflict in capitalist societies. *The British Journal of Sociology, 30*(2), 164-187.

Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry, 12*(3), 480-500.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews. Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Thousands Oak, California: Sage.

Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology, 28*(1), 167-195.

Lessing, J., Stehn, L., & Ekholm, A. (2015). Industrialised house-building–development and conceptual orientation of the field. *Construction innovation, 15*(3), 378-399.

Lillie, N. (2010). Bringing the offshore ashore: transnational production, industrial relations and the reconfiguration of sovereignty. *International Studies Quarterly, 54*(3), 683-704.

Lillie, N. (2012). Subcontracting, posted migrants and labour market segmentation in Finland. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 50*(1), 148-167.

Lillie, N., & Wagner, I. (2015). Subcontracting, insecurity and posted work: evidence from construction, meat processing and ship building. In J. Drahokoupil (Ed.), *The outsourcing challenge: Organizing workers across fragmented production networks*. Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.

Lindberg, G., & Lindén, A.-L. (1989). *Social segmentation på den svenska bostadsmarknaden*: Sociologiska institutionen, Lunds Universitet.

Lindén, A. L. (1990). Obstacles for young swedes to find a home of their own. *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research, 7*(4), 195-205.

LO. (2014). *Anställningsformer år 2014: Fast och tidsbegränsat anställda efter klass och kön år 1990-2014*. Retrieved from https://www.lo.se/start/lo_fakta/anstallningsformer_ar_2014

LO. (2017). *Anställningsformer och arbetstider 2017*. Retrieved from https://www.lo.se/start/lo_fakta/anstallningsformer_och_arbetstider_2017

Loosemore, M., & Lim, B. T. H. (2017). Linking corporate social responsibility and organizational performance in the construction industry. *Construction Management and Economics, 35*(3), 90-105.

Loosemore, M., & Lim, B. T. H. (2018). Mapping corporate social responsibility strategies in the construction and engineering industry. *Construction Management and Economics, 36*(2), 67-82.

Luhmann, N. (1979). *Trust and power*. Chichester: Wiley.

Lukács, G. (1968). *Historia och klassmedvetande*. Budapest: Bo Cavefors Bokförlag.

Lundqvist, Å. (2017). *Transforming Gender and Family Relations: How Active Labour Market Policies Shaped the Dual Earner Model*: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Löwstedt, M., & Räisänen, C. (2014). Social identity in construction: enactments and outcomes. *Construction Management and Economics, 32*(11), 1093-1105.

Löwstedt, M., Räisänen, C., & Leiringer, R. (2018). Doing strategy in project-based organizations: Actors and patterns of action. *International journal of project management, 36*(6), 889-898.

Macaulay, S. (1963). Non-contractual relations in business: A preliminary study. *American Sociological Review*, 55-67.

MacKenzie, R. (2002). The migration of bureaucracy: contracting and the regulation of labour in the telecommunications industry. *Work, employment and society, 16*(4), 599-616.

MacKenzie, R. (2008). From networks to hierarchies: The construction of a subcontracting regime in the Irish telecommunications industry. *Organization studies, 29*(6), 867-886.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (2009). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Marx, K. (2012). Economic and Philosphic Manuscripts of 1844. In C. Calhoun, J. Gerteis, J. Moody, S. Pfaff, & I. Virk (Eds.), *Classical Sociological Theory* (3 ed.). Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Marx, K. (2013). *Kapitalet: Kritik av den politiska ekonomin.* Lund: Arkiv förlag.

Mason, J. (2017). *Qualitative researching*. Thousands Oak, California: Sage.

McDowell, L., Batnitzky, A., & Dyer, S. (2008). Internationalization and the spaces of temporary labour: the global assembly of a local workforce. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 46*(4), 750-770.

Mešić, N. (2017). *Negotiating Solidarity: Collective Actions for Precarious Migrant Workers' Rights in Sweden.* Doctoral dissertation, Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Linköping University

Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology, 83*(2), 340-363.

Mills, C. W. (1951). *White collar: The American middle classes*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mills, C. W. (2000). *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mintzberg, H. (1978). Patterns in strategy formation. *Management science, 24*(9), 934-948.

Mintzberg, H. (1993). *Structure in fives: Designing effective organizations*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Mintzberg, H., & Waters, J. A. (1985). Of strategies, deliberate and emergent. *Strategic management journal, 6*(3), 257-272.

Miterev, M., Mancini, M., & Turner, R. (2017). Towards a design for the project-based organization. *International journal of project management, 35*(3), 479-491.

Molina, I. (1997). *Stadens rasifiering: Etnisk boendesegregation i folkhemmet:[ethnic residential segregation in the Swedish Folkhem].* Doctoral dissertation, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University,

Nandorf, T. (2018, April 09). Papperslösa flydde från bygget - nu jobbar Oscar Properties mot fusket. *Dagens Nyheter*. Retrieved from https://www.dn.se/ekonomi/papperslosa-flydde-fran-bygget-nu-arbetar-oscar-properties-mot-fusket/

NCC. (2018). NCC Montage. Retrieved from https://www.ncc.se/om-ncc/om-koncernen/andra-varumarken/ncc-montage/

NCC. (2021). NCC avvecklar Safida Montage. Retrieved from https://www.ncc.se/media/nyheter/safida-montage/

Neergaard, A. (2015). Migration, Racialization, and Forms of Unfree Labour: The Dilemma of Trade Union Solidarity. In R. M. Carl-Ulrik Schierup, Branka Likić-Brborić and Anders Neergaard (Ed.), *Migration, Precarity & Global Governance: Challenges and Opportunities for Labour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Neo, H. (2010). Geographies of subcontracting. *Geography Compass, 4*(8), 1013-1024.

Ness, K. (2012). Constructing masculinity in the building trades:'most jobs in the construction industry can be done by women'. *Gender, Work & Organization, 19*(6), 654-676.

Niklasson, C. (2020, October 01). Konkurser: ”Bygg har klarat pandemin bäst”. *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/konkurser-bygg-har-klarat-pandemin-bast/

Niklasson, C. (2021a, september 14). Historiskt låga siffror – nu påverkas bygglönerna negativt. *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/historiskt-laga-siffror-nu-paverkas-lonerna-i-bygg-negativt/

Niklasson, C. (2021b, October 13). Stadens krav på byggbolagen: "Måste ha lärlingar för att få jobb". *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/myndighetsrazzia-mot-northvolt-tittar-efter-brott-och-regelovertradeser/

Nilsson, J. (2018). Ny lag om entreprenörsansvar från årsskiftet – det här gäller. *Byggvärlden*. Retrieved from https://www.byggvarlden.se/ny-lag-om-entreprenorsansvar-fran-arsskiftet-det-har-galler-125920/nyhet.html

Norberg, C., & Johansson, M. (2021). “Women and “ideal” women”: The representation of women in the construction industry. *Gender Issues, 38*, 1-24.

Nyström, B. (2020). Europeiseringen och den svenska modellen för att reglera arbetsmarknaden-byggindustrin en sårbar bransch? In *Sund konkurrens i byggbranschen. En forskningsantologi* (pp. 19-39): Byggföretagen.

O'Mahoney, J., & Vincent, S. (2014). Critical realism as an empirical project: A beginner's guide. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney, & S. Vincent (Eds.), *Studying organizations using critical realism: A practical guide*.

Ochel, W. (2010). The EU Directive on Free Movement: A challenge for the European welfare state? In R. Black, G. Engbersen, M. Okólski, & C. Pantiru (Eds.), *A Continent Moving West? EU Enlargement and Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 313-331). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Olander, S., Aulin, R., & Landin, A. (2020). Förutsättningar för socialt ansvarsfulla byggupphandlingar. In Byggföretagen (Ed.), *Sund konkurrens i byggbranschen*.

Olofsson, B. (2000). *Kvinnor och män i byggyrken: En jämförande studie.* Doctoral dissertation, Institutionen för industriell ekonomi och organisation, Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan,

Olsson, H. (2017, September 23). Så vill myndigheterna sätta stopp för svartjobb på byggarbetsplatser. *Dagens Nyheter*. Retrieved from https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/sa-vill-myndigheterna-satta-stopp-for-svartjobb-pa-byggplatser/

Peck, J. A., & Theodore, N. (2002). Temped Out? Industry Rhetoric, Labor Regulation and Economic Restructuring in the Temporary Staffing Business. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 23*(2), 143-175.

Peck, J. A., Theodore, N., & Ward, K. (2005). Constructing markets for temporary labour: employment liberalization and the internationalization of the staffing industry. *Global Networks, 5*(1), 3-26.

Pedersini, R., & Coletto, D. (2009). *Self-employed workers: industrial relations and working conditions*. Retrieved from https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sv/observatories/eurwork

Penninx, R. (2018). Old Wine in New Bottles? Comparing the Post-War Guest Worker Migration and the Post 1989 Migration from CEE-Countries to EU-Member Countries. In P. Scholten & M. van Ostaijen (Eds.), *Between Mobility and Migration*. Cham: Springer.

Pernicka, S. (2006). Organizing the Self-Employed: Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Findings. *European Journal of Industrial Relations, 12*(2), 125-142.

Perulli, A. (2003). Study on economically dependent work/parasubordinate (quasisubordinate) work. *Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. European Parliament. Brüssel*.

