



Unions' Conceptualizations of Members' Professional Interests and Influence in the Workplace¹

■ **Arnhild Bie-Drivdal**²

PhD Research Fellow, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Centre for the Study of Professions, Norway

ABSTRACT

The role of unions as agents of professional knowledge is seldom addressed in studies on working life relations. This article investigates how unions with different degrees of professionalization conceptualize members' interests and influence in the workplace. Two unions of professionals and one general union in the Norwegian public sector are compared. The data consist of union documents, speeches, and interviews with 12 workplace representatives. A 'union logic' and 'professional association logic' are developed and applied as analytical ideal types, and the unions' conceptualizations and combinations of these institutional logics are analyzed. The article finds similarities and differences between the unions and interesting differences between the unions' micro and macro levels. Further, a distinct hybrid logic is identified as a 'union of professionals logic', with professional influence and the agency of elected representatives as key aspects. Introducing perspectives from the study of professions, the article contributes to a reconceptualization of the study of unions within the Nordic model – and beyond.

KEYWORDS

Elected representatives / employee participation / institutional logics / professional associations / professional influence / unions

Introduction

An increasing number of employees are professionals or other experts; accordingly, unions increasingly aspire to function both as unions and as professional associations. Still, knowledge about the specific characteristics of unions with different degrees of professionalization is scarce. The present article explores unions' conceptualizations of members' interests and influence to gain insight into their approaches to employee participation and professional issues in the workplace. The findings contribute to a reconceptualization of the study of unions and workplace democracy by highlighting knowledge, skills, and professional autonomy.

Previous research has defined 'unions' as democratic actors that contribute to balancing power in society and work life (Behrens et al. 2004; Heiret 2012); as such, unions have been viewed as agents of power within class struggle, highlighting employee participation in relation to rights, wages, and working conditions (Caraker et al. 2016; Knudsen 1995; Knudsen et al. 2011). More recent research on union revitalization

¹ You can find this text and its DOI at <https://tidsskrift.dk/njwls/index>.

² Corresponding author: Arnhild Bie-Drivdal, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Centre for the Study of Professions (SPS), Norway, E-mail: Arnhild.Bie-Drivdal@oslomet.no.



has highlighted union organization, capacity, and purpose (Fairbrother 2015), the importance of institutional frameworks and external coalitions (Ibsen & Tapia 2017), and the critical role of unions' strategic capabilities and the need to further develop these (Murray 2017). Employee participation and engagement in constructive partnerships with employers has also been highlighted as a means to increase worker influence, strengthen workplace development, and renew the relevance of unionism (e.g., Caraker et al. 2016; Frege & Kelly 2004; Irgens 2018). These approaches, however, largely overlook the question of how professional knowledge, autonomy, and identities relate to unions' purpose and power, and the ways unions may exert influence. One exception to this is the typology developed by Danish researcher Scheuer in the 1980s; he described professionalism and professional influence as rationale for union organizing (Scheuer 1986). Exceptions can also be found related to studies of unions in the education sector, where several contributions have highlighted teachers' unions as key actors in professional development (e.g., Bangs & MacBeath 2012; Stevenson & Gilliland 2015). One study on teachers' unions even tried to describe how 'professional unionism' diverts from 'industrial unionism' (Kerchner & Koppich 1993). However, from a Nordic perspective, these approaches seem incomplete because they do not embody the specific traditions of Nordic working life relations, such as the role of elected workplace representatives and institutionalized bipartite cooperation in the workplace. Generally, few studies have targeted unions of professionals or other unions that have highly educated members to investigate how their members' knowledge and skills may impact union revitalization or union influence.

Previous research on professions and their associations has dealt with organizations as knowledge agents and stakeholders in professionalization at the national level. 'Professional associations' are defined as necessary precondition of professionalism and a key characteristic of professions, linking them to the profession's knowledge base, professional ethics, and professional development (Brante 2013; Molander & Terum 2008). In addition, professional associations have been seen as altruistic social actors motivated to do good *and* as egoistic power agents aiming at monopoly and benefits (Fauske 2008; Parsons 1978). As such, professional associations have been viewed as 'hybrid organizations', containing both professional and union interests (Wilensky 1964). How the unions of professionals balance professional unionism against more traditional industrial unionism influences how they perceive rights and obligations and, eventually, what it means to them to represent members' interests (Kerchner & Koppich 1993). Some studies have analyzed organizations inhabiting the double role as union and professional association at the national level (e.g., Buch & Andersen 2014; Nerland & Karseth 2015); however, the workplace level of these organizations remains largely unexplored, including issues related to participation and employee representation.

The Norwegian work life is characterized by a strong tradition of employee participation and institutionalized influence through tripartite and bipartite cooperation, often referred to as the 'Nordic model' (Heiret 2012). Highly educated employees are characteristic of the Norwegian public sector, and both general unions and hybrid unions – for example, unions of physicians or teachers – inhabit key positions. Furthermore, the European trend of union decline has not been manifested in the Norwegian public sector, which is still characterized by an organizational density of about 80%. Employees join a union individually and voluntarily, and most workplaces have elected employee representatives who are engaged in continuous partnership and cooperation with employers

(Falkum et al. 2009). This relationship and the respective rights and duties of employers and employees are regulated by the Basic Agreement(s). Accordingly, the Norwegian public sector represents a relevant case for studying how presumably strong and influential unions that have different degrees of professional aspiration conceptualize members' interests and influence in the workplace. Moreover, these Norwegian unions may develop our general understanding of unions as knowledge agents in ways that might be relevant beyond the Nordic context.

