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EDITORIAL

The Birth of a New Nordic Career Guidance Journal

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Welcome to the first issue of the *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance* (NJTCG), a new international forum for the growing body of research in the Nordic region.

Keywords: Transitions; Careers; Guidance; Nordic context; Research

Velkommen til første udgave af *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance* (NJTCG), et nyt internationalt forum for en stødt stigende publicering af forskning om indenfor overgange, karriere og vejledning i Norden.

Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance (NJTCG) on uusi kansainvälinen julkaisufoorumi kasvavalle pohjoismaiselle ohjausalan tutkimukselle. Tervetuloa ensimmäisen numeron pariin.

Velkomin, og takk fyrir innlitið í fyrsta hefti *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance* (NJTCG), sem er alþjóðlegur vettvangur fyrir rannsóknir í náms- og starfsráðgjöf á Norðurlöndunum.

Velkommen til første utgave av *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance* (NJTCG), et nytt internasjonalt forum for det økende omfanget av forskning i Norden.

Välkomna till det första numret av *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance* (NJTCG), ett nytt internationellt forum för nordisk forskning om övergångar, karriärer och vägledning – ett snabbt växande forskningsfält.

The NJTCG aims to widen accessibility to research results and the professional discussion and debate between researchers in the Nordic region. In doing so, it could be said that we contribute to the Nordic Council of Ministers strategy (2020) to continue and together deploy “...the most advanced solutions, the Nordic countries can be the driving force leading the /.../ sustainable development and welfare for all” (p. 18). The Nordic region has distinctive features reflected in its high international rankings on prosperity, freedom and equality. Social capital and equalitarian opportunity structures put the focus on the social context of career transitions in people’s lives and the ability of governance to support citizens’ transition in education and work throughout their lifetime.

The journal also seeks to improve the visibility of Nordic research within the scope of the journal and stimulate international discussion of research results and collaboration. As such, the journal aims to become an influential and relevant publication and a trustworthy outlet for scholars.

The long-term goals of the journal are as follows:

- to support the development of a critical mass and/or research expertise at the Nordic level in transitions, careers and guidance
- to support the sharing of research results and a stronger, quality-assured shared knowledge pool within transitions, careers and guidance research in Nordic countries
- to provide an outlet for quality research focusing on career transitions and guidance in contexts
- to increase the visibility and thus the success of Nordic researchers in EU-funded activities and other international research collaborations

The journal seeks to widen participation in academic and professional discussion and debate through different types of submissions. Apart from *research papers*, we wish, for example, to publish *commentaries* that reflect upon or critique a specific event, such as the release of a major study or other notable occurrences related to the focus of the NJTCG. We also encourage critical engagement with the field through *reviews* that cover topics such as current controversies or the historical development of studies and issues of regional or temporal focus. Another genre of articles is labelled *policy and practice*. Within this category, we aim to include both policymakers and practitioners in the journal and encourage policy and practice articles that describe new applications and approaches in career guidance or policy making that influences individuals' relation to work and education or career support in society. By doing so, we hope to share both the novelty and the theoretical underpinning of policy making and practice development. In policy-focused papers, we encourage considerations of policy implications for individuals, institutions and professional practices.

The Nordic Context

Although not exclusively, the journal emphasises contributions written in or relevant to the Nordic context with a focus on transitions, careers and guidance. At its most basic definition, 'Nordic' is a geographical category that describes an area in Northern Europe and the Northern Atlantic comprising Denmark, Sweden and Norway, as well as Finland to the east and Iceland in the Atlantic. The Nordic region also includes the self-governing areas of Åland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The region is the home of indigenous people: the Greenlandic Inuits and the Sami in the northern parts of Finland, Sweden and Norway. In a recent publication (Haug, Hooley, Kettunen, & Thomsen, 2020), the features of ideological similarity of what is sometimes referred to as the *Nordic model* are said to include mixed economies, social democratic politics, high levels of taxation, welfare provision and a commitment to gender equality, social cohesion and limiting income inequality and differences between social classes (Marklund, 2017). Despite the many similarities of Nordic states and areas, however, it is important to recognise that they also have major differences.