Peterson, T., Stigendal, M., & Fryklund, B. (1988). *Skånepartiet: om folkligt missnöje i Malmö*. Lund: Arkiv förlag.

Petersson, S. (2012). *Bemanningsföretagens roll i rekryteringen av utländsk arbetskraft: En del av det nordiska forskningsprojektet" Labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe in the Nordic countries: Patterns of migration, working conditions and recruitment practices"*. Retrieved from www.diva-portal.org%2Fsmash%2Fget%2Fdiva2%3A822051%2FFULLTEXT01.pdf&clen=783883

Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*: New York: Harper & Row.

Pijpers, R. (2010). International employment agencies and migrant flexiwork in an enlarged European Union. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 36*(7), 1079-1097.

Pink, S., Tutt, D., & Dainty, A. (2013). *Ethnographic research in the construction industry*. New York: Routledge.

Poulantzas, N. (1973). On social classes. *New Left Review*(78), 27.

Poulantzas, N. (1977). *Den moderna kapitalismens klasstruktur*. Lund: Zenit.

Pulignano, V. (2011). Bringing labour markets 'back in': Restructuring international businesses in Europe. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 32*(4), 655-677.

Pulignano, V., & Keune, M. (2015). Understanding varieties of flexibility and security in multinationals: Product markets, institutional variation and local bargaining. *European Journal of Industrial Relations, 21*(1), 5-21.

Purcell, J., Purcell, K., & Tailby, S. (2004). Temporary work agencies: here today, gone tomorrow? *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 42*(4), 705-725.

Purcell, K., & Purcell, J. (1998). In-sourcing, outsourcing, and the growth of contingent labour as evidence of flexible employment strategies. *European journal of work and organizational psychology, 7*(1), 39-59.

Rainwater, K. (2021). Building Inequality: Wage Disparity between Bangladeshi and Thai Guestworkers in Singapore's Construction Industry. *Work, employment and society, 35*(3), 509-526.

Rasnaca, Z. (2020). Essential but unprotected: highly mobile workers in the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic. *ETUI Research Paper-Policy Brief, 9*.

Reich, M., Gordon, D. M., & Edwards, R. C. (1973). A theory of labor market segmentation. *The American Economic Review, 63*(2), 359-365.

Rubery, J., Grimshaw, D., Keizer, A., & Johnson, M. (2018). Challenges and contradictions in the 'normalising'of precarious work. *Work, employment and society, 32*(3), 509-527.

SCB. (2019). Nybyggnad av bostäder.

Scott, R. (2014). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas and interests* (4th ed.). Thousands Oak, California: Sage.

Sederblad, P. (Ed.) (2013). *Lean i arbetslivet*: Liber.

SFS. (1976:580). *Lagen om medbestämmande i arbetslivet*: Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet.

SFS. (2012:854). *Lagen om uthyrning av arbetstagare*: Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet.

SFS. (2018:1472). *Lagen om entreprenörsansvar för lönefordringar*: Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet.

Simu, K. (2020). Destruktiv fragmentering och brist på flödeseffektivitet motverkar utveckling. In Byggföretagen (Ed.), *Sund konkurrens i byggbranschen - En forskningsantologi*.

Skatteverket. (2018). *Skattesystemets utveckling del II*. Retrieved from https://www.skatteverket.se/omoss/varverksamhet/rapporterremissvarochskrivelser/rapporter/2018.4.b1014b415f3321c0de5fc1.html

Smith, C. (2010). Go with the flow: labour power mobility and labour process theory. In P. Thompson & C. Smith (Eds.), *Working Life: Renewing Labour Process Analysis.* Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Smith, C., & Elger, T. (2014). Critical realism and interviewing subjects. In P. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney, & S. Vincent (Eds.), *Studying organizations using critical realism: A practical guide* (pp. 109-131).

Sorge, A., & Streeck, W. (1988). Industrial Relations and Technological Change - the case for an extended perspective. In R. Hyman & W. Streeck (Eds.), *New Technology and Industrial Relations* (pp. 19-47). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Spigelman, A. (2013). The depiction of Polish migrants in the United Kingdom by the British press after Poland's accession to the European Union. *International journal of sociology and social policy, 33*(1/2), 98-113.

Spruch, S., Eriksson, P., Mattsson, T., & Qwick, S. (2021, March 08). Larmet: Byggsektorn tas över av kriminella. *Expressen*. Retrieved from https://www.expressen.se/debatt/larmet-byggsektorn-tas-over-av-kriminella/

Spängs, T. (2014, March 17). Utländska arbetare i "slavlika" förhållanden. *Dagens Nyheter*. Retrieved from https://www.dn.se/ekonomi/utlandsk-arbetskraft-i-slavlika-forhallanden/

Standing, G. (1999). *Global Labour Flexibility: Seeking Distributive Justice*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press.

Stewart, P. (Ed.) (1996). *Beyond Japanese management: the end of modern times?* London: Frank Cass.

Stewart, P., Danford, A., Richardson, M., & Pulignano, V. (2010). Workers' experiences of skill, training and participation in lean and high performance workplaces in Britain and Italy. *Employee Relations, 32*(6).

Stewart, P., & Garrahan, P. (1995). Employee responses to new management techniques in the auto industry. *Work, employment and society, 9*(3), 517-536.

Stewart, P., Mrozowicki, A., Danford, A., & Murphy, K. (2016). Lean as ideology and practice: A comparative study of the impact of lean production on working life in automotive manufacturing in the United Kingdom and Poland. *Competition & Change, 20*(3), 147-165.

Stigendal, M. (2021). Värdet av ett klassbegrepp. *Arkiv. Tidskrift för samhällsanalys*(13), 11-50.

Stinchcombe, A. L. (1959). Bureaucratic and craft administration of production: A comparative study. *Administrative science quarterly*, 168-187.

Streeck, W. (1987). The uncertainties of management in the management of uncertainty: Employers, labor relations and industrial adjustment in the 1980s. *Work, employment and society, 1*(3), 281-308.

Streeck, W. (1991). On the Institutional Conditions of Diversified Quality Production. In E. Matzner & W. Streeck (Eds.), *Beyond Keynesianism: The Socio-Economics of Production and Full Employment*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Streeck, W. (2010). The Sociology of Labor Markets and Trade Unions. In R. S. Neil J. Smelser (Ed.), *The handbook of economic sociology* (pp. 254). Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. A. (2005). *Beyond continuity: Institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Styhre, A. (2011). In the circuit of credibility: construction workers and the norms of 'a good job'. *Construction Management and Economics, 29*(2), 199-209.

Taylor, F. W. (1947). *Scientific Management*. New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers.

Ternby, L. (2020, June 29). Över hälften av dödsolyckorna skedde inom byggsektorn. Retrieved from https://www.dn.se/ekonomi/over-halften-av-dodsolyckorna-skedde-inom-byggsektorn/

Therborn, G. (1981). *Klasstrukturen i Sverige 1930-1980: arbete, kapital, stat och patriarkat*. Lund: Zenit.

Thiel, D. (2007). Class in construction: London building workers, dirty work and physical cultures. *The British Journal of Sociology, 58*(2), 227-251.

Thiel, D. (2010). Contacts and contracts: Economic embeddedness and ethnic stratification in London's construction market. *Ethnography, 11*(3), 443-471.

Thiel, D. (2013). *Builders: class, gender and ethnicity in the construction industry*. London and New York: Routledge.

Thompson, P. (2003). Disconnected capitalism: or why employers can't keep their side of the bargain. *Work, employment and society, 17*(2), 359-378.

Thompson, P. (2013). Financialization and the workplace: extending and applying the disconnected capitalism thesis. *Work, employment and society, 27*(3), 472-488.

Thompson, P., & McHugh, D. (1990). *Work organisations: a critical introduction*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan Education LTD.

Thompson, P., & McHugh, D. (2002). *Work Organisations - A Critical Introduction* (3 ed.). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.

Thompson, P., & Smith, C. (2010a). Debating labour process theory and the sociology of work. In *Working life: Renewing labour process analysis* (pp. 11-28). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thompson, P., & Smith, C. (2010b). *Working life: renewing labour process analysis*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thompson, P., & Smith, C. (2017). Capital and the labour process. *Reading "capital" today*, 116-137.

Thompson, P., & van den Broek, D. (2010). Managerial control and workplace regimes: an introduction. *Work, employment and society, 24*(3), 1-12.

Thullberg, P., & Östberg, K. (1994). *Den svenska modellen*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Thörnquist, A. (2011). False self-employment: a topical but old labour market problem. In A. Thörnquist & Å.-K. Engstrand (Eds.), *Precarious employment in perspective: old and new challenges to working conditions in Sweden* (pp. 101-129). Brussels: Peter Lang Publishing Group.

Thörnquist, A. (2013). *False (Bogus) self-employment in east-west labour migration: Recent trends in the Swedish construction and road haulage industries*: Linköping University Electronic Press.

Thörnquist, A. (2015). False self-employment and other precarious forms of employment in the 'grey area'of the labour market. *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations, 31*(4), 411-429.

Thörnqvist, C. (1999). The decentralization of industrial relations: The Swedish case in comparative perspective. *European Journal of Industrial Relations, 5*(1), 71-87.

Thörnqvist, C. (2011). The Most Powerful Industrial Relations in the World? Pros and Cons of the Sweidsh Collective Bargaining System in the Light of the Laval Conflict. In A. Thörnquist & Å.-K. Engstrand (Eds.), *Precarious Employment in Perspective. Old and New Challenges to Working Conditions in Sweden* (Vol. No. 70). Brussels: Peter Lang.