The organizations subject to closer examination in the current article are the Norwegian Medical Association (NMA), the Union of Education Norway (UEN), and the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees (NUMGE), which, respectively, organize the medical profession, the teaching profession, and a variety of municipal employees who belong to different professions or vocations. The data consist of a variety of union documents as well as interviews with 12 workplace representatives from the three organizations.

Based on the conception of union members as employees *and* professionals, the following research question guides the investigation: How are members' interests and influence in the workplace conceptualized by unions with different degrees of professionalization, and how are the conceptualizations combined at different levels in the organizations? To explore this question, the institutional logics perspective is used as a theoretical frame and analytical tool. This provides a fruitful framework for analyzing ideas and beliefs at both national and local levels, as well as discussing the agency of the unions' workplace representatives. The institutional logics perspective deals with belief systems and associated practices, thereby linking agency to socially constructed institutional practices (Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton & Ocasio 2008). Previous studies have used the institutional logics perspective to investigate issues such as work environment management (e.g., Madsen & Hasle 2017), and professionals' responses to the introduction of bureaucracy and market logics (e.g., Alvehus & Andersson 2018). Until now, the perspective has not been applied to explore the characteristics of unions with different professional histories and aspirations. Therefore, in this article, a 'union logic' and 'professional association logic' are developed and applied as analytical ideal types. The investigation reveals differences between the unions – and, in particular, between the unions' macro and micro levels – and insight into the agency of elected representatives. The findings are discussed in light of the unions' different histories and characteristics, and theoretical implications are suggested. The article identifies a distinct hybrid logic, provides new insight about unions as knowledge agents, and contributes to bridge the gap between studies of working life relations and studies of professions.

Institutional logics

Thornton and Ocasio define 'institutional logics' as 'the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality' (1999, p. 804; 2008, p. 101). Studies of institutional logics have often concentrated on how a dominant logic organizes and guides the behavior of the actors. Recently, more attention has been directed toward the coexistence of multiple logics and cooperation among logics (Goodrick & Reay 2011; Reay & Hinings



2009), as well as the existence of hybrid logics (Battilana et al. 2017; Meyer & Hammerschmid 2006). 'Hybrids' can be understood as organizations that instantiate the values and practices associated with multiple distinct logics. Such hybridity poses a number of challenges and opportunities to actors, however, if they acquire legitimacy, such hybrids can benefit from a broader resource base than can a single logic (Battilana et al. 2017). Moreover, the institutional logics perspective rests on an understanding of embedded agency, as the logics are expected to both shape and constrain the behavioral repertoire of social actors (Delbridge & Edwards 2013; Friedland & Alford 1991; Ocasio et al. 2017). In this perspective, the elected union representatives exercise agency in the formation, reproduction, and transformation of their respective unions. Elected representatives can be seen as either 'representatives' or 'strategic users' of logics, or as representing different combinations or degrees of such approaches (Greenwood et al. 2017). The Scandinavian approach to institutional logics emphasizes that ideas are translated and edited as they diffuse and are adopted (Greenwood et al. 2017) and adjusted to different organizational contexts. Together, these insights make the institutional logics perspective a fruitful approach for analyzing values and beliefs at national and local levels in different unions and exploring the agency of elected representatives in this respect.

Institutional logics can be studied and operationalized in a number of ways. One approach holds that institutional logics determine 'which issues and problems are salient' and 'which answers and solutions are the focus of attention' (Meyer & Hammerschmid 2006, p. 1005). In this article, 'members' interests' are used as a proxy for issues and problems, and 'the means of influence' suggested by the unions as adequate to secure those interests, are used as a proxy for answers and solutions. To facilitate a structured comparison of the conceptualizations of members' interests and influence in the different unions, two ideal typical institutional logics are developed, named 'union logic' and 'professional association logic.' The logics are ideal types and analytical constructs in the sense that they represent condensations of the most salient issues addressed and the main channels of influence suggested by the unions. Most unions can be expected to display aspects of both union logic and professional association logic. A key question of this paper is whether and how the logics are combined by the different unions.

The seminal work of Friedland and Alford (1991) identifies the capitalist market, the bureaucratic state, democracy, families, and religion as key institutional logics in Western societies. Later contributions have included other logics, among them being professionalism (Thornton et al. 2012). The general logics of democracy and professionalism are seen as backdrops when the logics of unions and professional associations are operationalized below.

Union logic

Participation is a key characteristic of the logic of democracy (Friedland & Alford 1991), and participation is also a crucial aspect of unions. Unions are democratic actors, both in society and in the workplace, and union presence and representative institutions strengthen employee participation (Behrens et al. 2004, p. 15). Unions are agents of power, and their legitimacy rests with their organizational density, which is the percentage of members a union organizes in a relevant field. For general unions, this potential may be unlimited, whereas unions of professionals typically only accept

members with specific education and/or in specific positions (Liljegren et al. 2008). The power and legitimacy of unions also follows from their members' status and position in the labor market, as well as from the laws and agreements regulating the rights and duties of employers and employees. In Norway, the Basic Agreement(s) are of specific importance here.

The most salient issues and problems raised by unions are related to workers' rights. Fundamental purposes of unions are to defend and secure the members' interests, dignity, and rights, both individually and collectively (Hodder & Edwards 2015; Murray 2017), and to represent the interests of those who are underrepresented when decisions are made (Behrens et al. 2004). Most unions couple this with a broad social agenda related to equality, equal opportunities, and other social policies. Accordingly, the key issues that unions seek to influence are members' wages and working conditions and their right to participate in the workplace, as well as broader social and political concerns. Moreover, unions will pursue objectives that reflect their identity (Hodder & Edwards 2015, p. 847), and unions of professionals—hybrid unions—can be expected to forward professional issues of relevance to their members. However, in the ideal typical union logic, the main issues and problems raised will relate to the members' interests as employees.