Evidently, the NJTCG has three primary foci: transitions, careers and guidance. *Transitions* denote both educational transitions and the transition from school to work, i.e. the movement of individuals through the education system and their movement from the education system to labour markets and work life. The notion of transition implies movement from a certain social arena to another one, which have different rules that apply for entering – some are formal and some are informal.

It could reasonably be claimed that everyone has a *career*. Careers can be pursued in many ways, both consciously and unconsciously, but careers can only happen in a context. It helps us to understand how individuals interact with society, how they engage with and move between institutions and how such relationships are integrated into an identity and how they influence the socio-political context.

The third foci, career *guidance*, is a professional activity intended to assist people of any age and at any point in their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Guidance practice is considered an important part of Nordic equalitarian welfare societies, where it is the legal right of the citizens to have access to career guidance services.

The birth of a new journal Nordic journal is the result of a long process, and many people have collectively taken part in all the necessary steps to make it a high-quality contribution to society. We are relying on the collaboration of all our editors, reviewers and contributors to make it a contemporary, lively and relevant publication.

We hope you will enjoy reading our first issue and that you find these articles useful to stimulate your research into the vibrant areas of transitions, careers and guidance. We encourage you to write engaging

pieces that share insights from policy development processes and to submit your best papers for publication. We invite you to review specific concepts trending in practice or methodologies of career guidance and to share your questions and building blocks in our community. We hope you will find the journal valuable in your continuous professional development whether your interest in transitions, careers and guidance relates to research, policy or practice.

First Issue Contributions

This inaugural issue features five papers—three research articles, one commentary and one policy paper. The contributions come from three Nordic countries and are diverse in content and methods. Nevertheless, there is a common emphasis on the context of career transitions and policies. A critical stance is taken both in the theoretical realm and on the current state of governance in the region, including where it is headed for a sustainable future.

In the research article by Lisbeth Lundahl, Jonna Linde, Joakim Lindgren, Per-Åke Rosvall and Åsa Sundelin, the authors conduct a study of introduction programmes (IPs) in Sweden, which are meant to facilitate the transition to upper secondary education of Swedish youth with incomplete compulsory education. It examines local structural and institutional preconditions and the strategies and work of the actors involved in the IPs in 90 municipalities. The municipalities fall into three categories: commuter municipalities close to big cities, rural municipalities and small cities.

Sif Einarsdóttir and James Rounds' research article provides a summary of 10 studies on gender differences in vocational interests in Iceland. Despite ranking high on international gender equality indices, the Nordic labour market is highly gender segregated. Gender differences in interests are found to be extensive in the population and similar to the differences found in other countries. Women prefer to work with people and men with things. The influence of sex-role socialisation, essentialist ideas in society, and the need for progressive policies and early interventions are discussed.

Ingela Bergmo Prvulovic's research article describes and analyses the career challenges that individuals encounter and the types of management strategies proposed in advice columns published in a Swedish newspaper between 2011 and 2015. The study uncovers several dilemmas of career navigation, which Bergmo Prvulovic classifies into five categories: 1) the need for recognition, 2) how to advance, 3) how to understand the labour market, 4) experiences of injustice and of being controlled and 5) uncertainty in one's current/forthcoming role. Based on the results, a bridging guidance approach is suggested. This approach addresses a perspective of exchange and, through increased awareness, builds bridges between different knowledge bases about career to support learning in career navigation.

In her commentary, Lisbet Höjdal discusses some contemporary approaches to career counselling, with specific and critical attention given to the life design paradigm and its key assumptions. She aims to initiate a discussion on the methodological implications of specific key assumptions regarding the individual and the context in which career choices are made. She claims that an emphasis on individual learning, adaptive behaviour and self-governance might contribute to the individualisation of career problems that may have a structural origin.

Peter Plant's policy and practice paper about green guidance provides a thought-provoking and interesting discussion about the need to shift the paradigms in career guidance. Examples from non-Western theories are contrasted with current paradigms and policies driven by a focus on economic growth. This topic provides an important discussion about the future foundation of guidance approaches and their possible contribution to sustainable development in a more utopian world.

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Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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