Thörnqvist, C., & Bernhardsson, S. (2015). Their own stories–how Polish construction workers posted to Sweden experience their job situation, or resistance versus life projects. *Transfer, 21*(1), 23-36.

Thörnqvist, C., & Woolfson, C. (2011). Dog den svenska modellen i Vaxholm? Laval-målet och den svenska arbetsmarknaden. *Arbetsmarknad & arbetsliv, 17*(3), 9-22.

Thörnqvist, C., & Woolfson, C. (2012). When tender turns tough: posted workers and the tendering regime in the Swedish construction industry. *Construction Management and Economics, 30*(7), 525-533.

Tilly, C., & Tilly, C. (1994). Capitalist Work and Labor Markets. In N. Smelser & R. Swedberg (Eds.), *The handbook of economic sociology* (pp. 283-312). Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Torp, E. (2018, September 04). "Jag var inte ens en hund i chefens ögon". *Dagens Arbete*. Retrieved from https://da.se/2018/09/arbetarna-langst-ner/

Wadensjö, E. (2015). Arbetskraftsinvandring från länder utanför EU/EES – ekonomiska förklaringar och ekonomiska effekter. In C. C. a. P. H. Olsson (Ed.), *Arbetskraft från hela världen. Hur blev det med 2008 års reform?* (pp. 40–71). Stockholm: Regeringskansliet.

Wagner, I., & Lillie, N. (2014). European Integration and the Disembedding of Labour Market Regulation: Transnational Labour Relations at the European Central Bank Construction Site. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 52*(2), 403-419.

Wahl, E. (2019, March 08). Byggnads lockar fler kvinnor: Bättre balands på byggena. *Byggnadsarbetaren*. Retrieved from https://www.byggnadsarbetaren.se/byggnads-lockar-fler-kvinnor-battre-balans-pa-byggena/

Wall, C. (2015). Historical perspectives on women in industry,. *CLR News, Women in construction*(3), 78-83.

Van Mol, C., & de Valk, H. (2016). Migration and Immigrants in Europe: A Historical and Demographic Perspective. In B. Garcés-Mascareñas & P. Penninx (Eds.), *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe*. Brussels, Belgium: Free University.

Ward, K. (2004). Going global? Internationalization and diversification in the temporary staffing industry. *Journal of Economic Geography, 4*(3), 251-273.

Watts, J. H. (2007). Porn, pride and pessimism: experiences of women working in professional construction roles. *Work, employment and society, 21*(2), 299-316.

Watts, J. H. (2009). Leaders of men: women 'managing'in construction. *Work, employment and society, 23*(3), 512-530.

Weber, M. (1968). *On charisma and institution building*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vershinina, N. A., Rodgers, P., Ram, M., Theodorakopoulos, N., & Rodionova, Y. (2018). False self-employment: the case of Ukrainian migrants in London's construction sector. *Industrial Relations Journal, 49*(1), 2-18.

Williamson, O. E. (1975). *Markets and hierarchies*. New York: Free Press.

Williamson, O. E. (1981). The economics of organization: The transaction cost approach. *American Journal of Sociology, 87*(3), 548-577.

Williamson, O. E. (1991). Comparative economic organization: The analysis of discrete structural alternatives. *Administrative science quarterly*, 269-296.

Willis, P. (2003). *Learning to Labour. How working class kids get working class jobs*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Vincent, S., & O'Mahoney, J. (2018). Critical Realism and Qualitative Research: An introductory Overview. In C. Cassell, A. L. Cunliffe, & G. Grandy (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods: History and Traditions*. Retrieved from https://methods.sagepub.com/book/handbook-of-qualitative-business-management-research-methods-v1

Winch, G. (1994). The search for flexibility: The case of the construction industry. *Work, employment and society, 8*(4), 593-606.

Womack, J., Jones, D., & Roos, D. (1990). *The Machine That Changed the World*. New York: MacMillan.

Woolfson, C., Fudge, J., & Thörnqvist, C. (2014). Migrant precarity and future challenges to labour standards in Sweden. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 35*(4), 695-715.

Woolfson, C., & Sommers, J. (2006). Labour Mobility in Construction: European Implications of the Laval un Partneri Dispute with Swedish Labour. *European Journal of Industrial Relations, 12*(1), 49-68.

Woolfson, C., Thörnqvist, C., & Sommers, J. (2010). The Swedish model and the future of labour standards after Laval. *Industrial Relations Journal, 41*(4), 333-350.

Woolthuis, R. K., Hillebrand, B., & Nooteboom, B. (2005). Trust, contract and relationship development. *Organization studies, 26*(6), 813-840.

Vänje, A. (2019). *"Vi får star treatment". Om jämställdhet, arbetsmiljö och säkerhet vid Ikano Bostad*. Retrieved from https://old.ikanobostad.se/contentassets/05dc3b8e15ff445caf52847068a4a14b/vi-far-star-treatment-oktober-2019.pdf

Vänje, A., & Brännmark, M. (2017). Walking around the pyramids: Managers' shop-floor activities in Lean-inspired organizations. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 38*(3), 495-512.

Vänje, A., & Ottosson, J. (2020). Kampen mot osund konkurrens: Den olösta frågan om arbetsmarknadens parter och myndigheter i samverkan. In Byggföretagen (Ed.), *Sund konkurrens i byggbranschen - en forskningsantologi*.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods (applied social research methods)* (5th ed.).

Publikationer från Sociologiska institutionen Lunds universitet

Beställning och aktuella priser på:
bokshop.lu.se
Böckerna levereras mot faktura eller kortbetalning.

Lund Dissertations in Sociology (ISSN 1102–4712)

13 Neergaard, Anders *Grasping the Peripheral State: A Historical Sociology of Nicaraguan State Formation* 401 sidor ISBN 91-89078-00-4 (1997)

14 Jannisa, Gudmund *The Crocodile's Tears: East Timor in the Making* 328 sidor ISBN 91-89078-02-0 (1997)

15 Naranjo, Eduardo *Den auktoritära staten och ekonomisk utveckling i Chile: Jordbruket under militärregimen 1973–1981* 429 sidor ISBN 91-89078-03-9 (1997)

16 Wangel, Arne *Safety Politics and Risk Perceptions in Malaysian Industry* 404 sidor ISBN 91-89078-06-3 (1997)

17 Jönhill, Jan Inge *Samhället som system och dess ekologiska omvärld: En studie i Niklas Luhmanns sociologiska systemteori* 521 sidor ISBN 91-89078-09-8 (1997)

18 Lindquist, Per *Det klyvbara ämnet: Diskursiva ordningar i svensk kärnkraftspolitik 1972–1980* 445 sidor ISBN 91-89078-11-X (1997)

19 Richard, Elvi *I första linjen: Arbetsledares mellanställning, kluvenhet och handlingsstrategier i tre organisationer* 346 sidor ISBN 91-89078-17-9 (1997)

20 Einarsdotter-Wahlgren, Mia *Jag är konstnär! En studie av erkännandeprocessen kring konstnärskapet i ett mindre samhälle* 410 sidor ISBN 91-89078-20-9 (1997)

21 Nilsson-Lindström, Margareta *Tradition och överskridande: En studie av flickors perspektiv på utbildning* 165 sidor ISBN 98-89078-27-6 (1998)

22 Popoola, Margareta *Det sociala spelet om Romano Platso* 294 sidor ISBN 91-89078-33-0 (1998)

23 Eriksson, Annika *En gangster kunde kanske älska sin mor… Produktionen av moraliska klichéer i amerikanska polis- och deckarserier* 194 sidor ISBN 91-89078-36-5 (1998)

24 Abebe Kebede, Teketel *'Tenants of the State': The Limitations of Revolutionary Agrarian Transformation in Ethiopia, 1974-1991* 364 sidor ISBN 91-89078-38-1 (1998)

25 Leppänen, Vesa *Structures of District Nurse – Patient Interaction* 256 sidor ISBN 91-89078-44-6 (1998)

26 Idof Ståhl, Zeth *Den goda viljans paradoxer: Reformers teori och praktik speglade i lärares erfarenheter av möten i skolan* 259 sidor ISBN 91-89078-45-4 (1998)

27 Gustafsson, Bengt-Åke *Symbolisk organisering: En studie av organisatorisk förändring och meningsproduktion i fyra industriföretag* 343 sidor ISBN 91-89078-48-9 (1998)

28 Munk, Martin *Livsbaner gennem et felt: En analyse af eliteidrætsudøveres sociale mobilitet og rekonversioner of kapital i det sociale* rum 412 sidor ISBN 91-89078-72-1 (1999)

29 Wahlin, Lottie *Den rationella inbrottstjuven? En studie om rationalitet och rationellt handlande i brott* 172 sidor ISBN 91-89078-85-3 (1999)

30 Mathieu, Chris *The Moral Life of the Party: Moral Argumentation and the Creation of meaning in the Europe Policy Debates of the Christian and Left-Socialist Parties in Denmark and Sweden 1960–1996* 404 sidor ISBN 91-89078-96-9 (1999)

31 Ahlstrand, Roland *Förändring av deltagandet i produktionen: Exempel från slutmonteringsfabriker i Volvo* 165 sidor ISBN 91-7267-008-8 (2000)