The unions' answers and solutions can be understood as the means by which the members' interests are secured. For unions, the main channels of influence in the workplace can be described as 'direct employee participation' and 'representative employee participation'. 'Direct participation' refers to individual employees' influence over their own work situation, which is typically related to task performance at the operational level. 'Representative participation' is exercised indirectly – for instance, through elected representatives – and is intended to give employees influence at a tactical or strategic level in relation to goals, the organization, and long-term development (Hagen & Trygstad 2009; Knudsen 1995; Knudsen et al. 2011). Representative participation is clearly linked to democratic values and the distribution of power. Direct participation is similarly intrinsic to workplace democracy; however, more recently, it has also been linked to the instrumental, management-driven logics of increased productivity and innovation, which is contrasted against the democratic aspects of representative participation. This distinction is less valid in the Norwegian context, where both forms of participation tend to exist side by side. Moreover, the direct and representative forms of participation are increasingly seen as mutually dependent and even mutually reinforcing in Norwegian workplaces (Hagen & Trygstad 2009; Trygstad et al. 2015).

Professional association logic

The logic of professionalism relates to specialized work grounded in discretionary knowledge and skills, exclusive jurisdiction, qualifying credentials, a formal training program, and an ideology committed to quality rather than economic efficiency (Freidson 2001, p. 127). Further, 'professions' are described as 'organized bodies of experts' (Fauske 2008, p. 35), and the 'professional association' is often understood as the collective voice of a profession and as a necessary precondition for professionalism (Brante 2013; Larson 1977; Molander & Terum 2008). Hence, in the literature, the concept of a 'profession' is often used interchangeably with that of a 'professional association'. This lack of differentiation between the concepts blurs the role and mandate of hybrid unions in



the workplace, as it is unclear whether or not they should be regarded as the professions' collective voice. Moreover, it hides the fact that professionals may be unorganized or organized in different associations or unions.

Professional associations are also agents of power. Their most important sources of power and legitimacy are the members' knowledge and status in society, and the power is typically translated into different professionalization strategies aiming at strengthening and securing the professions' positions and influence (Larson 1977; Torstendahl 1997). One could say that 'professions are organized into associations that unite members and take care of their interests' (Brante 2013, p. 4). Accordingly, the most salient issues and problems for professional associations relate to how to secure members' professional interests, both individually and collectively. Typically, this relates to knowledge use, methods and practice, and the ability to act as professionals with autonomy, to take professional responsibility, and to adhere to professional ethics (Brante 2013; Freidson 2001). Therefore, the ideal typical professional association logic highlights the issues and problems related to the members' interests as professionals rather than as employees.

Professional associations' answers and solutions—or the means available to secure members' interests—follow from the professions' autonomy, specialized knowledge, and exclusive jurisdiction in their fields of expertise (Brante 2013; Freidson 2001). Conceptually, it is possible to differentiate between individual and collective professional autonomy, where the first relates to the individual professionals and the latter to the professional community or association (Engel 1970). The literature on employee participation accordingly distinguishes between direct individual participation and direct collective participation; the first relates to an individual employee's job autonomy and the second relates to collective participation through staff meetings or project groups in the workplace (e.g., Knudsen 1995; Knudsen et al. 2011). The concept of participation is not commonly used in the literature on professions; however, for the current investigation, similar concepts are developed for professional associations, most notably to highlight professional knowledge as the basis for participation. Conceptually, as the main channels of influence for the ideal typical professional association in the workplace, this article distinguishes between 'individual professional participation' through individual professionals and 'collective professional participation' through the professional community.

This translates to an ideal typical 'union logic' that is characterized by an emphasis on the members' rights and interests as employees and an ideal typical 'professional association logic' that is characterized by an emphasis on issues that relate to members' interests as professionals. The two logics are similar in a number of ways: unions and professional associations are power agents and member organizations that must balance self-interest and social responsibility. However, they have different power resources, and the key issues and means of influence available in the two logics also differ. Importantly, when the members are understood as employees, as in the union logic, this implies certain rights; when the members are understood as professionals, as in the professional association logic, this evokes certain responsibilities. Moreover, the union logic draws heavily on the Basic Agreement(s) and representative participation in the workplace, whereas the professional association logic builds on the knowledge of the professional community, implying collective participation, often without a designated spokesperson, as the most powerful source of influence. The ideal typical logics are summarized in Table 1.

Table I The ideal types of union logic and professional association logic

Approaches to the members' interests and influence	Union logic	Professional association logic
Issues and problems in the workplace	Key issues relate to rights, wages, and working conditions, as well as social political issues	Key issues relate to professional autonomy, ethics, methods, practice, and quality of services
	The main task is to secure members' interests as employees, individually and collectively.	The main task is to secure members' interests as professionals, individually and collectively.
Answers and solutions in the workplace	The Basic Agreement and institutions for work life cooperation secures employees' access to decisions, and the organizational density gives power and legitimacy.	The profession's specialized knowledge secures exclusive jurisdiction and some degree of autonomy, and the association gives legitimacy and collective strength.
	Influence can be exerted through direct employee participation or representative employee participation.	Influence can be exerted through individual professional participation or collective professional participation.

Data and methods

This study rests on the premise that union members are both employees and professionals, and that professionalism is a rationale for union organizing. The unions' conceptualizations of members' professional interests and influence in the workplace are analyzed using documents from the unions' national level and interviews with local union representatives. The three unions subject to examination and comparison are large and influential in the highly organized Norwegian public sector and belong to three different union confederations, hence representing three distinct union traditions in Norway.

The NMA is both a union and professional association for physicians, with approximately 36,000 members constituting almost 95% of all practicing physicians in Norway. It is a member of the Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (Akademikerne). The UEN organizes teachers at all levels of the education system, from preschool to university. The union has more than 170,000 members, constituting an organizational density of around 80% of all schoolteachers. The UEN emphasizes that it is both a union and professional association, and it is the biggest affiliate in the Confederation of Unions for Professionals (Unio). In Norway, most physicians and teachers work with public welfare services. Therefore, these unions are predominantly public sector unions, and membership in both unions requires relevant higher education. The NUMGE, in contrast, is a general union, encompassing members who identify with different vocations and professions. Membership does not depend on a level or field of education; most of its members work for municipalities in roles typically related to welfare services. With more than 360,000 members, the NUMGE is the largest union in Norway and belongs to the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO).



These three unions can be placed on a continuum when it comes to professionalization. Unions organizing employees who have their primary loyalty to the profession and the professional community can be described as characterized by professionalism. General unions, in contrast, are characterized by collectivism, extending beyond the occupation or workplace. Between these extremes, professional collectivism is a middle characteristic of professional groups with weaker positions in the labor market than classic professions enjoy (Scheuer 1986), and they tend to be organized as traditional unions rather than as professional associations (Brante 2013). Whereas the NUMGE is clearly a general union, both the UEN and the NMA are characterized by professional collectivism, with the NMA characterized by the strongest professionalism. The NUMGE cannot be expected to relate to professional issues in the same way as do the unions of professionals. Nevertheless, the NUMGE acknowledges the professional and vocational identities and needs of its members, and its internal structures organize members according to professional or vocational belonging.

The unions represent three distinct cases in this study, chosen on the basis of their relevance and expected variation when it comes to the issues in question (Ragin 1987). The comparison has an explorative purpose, and a central aim is to identify the similarities and differences among the unions. Further, the current study aims to single out key characteristics to identify new questions. Two unions of professionals and one general union are compared. This selection of cases will contribute to highlight potential specific characteristics of unions of professionals, and display possible similarities between quite different public sector unions, thereby bridging the gap between the often too simplified division between unions and professional associations. As such, the comparative approach used in the study can be understood as descriptive and heuristic (Kocka 2003, p. 40).

The documents selected for the study are the organizations' key policy documents that have been adopted by the unions' national congresses as well as speeches given by the organizations' elected leaders to the same congresses. These documents are expected to synthesize the unions' main principles, values, and priorities, as well as the strategies used to secure their interests. To analyze comparable documents approximately from the same period, documents and speeches from two congresses for the NMA and the NUMGE are included, whereas only one congress is included for the UEN (it was planning its next congress at the time of analysis). Further, the data include handbooks for the elected representatives. These documents provide guidance for the union representatives on how to fulfill their roles in the workplace and thereby clearly express expectations to and ideas about representative participation. The different texts vary in terms of scope, the issues addressed, and the level of detail; nevertheless, they belong to relatively fixed genres of union documents, making them useful for comparison. Finally, the data include semi-structured, qualitative interviews (Rubin & Rubin 2011) with 12 workplace representatives—four from each organization. The interviewees work in hospitals, basic schools, or municipal care. These workplaces are typical of the unions in the current study; however, there are other member groups in the unions that are not directly analyzed. The main themes of the interviews are the elected representatives' perceptions of their roles, including the key issues they are involved with and the means of influence available to the employees in the workplace. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was recorded and transcribed. (See Appendix 1 for an overview of the data material.)

Taken together, this data material provides insight into the socially constructed patterns that shape and constrain the behavioral repertoire (Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton & Ocasio 1999, 2008) available to union representatives in the workplace. The data is expected to conceptualize the most salient issues and problems, as well as the preferred answers and solutions, put forward by the unions and perceived by their local representatives. The ensuing analysis entails an interplay between deductive and inductive perspectives, to generate new insights about challenges and opportunities related to the agency of workplace representatives and to develop theories and hypotheses about unions as knowledge agents. The ideal types of union logic and professional association logic are applied to detect and describe the conceptualizations as conveyed in the different data sources, and as a point of departure for exploring possible hybrid logics in the empirical material.

Accordingly, the first step of the analysis involves pattern matching (Reay & Jones 2016) by comparing the empirical data to the ideal types of union logic and professional association logic. How the selected documents and informants frame the values, beliefs, problems, and solutions are interpreted as indicators of the different logics. For instance, claims related to employee rights, wages, and working conditions were coded as expressions of a union logic, whereas claims promoting professional autonomy as inseparable from the quality of service were coded as expressions of a professional association logic. Furthermore, when the elected union representative is highlighted as a way to exert influence, this is coded as part of a union logic, whereas efforts to forward the professional community as the key actor in the workplace is coded as part of a professional association logic. This first step also implies giving specific attention to repetitions and so-called ‘missing data’ (Ryan & Bernard 2003), meaning issues and logics that stand out or seem absent in the documents or in the informants’ perceptions. The second step of the analysis involves pattern inducing (Reay & Jones 2016) to identify other, supplementary patterns not satisfactorily covered by either of the two logics. This implies specific attention to alternative narratives, combinations of the logics, and data that complicates the picture or goes against expectations (Roulston 2014). The third step of the analysis explores the similarities and differences among the three unions, thereby singling out key findings and themes for discussion. The steps of analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 The steps of analysis applied in the present study

	Aim	Analytic strategy	Empirical research question
1st step	Detect the most salient issues and problems highlighted by the unions, as well as the answers and solutions put forward.	Ideal types (pattern matching)	How do the unions conceptualize the members’ interests, and what channels are suggested for exerting influence in the workplace?
2nd step	Explore the findings, and specifically, the intersection between union logic and professional association logic.	Inductive (pattern inducing)	What characterizes the different unions at different levels, and how are the logics combined?
3rd step	Investigate similarities and differences between the three unions.	Descriptive and heuristic comparative methods	How can similarities and differences be described? Which new questions are raised by the findings?