32 Klintman, Mikael *Nature and the Social Sciences: Examples from the Electricity and Waste Sectors* 209 sidor ISBN 91-7267-009-6 (2000)

33 Hultén, Kerstin *Datorn på köksbordet: En studie av kvinnor som distansarbetar i hemmet* 181 sidor ISBN 91-89078-77-2 (2000)

34 Nilsén, Åke *"En empirisk vetenskap om duet": Om Alfred Schutz bidrag till sociologin* 164 sidor ISBN 91-7267-020-7 (2000)

35 Karlsson, Magnus *Från Jernverk till Hjärnverk: Ungdomstidens omvandling i Ronneby under tre generationer* 233 sidor ISBN 91-7267-022-3 (2000)

36 Stojanovic, Verica *Unga arbetslösas ansikten: Identitet och subjektivitet i det svenska och danska samhället* 237 sidor ISBN 91-7267-042-8 (2001)

37 Knopff, Bradley D. *Reservation Preservation: Powwow Dance, Radio, and the Inherent Dilemma of the Preservation Process* 218 sidor ISBN 91-7267-065-7 (2001)

38 Cuadra, Sergio *Mapuchefolket – i gränsernas land: En studie av autonomi, identitet, etniska gränser och social mobilisering* 247 sidor ISBN 91-7267-096-7 (2001)

39 Ljungberg, Charlotta *Bra mat och dåliga vanor: Om förtroendefulla relationer och oroliga reaktioner på livsmedelsmarknaden* 177 sidor ISBN 91-7267-097-5 (2001)

40 Spännar, Christina *Med främmande bagage: Tankar och erfarenheter hos unga människor med ursprung i annan kultur, eller Det postmoderna främlingskapet* 232 sidor ISBN 91-7267-100-9 (2001)

41 Larsson, Rolf *Between Crisis and Opportunity: Livelihoods, diversification, and inequality among the Meru of Tanzania* 519 sidor Ill. ISBN 91-7267-101-7 (2001)

42 Kamara, Fouday *Economic and Social Crises in Sierra Leone: The Role of Small-scale Entrepreneurs in Petty Trading as a Strategy for Survival 1960-1996* 239 sidor
ISBN 91-7267-102-5 (2001)

43 Höglund, Birgitta *Ute & Inne: Kritisk dialog mellan personalkollektiv inom psykiatrin* 206 sidor ISBN 91-7267-103-3 (2001)

44 Kindblad, Christopher *Gift and Exchange in the Reciprocal Regime of the Miskito on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, 20th Century* 279 sidor ISBN 91-7267-113-0 (2001)

45 Wesser, Erik *"Har du varit ute och shoppat, Jacob?" En studie av Finansinspektionens utredning av insiderbrott under 1990-talet* 217 sidor ISBN 91-7267-114-9 (2001)

46 Stenberg, Henrik *Att bli konstnär: Om identitet, subjektivitet och konstnärskap i det senmoderna samhället* 219 sidor ISBN 91-7267-121-1 (2002)

47 Copes, Adriana *Entering Modernity: The Marginalisation of the Poor in the Developing Countries. An Account of Theoretical Perspectives from the 1940's to the 1980's* 184 sidor ISBN 91-7267-124-6 (2002)

48 Cassegård, Carl *Shock and Naturalization: An inquiry into the perception of modernity* 249 sidor ISBN 91-7267-126-2 (2002)

49 Waldo, Åsa *Staden och resandet: Mötet mellan planering och vardagsliv* 235 sidor ISBN 91-7267-123-8 (2002)

50 Stierna, Johan *Lokal översättning av svenskhet och symboliskt kapital: Det svenska rummet i Madrid 1915–1998.* 300 sidor ISBN 91-7267-136-X (2003)

51 Arvidson, Malin *Demanding Values: Participation, empowerment and NGOs in Bangladesh* 214 sidor ISBN 91-7267-138-6 (2003)

52 Zetino Duartes, Mario *Vi kanske kommer igen, om det låser sig: Kvinnors och mäns möte med familjerådgivning* 246 sidor ISBN 91-7267-141-6 (2003)

53 Lindell, Lisbeth *Mellan frisk och sjuk: En studie av psykiatrisk öppenvård* 310 sidor ISBN 91-7267-143-2 (2003)

54 Gregersen, Peter *Making the Most of It? Understanding the social and productive dynamics of small farmers in semi-arid Iringa,* Tanzania 263 sidor ISBN 91-7267-147-5 (2003)

55 Oddner, Frans *Kafékultur, kommunikation och gränser* 296 sidor ISBN 91-7267-157-2 (2003)

56 Elsrud, Torun *Taking Time and Making Journeys: Narratives on Self and the Other among Backpackers* 225 sidor ISBN 91-7267-164-5 (2004)
57 Jörgensen, Erika *Hållbar utveckling, samhällsstruktur och kommunal identitet: En jämförelse mellan Västervik och Varberg* 242 sidor ISBN 91-7267-163-3 (2004)
58 Hedlund, Marianne *Shaping Justice: Defining the disability benefit category in Swedish social policy* 223 sidor ISBN 91-7267-167-X (2004)
59 Hägerström, Jeanette *Vi och dom och alla dom andra andra på Komvux: Etnicitet, genus och klass i samspel* 234 sidor ISBN 91-7267-169-6 (2004)
60 Säwe, Filippa A*tt tala med, mot och förbi varandra: Samtal mellan föräldrar och skolledning på en dövskola* 215 sidor ISBN 91-7267-173-4 (2004)
61 Alkvist, Lars-Erik *Max Weber och kroppens sociologi* 271 sidor ISBN 91-7267-178-5 (2004)
62 Winsvold, Aina *Når arbeidende barn mobiliserer seg: En studie av tre unioner i Karnataka, India* 300 sidor ISBN 91-7267-183-1 (2004)
63 Thorsted, Stine *IT-retorik og hverdagsliv: Et studie af fødevarehandel over Internet* 219 sidor ISBN 91-7267-186-6 (2005)
64 Svensson, Ove *Ungdomars spel om pengar: Spelmarknaden, situationen och karriären* 308 sidor ISBN 91-7267-192-0 (2005)
65 Lundberg, Anders P. *Om Gemenskap: En sociologisk betraktelse* 248 sidor ISBN 91-7267-193-9 (2005)
66 Mallén, Agneta *Trygghet i skärgårdsmiljö: En studie om rädsla för brott i Åland* 218 sidor ISBN 91-7267-1955 (2005)
67 Ryding, Anna *Välviljans variationer: Moraliska gränsdragningar inom brottsofferjourer* 222 sidor ISBN 91-7267-188-2 (2005)
68 Burcar, Veronika *Gestaltningar av offererfarenheter: Samtal med unga män som utsatts för brott* 206 sidor ISBN 91-7267-207-2 (2005)
69 Ramsay, Anders *Upplysningens självreflexion: Aspekter av Theodor W. Adornos kritiska teori* 146 sidor ISBN 91-7267-208-0 (2005)
70 Thelander, Joakim *Mutor i det godas tjänst: Biståndsarbetare i samtal om vardaglig korruption* 194 sidor ISBN 91-7267-211-0 (2005)
71 Henecke, Birgitta *Plan & Protest: En sociologisk studie av kontroverser, demokrati och makt i den fysiska planeringen* 272 sidor ISBN 91-7267-213-7 (2006)
72 Ingestad, Gunilla *Dokumenterat utanförskap: Om skolbarn som inte når målen* 180 sidor ISBN 91-7267-219-6 (2006)
73 Andreasson, Jesper *Idrottens kön: Genus, kropp och sexualitet i lagidrottens vardag* 267 sidor ISBN 91-628-7009-2 (2007)
74 Holmström, Ola *Skolpolitik, skolutvecklingsarena och sociala processer: Studie av en gymnasieskola i kris* 249 sidor ISBN 91-7267-229-3 (2007)
75 Ring, Magnus *Social Rörelse: Begreppsbildning av ett mångtydigt fenomen* 200 sidor ISBN 91-7267-231-5 (2007)