This is a qualitative, explorative study; however, with contextual sensitivity and critical examination of the findings, analytic generalization to similar unions within the Nordic model may be possible (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Moreover, the article raises questions and suggests theoretical perspectives that have general relevance for future studies of unions and professional associations – even beyond the Nordic context.

Findings

The following sections describe how the different unions conceptualize members' interests and influence in the workplace in terms of a union logic and a professional association logic, and explore how these logics are combined. Moreover, the unions are compared to highlight key differences and similarities in how they evoke the different logics.

Conceptualizations of members' interests and influence

The NMA

The NMA's policy texts and speeches investigated in this study are primarily concerned with professional issues and professional influence. Professional ethics, autonomy, and professional standards are highlighted in the documents, and it is argued that 'specialists ... must be involved to secure better decisions and results' (NMA 2015). It is also argued that physicians need more time to share experiences and engage in development work. By this, a professional association logic is evoked—both in terms of the issues addressed and in terms of the prescribed solutions. The solutions highlight individual professionals and the professional community, signifying individual and collective professional participation.

In contrast, in its instructions to elected representatives, the NMA evokes a clear union logic. The issues addressed in the handbook primarily relate to workers' rights, and the workplace representatives are merely expected to secure the members' interests when it comes to wages and working conditions: 'The most important task for an elected representative is to discuss/negotiate issues related to wages and working conditions' (NMA 2009, p. 26). Thus, the different texts evoke quite different institutional logics. Generally, the written data from the NMA do not seem to integrate the roles of union and professional association in the workplace. However, one exception is found in the latest policy document, from 2017, which is the first policy document issued after the big physician strike in 2016. Here, a new formulation is included to state that 'elected representatives must be involved and heard in organizational development and in the daily operations' (NMA 2017, p. 3). This new rhetoric, highlighting the union representatives, is also evident in the latest speech from 2017, in which the elected leader of the NMA states that 'we fight for co-determination, involvement and the Norwegian model' and that the NMA 'defends the right to co-determination and professional integrity'. Such references to union means of influence are not evident in the earlier policy texts.

In contrast to the written texts, the elected union representatives in the workplace describe hybrid roles that integrate their means of influence with the members' professional interests. One informant argues that the strong position of an elected representative

also gives her influence over professional issues because the leaders *must* listen to what she says. Another informant describes his motivation to be an elected representative when referencing the opportunity to influence professional decisions; he says that he wants to facilitate the prospects for professional influence and fight for members' professional autonomy. He further describes how the members usually promote their own professional opinions, arguing that many professional issues are best handled through such direct professional influence. However, he adds the following:

I feel that I must be there to facilitate the possibility [for individual professional participation] – not because I am the one to fight for professional issues in the different departments, but [because] I shall secure the possibility and the general understanding that such influence is necessary.

This expresses the rationale behind what might be termed a 'hybrid logic,' integrating the roles of union and professional association in the workplace. The informant argues that his representative influence—typically associated with union logic—can be used to secure professional autonomy—an issue typically associated with professional association logic. This hybrid logic is hardly conceptualized in the NMA policy texts but seems to be intuitive to the interviewed NMA representatives in the workplace.

The UEN

The other union of professionals in the current study—the teachers' union UEN—displays quite different characteristics. The policy document and speech clearly evoke both a union logic and a professional association logic while also conceptualizing a hybrid logic. That is, wages and working conditions are addressed along with professional issues, and the texts highlight the traditional means of influence available to unions while stressing that the professional community is key to professional development and quality. Moreover, the policy document states, 'The elected representatives in the UEN shall actively promote professional autonomy' (UEN 2015, p. 6) and that 'professional influence is exerted through co-determination, other formal and informal bilateral cooperation, and political advocacy work' (UEN 2015, p. 21). It further states that the elected representatives 'shall forward knowledge- and experience-based arguments ..., and represent the profession on professional issues as well as other issues related to the employees' work (UEN 2015, pp. 21–22). This expresses a hybrid logic by linking the union's means of influence with the issues promoted by the professional association. In addition, the speech given to the national congress in 2015 highlights the teachers' strike in 2014 as a fight for professional autonomy and the right to take professional responsibility. At the same time, the professional community is noted as the key actor in systematic development work (UEN 2015, pp. 12–19), and the 2015 speech further demonstrates professional association logic by stressing the need to 'develop the professional community' as crucial for securing professional practice. This ambition, however, is not coupled with related expectations directed at elected representatives.

The handbook for elected representatives briefly states that they are expected to 'forward the members' interests and contribute constructively with professional judgments in the cooperation with the employer' (UEN 2017, p. 6). Generally, however,



union logic seems to dominate the handbook, and the relationship between the professional community and the elected representative is not clarified.

The informants from the UEN generally regard the effort to secure members' interests as employees as their main task. At the same time, they clearly recognize that they could facilitate professional discussions, and one of the informants states that 'one chooses to become an elected representative because of interest in school development'. The integration of union and professional interests is, however, unexpectedly weak among the workplace representatives. One of the informants acknowledges the inconsistency in that, at the national level, the UEN is a professional actor exerting professional influence, whereas locally, as he puts it: 'I do not feel that I am particularly involved in professional development, or that we as union members discuss many professional issues'. Another interviewee expresses that if the members wanted a spokesperson on professional issues, they should rather elect someone else from among their colleagues.

When compared with the UEN's strong professional aspirations at the national level, the clear domination of union logic among representatives in the workplace seems to be a paradox. Further, the UEN argues that quality depends on confident, competent, and ethically aware professionals who take responsibility—individually and collectively. The policy texts use 'we' to state that the profession will take on this responsibility. However, it remains unclear whether 'we' refers to the professional community and/or to the union and its representatives in the workplace.

The NUMGE

The only general union studied in the current article, the NUMGE, is clearly characterized by a union logic throughout the empirical material. The policy documents and speeches emphasize workers' rights as specifically related to wages and working conditions, along with social policy issues such as public welfare, equality, climate action, and culture. The NUMGE's speeches are highly political, and the 2013 speech underlines that 'the union movement must now, as before, take a broad social responsibility'. Furthermore, the 2017 speech states, 'It is in the local, daily work in the different workplaces that we [the NUMGE] are most visible, through well trained elected representatives'. The members, the union representatives, and the other traditional union means of influence, such as collective action and negotiations, are highlighted as the main answers to the questions posed. The members' knowledge and right to lifelong learning are also addressed but not in relation to the members' professional responsibility. The NUMGE, therefore, hardly induces a professional association logic. Nevertheless, the NUMGE is concerned with development and quality in the public sector, however, its texts seem to indicate that tripartite cooperation at the national and municipal levels are key to such developments, rather than bipartite cooperation involving elected representatives in the workplace. Further, a union logic is also evoked in the instructions to elected representatives, who are primarily expected to secure the members' wages and working conditions.

The interviewed NUMGE representatives in the workplace induce a similar union logic; they clearly perceive their main task to be safeguarding members' interests as employees, and they highlight both direct and representative employee participation as means of influence in the workplace. When asked what the most important tasks to be fulfilled by her as an elected representative in the workplace are, one informant states

that it is ‘to follow the Basic Agreement, and the laws and regulations supported by the NUMGE’. She continues to describe how the union movement has secured workers’ interests and rights and that an important issue is to maintain those rights. The other informants also highlight the safeguarding of members’ rights and the duty to help members as key aspects of their role.

Generally, the NUMGE documents as well as the informants do not highlight members’ professional or vocational interests. Rather, the primary concern is members’ interests as employees, and the means of influence evoked belong to union logic.

The unions compared

As expected, a key division between the unions of professionals and the general union in the current study relates to how the first two define their members’ interests as both employees and professionals while the third merely conceives of members as employees only. Interestingly, however, the comparison further reveals that despite the unions’ quite different degrees of professionalization, they seem to describe and operationalize the agency of workplace representatives in similar ways – primarily inducing a union logic.

Moreover, the interviewed representatives from the unions of professionals describe a similar key challenge: decisions in the workplace are made without sufficient professional involvement from the employees. The informants are frustrated by their lack of influence over decisions that affect their daily professional work. One informant from the NMA highlights that the responsibility, for instance, if something goes wrong, rests with the individual physicians, and as such, they ‘want to influence how things are done’. A representative from the UEN touches upon the same challenge when saying that ‘the professional community wants more influence on professional development work’. In contrast, the interviewees from the NUMGE seem to be quite satisfied with their level of influence on issues of relevance to their members, as well as with the general prospects for direct employee participation. One of the NUMGE informants puts it the following way: ‘At this workplace we have the space that we need’. Consequently, it seems that the unions of professionals evoke different logics at different levels, whereas the general union conceptualizes a union logic throughout. A key characteristic of hybrid unions is that their members’ interests clearly follow from their dual role as employees *and* professionals. From this follows not only a double rationale for organizing and a double identification with the union for members but also a double expectation related to the role and influence of the union. This seems to evoke distinct challenges and opportunities for unions of professionals. A mismatch between the professional association logic induced in national union documents and the perceptions and experiences of workplace representatives, is evident in the frustration expressed by the informants from the hybrid unions.

Both the unions of professionals combine union logic and professional association logic; however, the differences in how they are combined at the different levels are interesting in their own right. More specifically, the NMA policy documents clearly express a professional association logic at the national level and in relation to daily operations in the workplace, while the handbook for elected representatives conceptualizes a narrow and clear union logic. The workplace representatives, however, understand their roles as part of a hybrid logic. A mismatch between the logics evoked is also seen in the empirical sources related to the UEN, albeit for different reasons. The UEN’s policy documents



combine and even integrate union logic and professional association logic, but this integration is not as salient among the interviewed representatives because they describe their roles as predominantly guided by union logic. What might be termed a 'hybrid logic' is generally weakly conceptualized and primarily materializes as a motivation and perception expressed by the workplace representatives in the NMA and as an ambition and idea conveyed in the UEN's policy documents. Nevertheless, the unions of professionals do conceptualize the members' knowledge as a basis for exerting influence in the workplace, even if this idea and the associated practice seems underdeveloped. In contrast, the logic evoked by the NUMGE appears more consistent throughout the different levels, making the mandate of elected representatives less ambiguous; however, the union seems to miss out on power resources related to members' knowledge and skills because professional association logic is not evoked.