76 Persson, Marcus *Mellan människor och ting. En interaktionistisk analys av samlandet* 241 sidor ISBN 91-7267-238-2 (2007)
77 Schmitz, Eva *Systerskap som politisk handling: Kvinnors organisering i Sverige 1968–1982* 362 sidor ISBN 91-7267-244-7 (2007)
78 Lundberg, Henrik *Filosofisociologi: Ett sociologiskt perspektiv på filosofiskt tänkande* 225 sidor ISBN 91-7267-245-5 (2007)
79 Melén, Daniel *Sjukskrivningssystemet: Sjuka som blir arbetslösa och arbetslösa som blir sjukskrivna* 276 sidor ISBN 91-7267-254-4 (2007)
80 Kondrup Jakobsen, Klaus *The Logic of the Exception: A Sociological Investigation into Theological Foundation of Political with specific regard to Kierkegaardian on Carl Schmitt* 465 sidor ISBN 91-7267-265-X (2008)
81 Berg, Martin *Självets garderobiär: Självreflexiva genuslekar och queer socialpsykologi* 230 sidor ISBN 91-7267-257-9 (2008)
82 Fredholm, Axel *Beyond the Catchwords: Adjustment and Community Response in Participatory Development in Post-Suharto Indonesia* 180 sidor ISBN 91-7267-269-2 (2008)
83 Linné, Tobias *Digitala pengar: Nya villkor i det sociala livet* 229 sidor ISBN 91-7267-282-X (2008)
84 Nyberg, Maria *Mycket mat, lite måltider: En studie av arbetsplatsen som måltidsarena* 300 sidor ISBN 91-7267-285-4 (2009)
85 Eldén, Sara *Konsten att lyckas som par: Populärterapeutiska berättelser, individualisering och kön* 245 sidor ISBN 91-7267-286-2 (2009)
86 Bjerstedt, Daniel *Tryggheten inför rätta: Om rätten till förtidspension enligt förvaltningsdomstolarna under tre decennier* 240 sidor ISBN 91-7267-287-0 (2009)
87 Kåhre, Peter *På AI-teknikens axlar: Om kunskapssociologin och stark artificiell intelligens* 200 sidor ISBN 91-7267-289-7 (2009)
88 Loodin, Henrik *Biografier från gränslandet: En sociologisk studie om psykiatrins förändrade kontrollmekanismer* 118 sidor ISBN 91-7267-303-6 (2009)
89 Eriksson, Helena *Befolkning, samhälle och förändring: Dynamik i Halmstad under fyra decennier* 212 sidor ISBN 91-7267-313-3 (2010)
90 Espersson, Malin *Mer eller mindre byråkratisk: en studie av organisationsförändringar inom Kronofogdemyndigheten* 182 sidor ISBN 91-7267-315-X (2010)
91 Yang, Chia-Ling *Othering Processes in Feminist Teaching: A case study of an adult educational institution* 184 sidor ISBN 91-7267-318-4 (2010)
92 Isaksson, Anna *Att utmana förändringens gränser: En studie om förändringsarbete, partnerskap och kön med Equal-programmet som exempel* 206 sidor ISBN 91-7267-321-4 (2010)

93 Hilding, Lars-Olof *”Är det så här vi är”: Om utbildning som normalitet och om produktionen av studenter* 200 sidor ISBN 91-7267-326-5 (2011)

94 Berg, Pernille *The Reluctant Change Agent: Change, Chance and Choice among Teachers Educational Change in The City* 196 sidor ISBN 91-7267-331-1 (2011)

95 Rahman, Mashiur *Struggling Against Exclusion: Adibasi in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh* 202 sidor ISBN 91-7267-334-6 (2011)

96 Eklund, Lisa *Rethinking Son Preference: Gender, Population Dynamics and Social Change in the People's Republic of China* 218 sidor ISBN 978-91-7473-108-8 (2011)

97 Gustavsson, Klas *Det vardagliga och det vetenskapliga: Om sociologins begrepp* 260 sidor ISBN 91-7267-336-2 (2011)

98 Sjödin, Daniel *Tryggare kan ingen vara: Migration, religion och integration i en segregerad omgivning* 268 sidor ISBN 91-7267-337-0 (2011)

99 Ringström, Jonas *Mellan sanning och konsekvens: En studie av den tredje generationens kognitiva beteendeterapier* 268 sidor ISBN 921-7267-338-9 (2011)

100 Norstedt, Maria *Berättelser om stroke och arbetsliv: Att upptäcka styranderelationer* 204 sidor ISBN 978-91-7473-182-8 (2011)

101 Anving, Terese *Måltidens paradoxer: Om klass och kön i vardagens familjepraktiker* 228 sidor ISBN 91-7267-339-2 (2012)

102 Basic, Goran *Samverkan blir kamp: En sociologisk analys av ett projekt i ungdomsvården* 287 sidor ISBN 91-7267-346-X (2012)

103 Zettervall, Charlotta *Reluctant Victims into Challengers: Narratives of a Kurdish Political Generation in Diaspora in Sweden* 315 sidor ISBN 978-91-7473-412-6 (2013)

104 Apelmo, Elisabet *Som vem som helst: Kön, funktionalitet och idrottande kroppar* 272 sidor ISBN 978-91-7473-408-9 (2012) Utgivare: Bokförlaget Daidalos, Bergsjödalen 54b, 415 23, Göteborg, www.daidalos.se

105 Sandgren, Mikael *Europa som nation: En ny stil i nationalismens genre* 242 sidor ISBN 91-7267-356-7 (2013)

106 Sandberg, Johan *Social Policy of Our Time? An Inquiry into Evidence, Assumptions, and Diffusion of Conditional Cash Transfers in Latin America* 182 sidor ISBN 91-7267- 365-6 (2014) Kan ej beställas av Media-Tryck. Beställs av författaren.

107 Frees Esholdt, Henriette *Når humor, leg og lyst er på spil: Social interaktion på en multietnisk arbejdsplads* 260 sidor ISBN 978-91-7623-215-6 (2015).

108 Vaide, Johan, *Contact Space: Shanghai. The Chinese Dream and the Production of a New Society* 215 sidor ISBN 978-91-7623-231-6 (2015)

109 Kolankiewicz, Marta *Anti-Muslim Violence and the Possibility of Justice* 226 sidor ISBN 978-91-7623-257-6 (2015)

110 Boethius, Susanne *Män, våld och moralarbete: Rapporter från män som sökt behandling för våld i nära relationer* 262 sidor ISBN 978-91-7623-450-1 (2015)
111 Görtz, Daniel *Etnifierade polispraktiker: Hur etnicitet görs i polisens vardag* 337 sidor
ISBN 978-91-7267-380-9 (2015)
112 Stjärnhagen, Ola *Ekonomisk tillväxt i välfärdskapitalismen: En jämförande studie av BNP per capita-tillväxten i rika OECD-länder 1970–2000.* 168 sidor ISBN 978-91-7623-490-7 (2015)
113 Hedman, Karl *Managing Medical Emergency Calls* 281 sidor ISBN 978-91-7623- 690-1 (2016)
114 Solano, Priscilla *Assisting in the Shadows: Humanitarianism, Shelters and Transit Migration Politics* 250 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-102-9 (2017)
115 Ennerberg, Elin *Destination employment? Contradictions and ambiguities in Swedish labour market policy for newly arrived migrants* 232 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-204-0 (2017)
116 Sunnercrantz, Liv *Hegemony and the Intellectual Function Medialised Public Discourse on Privatisation in Sweden 1988–1993.* 338 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-471-6 (2017)
117 Kaya, Gökhan *Aspirations, Capital and Identity: Four studies on the determinants of life chances for young Swedes with an immigrant background* 163 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-771-7 (2018)
118 Hylmö, Anders *Disciplined reasoning: Styles of reasoning and the mainstream-heterodoxy divide in Swedish economics* 360 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-788-5 (2018)
119 Yakhlef, Sophia *United Agents: Community of Practice within Border Policing in the Baltic Sea Area* 220 sidor ISBN: 978-91-7753-806-6 (2018)
120 Flower, Lisa *Loyalty Work: Emotional interactions of defence lawyers in Swedish courtrooms* 266 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-820-2 (2018)
121 Jack, Tullia *Negotiating Conventions: cleanliness, sustainability and everyday life* 166 sidor ISBN 978-91-7267-400-4 (2018)
122 Hemmaty, Mona *On the Margins: Migrants, Status Mobility and Recent Turns in Swedish Migration Politics* 203 sidor ISBN 978-91-7895-036-2 (2019)
123 Kloppenborg Møller, Henrik *Spectral Jade. Materiality, Conceptualisation, and Value in the Myanmar-China Borderland Jadeite Trade* 377 sidor ISBN 978-91-7895-346-2 (2019)
124 Franzén, Alexandra *Brottslingar av en mycket speciell sort. Spionskandalen som en maktkamp mellan visselblåsare, grävande journalister och underrättelsetjänster* 237 sidor ISBN 978-91-7895-943-3 (2021)
125 Sahlin Lilja, Hanna *The Emergence, Establishment and Expansion of Fear of Crime Research in Sweden* 300 sidor ISBN 978-91-8039-025-5 (2021)

126 Klitgaard Vibeke *Social (u)orden i distriktspsykiatrien - En systemteoretisk analyse af psykiatriske patienters kommunikation og adfærd samt stigmatisering fra omverdenen* 445 sidor, ISBN 978-91-8039-063-7 (2021)
127 Ahlstrand, Rasmus *Structures of subcontracting - Work organisation, control, and labour in the Swedish building sector* 272 sidor ISBN 978-91-8039-108-5

Licentiate's Dissertations in Sociology (ISSN-1403-6061)