Across the unions, the role and agency of elected representatives stands out as significant both in terms of representing and translating the political ideas conveyed by the unions when it comes to local professional influence, and in terms of the strategic use of available logics in the workplace. The way in which to combine workplace democracy, employee participation, and professional influence in the workplace seems largely to be left to the interpretation of individual elected representatives.

Discussion

The key findings of the above analysis can be summarized as follows. First, the findings suggest variation in how members' interests and influence are conceptualized, both between and within the studied unions, as union and professional association logics are combined in different ways. Further, distinct challenges and opportunities face the unions of professionals in this study, and the dichotomy between unions and professional associations seems to limit our understanding of such hybrid unions. Last, the findings imply that a hybrid logic is at play and that elected workplace representatives are key actors in this respect. This logic, however, seems underdeveloped and inconsistently conceptualized in relation to the workplace. The following sections discuss these findings in light of the different histories and characteristics of the unions and the possible theoretical implications of the findings.

Union histories and characteristics

Historical contingency is a key assumption of the institutional logics approach (Thornton & Ocasio 2008), and the variation between the unions and the various conceptualizations across the data material may be seen in light of the unions' different histories and contexts. For instance, the NMA's history is strongly characterized by professionalism, and the NMA's legitimacy has traditionally depended on a clear distinction between its role as a union and as a professional association (Haave 2014). This illuminates the weak conceptualization of union representatives as professional agents in the written material of the NMA. Further, the NMA's members have traditionally enjoyed substantial individual power and autonomy, and they have consequently been less dependent on collective representation to be heard (Scheuer 1986). The physicians' autonomy and

position have come under increasing pressure, and the 2016 strike – aiming to secure members’ professional influence in hospitals – represented something new in the history of the NMA. The shift toward a union logic in the latest policy paper and speech from 2017 may be understood based on this experience. Further, the NMA’s traditional distinction between union issues and professional issues, as displayed in most of the analyzed texts, seems to be challenged by workplace representatives with strong professional identities acting as ‘strategic users’ of institutional logics (Greenwood et al. 2017), integrating representative participation and professional influence in the workplace.

The UEN, in contrast, is the result of multiple fusions of different teachers’ organizations; its predecessors have balanced traditional union issues against professional issues in different ways. In the 1980s and 1990s, the teachers’ unions chose strategies that highlighted wages and working conditions at the expense of professional issues (Grove & Michelsen 2014; Rovde 2014). In recent years, the UEN has voiced more professional aspirations and developed a distinct professional role at the national level (Mausethagen 2013; Nerland & Karseth 2015), and in 2014, the UEN went on strike to secure members’ professional autonomy and what they described as the right to be a good teacher. These historical developments are a relevant backdrop for understanding the UEN documents, which are characterized by a clear political ambition to operate as a hybrid union at all levels in the organization. However, the informants in this study seem to understand their roles more as representatives and carriers of a union logic in line with the teachers’ unions’ strategies from the past. Thereby, the union’s policy does not seem to be fully realized in the workplace.

The history of the NUMGE is characterized by collectivism and collective power, primarily applied to negotiate wages and working conditions for its members (Scheuer 1986). An unambiguous union logic is conceptualized throughout the empirical material, and their elected representatives seem to act as confident ‘representatives’ (Greenwood et al. 2017) of this dominating union logic. This finding is expected; however, the NUMGE is also concerned with its member’s vocational and professional identity, and a professional association logic could partially also be tapped for a general union such as NUMGE. Policy texts or elected representatives could, for instance, promote issues related to knowledge and skills as part of members’ interests and as a basis for exerting influence in the workplace. Yet, on such issues, the general unions will hardly evoke the same legitimacy, as will unions of professionals. As the latter represents the specialized knowledge, exclusive jurisdiction, and autonomy of a professional community, this is inseparable from professional responsibility and provides a separate source of power.

The different knowledge bases of the physicians, teachers, and municipal employees—and the different work organizations and management systems they are part of—might also account for some of the differences among the unions. Both the medical and teaching professions are experiencing increased external pressure and demands for accountability that sometimes conflict with professional autonomy (Alvehus & Andersson 2018). The analysis in the current article indicates that the UEN’s response may be to move toward more professionalism, whereas the NMA may move toward more unionism to secure members’ interests as employees *and* professionals under changing conditions. While the NUMGE members’ interests remain more narrowly defined, and thereby easier to defend and secure, a union logic is likely to continue to dominate throughout. The distinction between union representatives as either ‘representatives’ or ‘strategic users’ of existing logics may be conceptualized as ‘a continuum of embedded



discretion,' and the position of an actor is likely to vary across situations and over time (Greenwood et al. 2017, p. 11). More research is needed to understand under what conditions elected representatives tend to reproduce, challenge, or integrate existing logics.

A union of professionals logic?

According to the institutional logics perspective, different logics can be evoked simultaneously and can, at least temporarily, create hybrid versions that differ from either of the two logics (Battilana et al. 2017; Meyer & Hammerschmid 2006). The unions of professionals in the current study conceptualize combinations of the ideal typical union logic and professional association logic. This article identifies this as a 'hybrid logic' and argues that its key characteristics are 1) an understanding of members' interests as related to their rights as employees *and* their responsibilities as professionals and 2) a conceptualization of representative participation as a means to secure professional influence and autonomy. This hybrid logic connects the issues and problems of the professional association logic with the answers and solutions of the union logic. The hybrid may be termed a 'union of professionals logic'.