1996:1 Forsberg, Pia *Välfärd, arbetsmarknad och korporativa institutioner: En studie av Trygghetsrådet SAF/PTK* 147 sidor ISBN 91-89078-07-1
1996:2 Klintman, Mikael *Från "trivialt" till globalt: Att härleda miljöpåverkan från motiv och handlingar i urbana sfärer* 171 sidor ISBN 91-89078-46-2
1996:3 Höglund, Birgitta *Att vårda och vakta: Retorik och praktik i en rättspsykiatrisk vårdkontext* 215 sidor ISBN 91-89078-68-3
1997:1 Jacobsson, Katarina *Social kontroll i dövvärlden* 148 sidor ISBN 91-89078-18-7
1997:2 Arvidsson, Adam *Den sociala konstruktionen av "en vanlig Människa": Tre betraktelser kring reklam och offentlighet* 122 sidor ISBN 91-89078-26-8
1998:1 Lundberg, Magnus *Kvinnomisshandel som polisärende: Att definiera och utdefiniera* 136 sidor ISBN 91-89078-40-3
1998:2 Stojanovic, Verica *Att leva sitt liv som arbetslös... Svenska och danska ungdomars relationer, ekonomi, bostadssituation och värdesättning av arbete* 148 sidor ISBN 91-89078-54-3
1998:3 Wesser, Erik *Arbetsmarknad och socialförsäkring i förändring: En studie av långtidssjukskrivning och förtidspensionering på 90-talet* 150 sidor 91-89078-57-8
1999:1 Radmann, Aage *Fotbollslandskapet: Fotboll som socialt fenomen* 167 sidor ISBN 91-89078-81-0
1999:2 Waldo, Åsa *Vardagslivets resor i den stora staden* 288 sidor ISBN 91-89078-88-8
1999:3 Säwe, Filippa *Om samförstånd och konflikt: Samtal mellan föräldrar och skolledning på en specialskola* 159 sidor ISBN 91-89078-93-4
1999:4 Schmitz, Eva *Arbetarkvinnors mobiliseringar i arbetarrörelsens barndom: En studie av arbetarkvinnors strejkaktiviteter och dess inflytande på den svenska arbetarrörelsen* 138 sidor ISBN 91-89078-99-3
2000:1 Copes, Adriana *Time and Space: An Attempt to Transform Relegated Aspects in Central Issues of the Sociological Inquiry* 177 sidor ISBN 91-7267-003-7
2000:2 Gottskalksdottir, Bergthora *Arbetet som en port till samhället: Invandrarakademikers integration och identitet* 89 sidor ISBN 91-7267-012-6
2000:3 Alkvist, Lars-Erik *Max Weber och rationalitetsformerna* 176 sidor ISBN 91-7267-019-3

2001:1 Bergholtz, Zinnia *Att arbeta förebyggande: Tankar kring ett hälsoprojekt* 50 sidor ISBN 91-7267-043-6

2005:1 Bing Jackson, Hannah *Det fragmenterede fællesskab: Opfattelser af sociale fællesskabers funktion og deres udvikling i det senmoderne samfund* 162 sidor ISBN 91-7267-190-4

2005:2 Lundberg, Henrik *Durkheim och Mannheim som filosofisociologer* 88 sidor ISBN 91-7267-200-5

Lund Studies in Sociology (ISSN 0460-0045)

1 Goodman, Sara & Mulinari, Diana (red) *Feminist Interventions in Discourses on Gender and Development: Some Swedish Contributions* 250 sidor ISBN 91-89078-51-9 (1999)

2 Ahlstrand, Roland *Norrköpingsmodellen – ett projekt för ny sysselsättning åt personalen vid Ericsson Telecom AB i Norrköping* 114 sidor ISBN 91-7267-026-6 (2001)

3 Djurfeldt, Göran & Gooch, Pernille *Bondkäringar – kvinnoliv i en manlig värld* 60 sidor ISBN 91-7267-095-9 (2001)

4 Davies, Karen *Disturbing Gender: On the doctor – nurse relationship* 115 sidor ISBN 91-7267-108-4 (2001)

5 Nilsson, Jan-Olof & Nilsson, Kjell *Old Universities in New Environments: New Technology and Internationalisation Processes in Higher Education* 116 sidor ISBN 91-7267-174-2 (2004)

Research Reports in Sociology (ISSN 1651-596X)

1996:1 Ahlstrand, Roland *En tid av förändring: Om involvering och exkludering vid Volvos monteringsfabrik i Torslanda 1991–1993.* 116 sidor ISBN 91-89078-15-2

1997:1 Lindbladh, Eva, et al. *Unga vuxna: Berättelser om arbete, kärlek och moral* 192 sidor ISBN 91-89078-14-4

1997:2 Lindén, Anna-Lisa (red) *Thinking, Saying, Doing: Sociological Perspectives on Environmental Behaviour* 103 sidor ISBN 91-89078-13-6

1997:3 Leppänen, Vesa *Inledning till den etnometodologiska samtalsanalysen* 76 sidor ISBN 91-89078-16-0

1997:4 Dahlgren, Anita & Claezon, Ingrid *Nya föräldrar: Om kompisföräldraskap, auktoritet och ambivalens* 117 sidor ISBN 91-89078-08-X

1997:5 Persson, Anders (red) *Alternativ till ekonomismen* 71 sidor ISBN 91-89078-22-5

1997:6 Persson, Anders (red) *Kvalitet och kritiskt tänkande* 67 sidor ISBN 91-89078-25-X

1998:1 Isenberg, Bo (red) *Sociology and Social Transformation: Essays by Michael Mann, Chantal Mouffe, Göran Therborn, Bryan S. Turner* 79 sidor ISBN 91-89078-28-4

1998:2 Björklund Hall, Åsa *Sociologidoktorer: Forskarutbildning och karriär* 84 sidor ISBN 91-89078-31-4

1998:3 Klintman, Mikael *Between the Private and the Public: Formal Carsharing as Part of a Sustainable Traffic System – an Exploratory Study* 96 sidor ISBN 91-89078-32-2

1998:4 Lindén, Anna-Lisa & Carlsson-Kanyama, Annika *Dagens livsstilar i framtidens perspektiv* 74 sidor ISBN 91-89078-37-7

1998:5 Ahlstrand, Roland *En tid av förändring: Dominerande koalitioner och organisationsstrukturer vid Volvo Lastvagnars monteringsfabriker i Tuve 1982–1994* 94 sidor ISBN 91-89078-37-3

1998:6 Sahlin, Ingrid *The Staircase of Transition: European Observatory on Homelessness. National Report from Sweden* 66 sidor ISBN 91-89078-39-X

1998:7 Naranjo, Eduardo *En kortfattad jämförelse mellan den asiatiska och chilenska socioekonomiska erfarenheten* 42 sidor ISBN 91-89078-42-X

1998:8 Bosseldal, Ingrid & Esseveld, Johanna *Bland forskande kvinnor och teoretiserande män: Jämställdhet och genus vid Sociologiska institutionen i Lund* 103 sidor ISBN 91-89078-59-4

1998:9 Bosseldal, Ingrid & Hansson, Carl *Kvinnor i mansrum: Jämställdhet och genus vid Sociologiska institutionen i Umeå* 82 sidor ISBN 91-89078-60-8

1998:10 Bosseldal, Ingrid & Hellum, Merete *Ett kvinnligt genombrott utan feminism? Jämställdhet och genus vid Sociologiska institutionen i Göteborg* 83 sidor ISBN 91-89078-61-6

1998:11 Morhed, Anne-Marie *Det motstridiga könet: Jämställdhet och genus vid Sociologiska institutionen i Uppsala* 103 sidor ISBN 91-89078-62-4

1998:12 Bosseldal, Ingrid & Magdalenic, Sanja *Det osynliga könet: Jämställdhet och genus vid Sociologiska institutionen i Stockholm* 71 sidor ISBN 91-89078-63-2

1998:13 Bosseldal, Ingrid & Stina Johansson *Den frånvarande genusteorin: Jämställdhet och genus vid Sociologiska institutionen i Linköping* 62 sidor ISBN 91-89078-64-0

1998:14 Hydén, Håkan & Lindén, Anna-Lisa (red) *Lagen, rätten och den sociala tryggheten: Tunnelbygget genom Hallandsåsen* 154 sidor ISBN 91-89078-67-5

1998:15 Sellerberg, Ann-Mari (red) *Sjukdom, liv och död – om samband, gränser och format* 165 sidor ISBN 91-89078-66-7

1999:1 Pacheco, José F. (ed.) *Cultural Studies and the Politics of Everyday Life: Essays by Peter Dahlgren, Lars Nilsson, Bo Reimer, Monica Rudberg, Kenneth Thompson, Paul Willis. Introductory comments by Ron Eyerman and Mats Trondman* 105 sidor ISBN 91-89078-84-5

1999:2 Lindén, Anna-Lisa & Rinkevicius, Leonardas (eds.) *Social Processes and the Environment – Lithuania and Sweden* 171 sidor ISBN 91-7267-002-9

2000:1 Khalaf, Abdulhadi *Unfinished Business – Contentious Politics and State-Building in Bahrain* 120 sidor ISBN 91-7267-004-5

2000:2 Pacheco, José F. (red.) *Kultur, teori, praxis: Kultursociologi i Lund* 238 sidor ISBN 91-7267-015-0

2000:3 Nilsson, Jan Olof *Berättelser om Den Nya Världen* 92 sidor ISBN 91-7267-024-X

2001:1 Alkvist, Lars-Erik *Max Webers verklighetsvetenskap* 147 sidor ISBN 91-7267-099-1

2001:2 Pacheco, José F. (red) *Stadskultur: Bidrag av Eric Clark, Richard Ek, Mats Franzén, Camilla Haugaard, Magnus Carlsson, Charlotte Kira-Kimby, José F. Pacheco, Margareta Popoola, Ingrid Sahlin, Catharina Thörn, Magnus Wennerhag, Niklas Westberg* 125 sidor ISBN 91-7267-115-7

2002:1 Wendel, Monica *Kontroversen om arbetstidsförkortning: En sociologisk studie av tre försök med arbetstidsförkortning inom Malmö kommun* 209 sidor ISBN 91-7267-166-5

2002:2 Thelander, Joakim *"Säker är man ju aldrig": Om riskbedömningar, skepsis och förtroende för handel och bankärenden via Internet* 58 sidor ISBN 91-7267-117-3

2002:3 Dahlgren, Anita *Idrott, motion och andra fritidsintressen: En enkätundersökning bland 17-åriga flickor och pojkar i Landskrona, Kävlinge och Svalöv* 39 sidor ISBN 91 7267-123-8 (2002)

2002:4 Wendel, Monica *Mot en* ny *arbetsorganisering: En sociologisk studie av några försöksprojekt med flexibla arbetstider och distansarbete inom Malmö kommun* 144 sidor ISBN 91-7267-129-7

2002:5 Sörensen, Jill *Utvärderingsmodell för flexibla arbetstider inom Malmö kommun* 76 sidor ISBN 91-7267-132-7

2003:1 Klintman, Mikael & Mårtensson, Kjell med Johansson, Magnus *Bioenergi för uppvärmning – hushållens perspektiv* 98 sidor ISBN 91-7267-148-3

2004:1 Johnsdotter, Sara *FGM in Sweden: Swedish legislation regarding "female genital mutilation" and implementation of the law* 68 sidor ISBN 91-7267-162-9

2004:2 Carlsson-Kanyama, Annika, Lindén, Anna-Lisa & Eriksson, Björn *Hushållskunder på elmarknaden: Värderingar och beteenden* 133 sidor ISBN 91-7267-166-9

2005:1 Lindén, Anna-Lisa et al. *Mat, hälsa och oregelbundna arbetstider* 216 sidor ISBN 91-7267-187-4

2006:1 Lindén, Anna-Lisa et al. *Miljöpolitik och styrmedel – Två fallstudier: Kött och kläder* 90 sidor ISBN 91-7267-220-X

2006:2 Heidegren, Carl-Göran *FOSS-galaxen – En empirisk undersökning kring fri och öppen programvarurörelsen* 93 sidor ISBN 91-7267-218-8

2006:3 Apelmo, Elisabet & Sellerberg, Ann-Mari *"Shit, jag kan också lyckas" – Om genus, funktionshinder och idrottande kroppar* 43 sidor ISBN 91-7267-225-0

2007:1 Sellerberg, Ann-Mari *Världsbäst och i periferin – Om att vara funktionshindrad kvinna i idrotten* 40 sidor ISBN 91-7267-248-X

2007:2 Thorsted, Stine *Måltidet i tidsfällan – Måltidspraksis og brug af färdigmat i vardagen* 56 sidor ISBN 91-7267-250-1

2008:1 Klintman, Mikael, Boström, Magnus, Ekelund, Lena & Lindén, Anna-Lisa *Maten märks – Förutsättningar för konsumentmakt* 134 sidor ISBN 91-7267-266-8

2008:2 Anving, Terese *"Man måste ligga steget före" – Måltidsarbetets planering och organisering i barnfamiljen* 56 sidor ISBN 91-7267-267-6

2008:3 Sellerberg, Ann-Mari *En het potatis – Om mat och måltider i barn- och tonårsfamiljer* 96 sidor ISBN 91-7267-268-4

2008:4 Nyberg, Maria, Lindén, Anna-Lisa, Lagnevik, Magnus *Mat på arbetet dygnet runt? Arbete – Tid – Måltid Inventering av kunskap genom svensk forskning* 49 sidor
ISBN 91-7267-275-7

2008:5 Lindén, Anna-Lisa *Hushållsel – Effektivisering i vardagen* 84 sidor ISBN 91-7267-280-3

2009:1 Lindén, Anna-Lisa *Klimat och konsumtion – Tre fallstudier kring styrmedel och konsumtionsbeteende* 72 sidor ISBN 91-7267-294-3

2009:2 Lindén, Anna-Lisa, Jörgensen, Erika, Thelander, Åsa *Energianvändning – Konsumenters beslut och agerande* 264 sidor ISBN 91-7267-298-6

Working Papers in Sociology (1404-6741)

1997:1 Sjöberg, Katarina (red) *Vetenskapsteori* 92 sidor ISBN 91-89078-10-1

1997:2 Lindholm, Jonas & Vinderskov, Kirstine *Generationen der blev kulturpendlere: Et kvalitativt studie af unge muslimers hverdag* 171 sidor ISBN 91-89078-19-5

1999:1 Jörgensen, Erika *Perspektiv på social hållbarhet i Varberg och Västervik* 65 sidor ISBN 91-89078-75-6

1999:2 Holmström, Ola *En utvärdering av en utvärdering eller Berättelsen om hur jag förlorade min sociologiska oskuld* 93 sidor ISBN 91-89078-91-8

2000:1 Kimby, Charlotte Kira & Haugaard, Camilla *Kroppen i den computermedierede kommunikation* 93 sidor ISBN 91-7267-007-X

2000:2 Bing Jackson, Hannah *Forandringer i arbejdslivet og i familjelivet: Om kvinders livsformer ved årtusindeskiftet* 43 sidor ISBN 91-7267-017-7

2000:3 Bing Jackson, Hannah *Family and Fertility Patterns in Denmark – a "Postmodern" Phenomenon: On the relationship between women's education and employment situation and the changes in family forms and fertility* 52 sidor ISBN 91-7267-018-5

2002:1 Henecke, Birgitta & Khan, Jamil *Medborgardeltagande i den fysiska planeringen: En demokratiteoretisk analys av lagstiftning, retorik och praktik* 38 sidor ISBN 91-7267-134-3

2003:1 Persson, Marcus & Thelander, Joakim *Mellan relativism och realism: Forskarstudenter om vetenskapsteori* 89 sidor ISBN 91-7267-146-7

2003:2 Barmark, Mimmi *Sjuka hus eller sjuka människor? Om boenderelaterad ohälsa bland malmöbor* 46 sidor ISBN 91-7267-151-3

2004:1 Persson, Marcus & Sjöberg, Katarina (red) *Om begrepp och förståelse: Att problematisera det enkla och förenkla det svåra* 61 sidor ISBN 91-7267-171-8

2007:1 Lindén, Anna-Lisa *Sociala dimensioner i hållbar samhällsplanering* 30 sidor ISBN 91-7267-236-6

Evaluation Studies

1997:1 Persson, Anders *Räddningstjänstutbildning för brandingenjörer – en utvärdering* 37 sidor ISBN 91-89078-12-8

1997:2 Björklund Hall, Åsa *På spaning efter tillvaron som doktorand – med hjälp av forskarstuderandes röster* 72 sidor ISBN 91-89078-21-7

1998:1 Bierlein, Katja, Misirli, Leila & Nilsson, Kjell *Arbetslivsrehabilitering i samverkan: Utvärdering av Projekt Malmö Rehab 2000.* 63 sidor ISBN 91-89078-30-6

1998:2 Mulinari, Diana *Reflektioner kring projektet KvinnoKrami/MOA* 84 sidor ISBN 91-89078-55-1

1998:3 Mulinari, Diana & Neergard, Anders *Utvärdering av projektet "Steg till arbete"* 72 sidor ISBN 91-89078-56-X

1998:4 Misirli, Leila & Wendel, Monica *Lokal samverkan – till allas fördel? En utvärdering av Trelleborgsmodellen – ett arbetsmarknadspolitiskt försök med "friår", inom Trelleborgs kommun* 45 sidor ISBN 91-89078-58-6

1998:5 Bierlein, Katja & Misirli, Leila *Samverkan mot ungdomsarbetslöshet: Utvärdering av projekt Kompassen i Helsingborg* 80 sidor ISBN 91-89078-69-1

1999:1 Bierlein, Katja & Platzer, Ellinor *Myndighetssamverkan i projekt Malmö Rehab 2000: Utvärdering 1997–98.* 75 sidor ISBN 91-89078-74-8

1999:2 Ahlstrand, Roland & Wendel, Monica *Frågor kring samverkan: En utvärdering av Visionsbygge Burlöv – ett myndighetsövergripande projekt för arbetslösa invandrare* 51 sidor ISBN 91-89078-82-9

1999:3 Nilsson Lindström, Margareta *En processutvärdering av projektet Trampolinen: Ett vägledningsprojekt riktat till långtidsarbetslösa vid Arbetsförmedlingen i Lomma* 104 sidor ISBN 91-89078-94-2

1999:4 Nilsson Lindström, Margareta *En processutvärdering av projektet New Deal: Ett vägledningsprojekt för långtidsarbetslösa kvinnor inom kontor och administration* 107 sidor ISBN 91-89078-95-0

1999:5 Wendel, Monica *Utvärdering av projekt arbetsLÖSningar: En arbetsmarknadsåtgärd i samverkan för långtidssjukskrivna och långtidsarbetslösa* 63 sidor ISBN 91-7267-000-2

2005:1 Nilsson Lindström, Margareta *Att bryta traditionella könsmönster i arbetslivet: En grupp långtidsarbetslösa kvinnors erfarenheter av kursen "Teknik för kvinnor med begränsat utbud"* 50 sidor ISBN 91-7267-209-9

Afrint Working Paper (ISSN 1651-5897)

1 Larsson, Rolf, Holmén, Hans & Hammarskjöld, Mikael *Agricultural Development in Sub – Saharan Africa* 48 sidor ISBN 91-7267-133-5

2 Djurfeldt, Göran & Jirström, Magnus *Asian Models of Agricultural Development and their Relevance to Africa* 47 sidor ISBN 91-7267-137-8

Studies in Bodies, Gender and Society (ISSN 1652-1102)

1 Hansson, Adam *Det manliga klimakteriet: Om försöket att lansera ett medicinskt begrepp* 50 sidor ISBN 91-7267-158-0 (2003)

2 Norstedt, Maria *Att skapa dikotomier och bibehålla genusordningar: An analys av tidningen* Taras *berättelser om kropp. kön och medelålder* 52 sidor ISBN 91-7267-159-9 (2003)

Lund Monographs in Social Anthropology (ISSN 1101-9948)

3 Pérez-Arias, Enrique *Mellan det förflutna och framtiden: Den sandinistiska revolutionen i Nicaragua* 322 sidor ISBN 91-89078-01-2 (ak. avh. 1997)

4 Karlsson, B. G. *Contested Belonging: An Indigenous People's Struggle for Forest and Identity in Sub-Himalayan Bengal* 318 sidor ISBN 91-89078-04-7 (ak. avh. 1997)

5 Lindberg, Christer (red) *Antropologiska porträtt 2.* 342 sidor ISBN 91-89078-05-5 (1997)

6 Gooch, Pernille *At the Tail of the Buffalo: Van Gujjar pastoralists between the forest and the world arena* 391 sidor ISBN 91-89078-53-5 (ak. avh. 1998)

7 Persson, Johnny *Sagali and the Kula: A regional systems analysis of the Massim* 245 sidor ISBN 91-89078-87-X (ak. avh. 1999)

8 Malm, Thomas *Shell Age Economics: Marine Gathering in the Kingdom of Tonga, Polynesia* 430 sidor ISBN 91-89078-97-7 (ak. avh. 1999)

9 Johansson Dahre, Ulf *Det förgångna är framtiden: Ursprungsfolk och politiskt självbestämmande i Hawai'i* 228 sidor Ill. ISBN 91-7267-107-6 (ak. avh. 2001)

10 Johnsdotter, Sara *Created by God: How Somalis in Swedish Exile Reassess the Practice of Female Circumcision* 301 sidor ISBN 91-7267-127-0 (ak. avh. 2002)

11 Andersson, Oscar *Chicagoskolan: Institutionaliseringen, idétraditionen & vetenskapen* 336 sidor ISBN 91-7267-153-X (ak. avh. 2003)

12 Carlbom, Aje *The Imagined versus the Real Other: Multiculturalism and the Representation of Muslims in Sweden* 234 sidor ISBN 91-7267-154-8 (ak. avh. 2003)

13 Antoniusson, Eva-Malin *Överdosens antropologi: En kontextuell studie* 232 sidor ISBN 91-7267-161-0 (ak. avh. 2003)

14 Parker, Peter *How Personal Networks Shape Business: An Anthropological Study of Social Embeddedness, Knowledge Development and Growth of Firms* 156 sidor ISBN 91-7267-182-3 (ak. avh. 2004)

15 Lindberg, Christer (red) *Nya antropologiska porträtt* 355 sidor ISBN 91-7267-182-3 (2005)

16 Sliavaite, Kristina *From Pioneers to Target Group: Social change, ethnicity and memory in a Lithuanian power plant community* 206 sidor ISBN 91-7267-202-1 (ak. avh. 2005)

17 Göransson, Kristina *Conflicts and Contracts – Chinese Intergenerational Relations in Modern Singapore* 187 sidor ISBN 91-7167-202-1 (ak. avh. 2006)

18 Bourgouin, France *The Young, the Wealthy, and the Restless: Trans-national Capitalist Elite Formation in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg* 342 sidor ISBN 91-7267-249-8
(ak. avh. 2007)

19 Matsson, Anna *The Power to do Good: Post-Revolution, NGO Society, and the Emergence of NGO-Elites in Contemporary Nicaragua* 208 sidor ISBN 91-7267-251-X
(ak. avh. 2007)
20 Holm, Hilma *Knowledge as Action – An Anthropological Study of Attac Sweden* 144 sidor ISBN 91-7267-317-6 (ak. avh. 2010)
21 Wittrock, Hanna *Säg inte mötesplats! – Teater och integration i ord och handling* 268 sidor ISBN 91-7267-332-X (ak. avh. 2011)
22 Hedlund, Anna *Exile Warriors: Violence and Community among Hutu Rebels in the Eastern Congo* 244 sidor ISBN 978-91-7473-983-1 (ak. avh. 2014)
23 Capelán Köhler, Annika *Fibre Formations: Wool as an anthropological site* 260 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-202-6 (ak. avh. 2017)
24 Granbom Lotta, *The Second Wave: The Urak Lawoi After the Tsunami in Thailand.* 356 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-397-9 (ak. avh. 2017)
25 Krantz Anna Sarri, *Tredje generationens överlevande – En socialantropologisk studie om minne, antisemitism och identitet i spåret av Förintelsen* 194 sidor ISBN 978-91-7753-852-3 (ak. avh. 2018)
26 Abelin Matthias, *A Swedish Dilemma – A Culture and Rule of Law in Swedish Sickness Insurance* 256 sidor ISBN 978-91-7895-018-8 (ak. avh. 2019)
27 Berglund Anna, *Ambiguous hopes: an ethnographic study of agricultural modernisation in a Rwandan village* 223 sidor ISBN 978-91-7895-269-4 (ak. avh. 2019)

Licentiate's Dissertation in Social Anthropology (ISSN 1404-7683)

1999:1 Parker, Peter *Cognition and Social Organisation: A Framework* 125 sidor ISBN 91-89078-76-4
1999:2 Johansson Dahre, Ulf *Politik med andra medel: En antropologisk betraktelse av rättens politiska och ideologiska förhållanden* 137 sidor ISBN 91-7267-006-1

Research Reports in Social Anthropology

2006:1 Johansson Dahre, Ulf (ed.) *The Reconstruction of Good Governance in the Horn of Africa – Proceedings of the 4th SIRC Conference on the Horn of Africa, October 14–16, 2005.* 232 sidor ISBN 91-7267-216-1
2007:1 Johansson Dahre, Ulf (ed.) *The Role of Diasporas in Peace, Democracy and Development in the Horn of Africa* 226 sidor ISBN 91-7267-237-4

2008:1 Johansson Dahre, Ulf (ed.) *Post-Conflict Peace-Building in the Horn of Africa: A Report of the 6th Annual Conference on the Horn of Africa, Lund, August 24–26, 2007.* 288 sidor ISBN 91-7267-256-0

2009:1 Svensson, Nicklas (ed.) *Initiative Report Horn of Africa: Co-operation Instead of Wars and Destruction, 11–12 May, 2002 Lund, Sweden* 106 sidor ISBN 91-7267-290-0

2009:2 Svensson, Nicklas (ed.) *Final Report Conference Horn of Africa: II No Development without Peace, 23–25 May, 2003 Lund, Sweden* 136 sidor ISBN 91-7267-291-9

2009:3 Svensson, Nicklas (ed.) *Horn of Africa: Transforming Itself from a Culture of War into a Culture of Peace, 27–29 August 2004 Lund, Sweden* 312 sidor ISBN 91-7267-292-7

2009:4 Sthlm Policy Group (ed.) *Faith, Citizenship, Democracy and Peace in the Horn of Africa: A Report of the 7th Annual Conference on the Horn of Africa, Lund, October 17–19, 2008.* 216 sidor ISBN 91-7267-293-5

Working Papers in Social Anthropology (ISSN 1652-442X)

2004:1 Göransson, Kristina *Filial Children and Ageing Parents: Intergenerational Family Ties as Politics and Practice among Chinese Singaporeans* 26 sidor ISBN 91-7267-175-0

2005:1 Granbom, Ann-Charlotte *Urak Lawoi: A Field Study of an Indigenous People in Thailand and their Problems with Rapid Tourist Development* 98 sidor ISBN 91-7267-206-4

Övrigt

Från seminarium till storinstitution: Sociologi i Lund 1947–1997 (Sociologiska institutionens Årsbok 1996) 105 sidor

Institution i rörelse: Utbildning och forskning inför år 2000 (Sociologiska institutionens Årsbok 1997) 153 sidor ISBN 91-89078-29-2

Printed by Media-Tryck, Lund 2021 NORDIC SWAN ECOLABEL 3041 0903

Structures of subcontracting

The Swedish building sector is rapidly changing. While construction rates are the highest they have been for 50 years, the sector is undergoing structural transformation as large parts of production are externalised and both major and minor firms rely heavily on subcontractors. Additionally, the sector increasingly makes use of posted workers from predominantly Central and Eastern Europe.

Structures of subcontracting analyses the augmented use of subcontractors in the Swedish building sector, with the point of departure in a qualitative study of two building companies. Building on a theoretical tradition of sociology of work and organisations, the study identifies a variety of ways in which work is organised through subcontractors. A key contribution of this study is the conceptualisation of new forms of subcontracting arrangements as masked staffing. Through the use of masked staffing, this dissertation shows how subcontractors are hired according to principles of staffing rather than external business relations, allowing firms to effectively sidestep employer responsibility while at the same time maintaining control of the labour process.

LUND UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Social Science
Department of Sociology
Lund Dissertations in sociology 127
ISBN 978-91-8039-108-5
ISSN 1652-8220