A union of professionals logic integrates the general logics of democracy and professionalism because workplace democracy becomes a channel for exerting professional influence. This makes elected representatives key actors in representing the hybrid logic or even inventing such a hybrid in the workplace. Workplace representatives may contribute to professionalism for instance: by securing the involvement of relevant specialists when important decisions are made, by initiating or facilitating discussions related to professional development in the workplace, or by filling the role of spokesperson for the professional community. Moreover, a union of professionals logic confirms that it might be analytically fruitful to differentiate between 'representative professional participation' and 'collective professional participation' (Bie-Drivdal 2018, 2019). The first concept could be seen as part of the hybrid logic and refers to participation through elected representatives as described in the Basic Agreement(s). The second concept is part of the professional association logic and denotes direct influence based on the legitimacy and knowledge of the professional community. The latter concept is related to what Knudsen et al. (2011, p. 385) term 'direct, collective participation' however, includes the specialized knowledge of the profession as a key aspect. Theoretically, hybrids might benefit from a broader resource base than do organizations drawing on a single logic (Battilana et al. 2017). In Norwegian workplaces, direct and representative employee participation are seen as mutually reinforcing (Hagen & Trygstad 2009; Trygstad et al. 2015). Future research might discern whether this synergy is also valid for representative and collective professional participation.

Institutions and their logics are socially constructed and always temporary and preliminary (Meyer & Hammerschmid 2006, p. 1004). To what extent a union of professionals logic will develop as a stable logic in its own right, or whether it is merely a temporary blend of the other logics, is likely to depend on the future strategies employed by unions as well as the organizational and political contexts in which their members operate. There is a general trend toward so-called hybrid professionalism in public professions experiencing pressure from competing logics, such as market and bureaucracy logics (Alvehus & Andersson 2018; Noordegraaf 2015). Future studies

should explore the relationship between such hybrid professionalism and hybrid unionism to investigate whether new forms of hybrid professionalism influence union strategies and working life relations.

Conclusion

This article explores conceptualizations of members' professional interests and influence in the workplace as conveyed by three Norwegian public sector unions representing different degrees of professionalization. The institutional logics perspective is applied as a theoretical frame and analytical tool. The article identifies a distinct 'union of professionals logic', as a hybrid integrating a union logic and professional association logic. This logic implies that union organizing is not merely a strategy to secure employees' wages and working conditions but also a way to exert professional influence and secure professional practice in the workplace. The hybrid logic seems to be limited to the unions of professionals in this study and is surprisingly weakly conceptualized.

Unions and professional associations are often described as fundamentally different organizations, driven by diverse motives and applying separate strategies for influence. The institutional logics perspective enables an explorative study of how logics are combined by the unions, thereby challenging this dichotomy. The findings develop our understanding of key actors in the Norwegian work life and have general relevance for future studies of unions and professional associations. Studies of professions and their associations usually do not involve concepts such as 'employee participation' and 'workplace level', and studies of unions typically do not include perspectives on professional autonomy and responsibility, or the collective power of the professional community. The gap between the research fields has left hybrid unions largely unexplored. Through a combination of perspectives from the studies of working life relations and studies of professions, this article contributes to a reconceptualization of both fields. Insight into the specific characteristics of unions with different degrees of professionalization enhances our understanding of unions as knowledge agents—historically, currently, and in the future.

References

- Alvehus, J., & Andersson, T. (2018). A new professional landscape: entangled institutional logics in two Swedish welfare professions, *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies* 8(3): 91–109. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18291/njwls.v8i3.109542>.
- Bangs, J., & MacBeath, J. (2012). Collective leadership: the role of teacher unions in encouraging teachers to take the lead in their own learning and in teacher policy, *Professional Development in Education* 38(2): 331–343. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.657879>.
- Battilana, J., Besharov, M., & Mitzinnck, B. (2017). On Hybrids and Hybrid Organizing: A Review and Roadmap for Future Research. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, T. B. Lawrence, & R. E. Meyer (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (2nd ed.), London: SAGE Publications.
- Behrens, M., Hamann, K., & Hurd, R. (2004). Conceptualizing Labour Union Revitalization. In C. M. Frege & J. Kelly (Eds.), *Varieties of Unionism. Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.



- Bie-Drivdal, A. (2018). Public sector unions' ideas about employee-driven development: Restricted conceptualization of representative participation in workplaces, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Published online. doi: <https://doi.org/0143831X18814929>.
- Bie-Drivdal, A. (2019). Tillitsvalgte oppfatninger om egen rolle i faglig utviklingsarbeid, *Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning* 60(3): 228–249. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1504-291X-2019-03-02.ER>.
- Brante, T. (2013). The professional landscape: the historical development of professions in Sweden, *Professions and Professionalism* 3(2): 1–18. doi: <https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.558>.
- Buch, A., & Andersen, V. (2014). Rationalities in trade union practices: a discourse analytic perspective on the strategies of three Danish trade unions for professionals, *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies* 4(4): 137–155. doi: <https://doi.org/10.19154/njwls.v4i4.4711>.
- Caraker, E., Jørgensen, H., Madsen, M. O., & Baadsgaard, K. (2016). Representation without co-determination? Participation and co-determination for semi-professional shop stewards in the collective participation system in Denmark, *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 37(2): 269–295. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831x14538527>.
- Delbridge, R., & Edwards, T. (2013). Inhabiting institutions: critical realist refinements to understanding institutional complexity and change, *Organization Studies* 34(7): 927–947. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18291/njwls.v8i3.109542>.
- Engel, G. V. (1970). Professional autonomy and bureaucratic organization, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 15(1): 12–21. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2391182>.
- Fairbrother, P. (2015). Rethinking trade unionism: union renewal as transition, *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 26(4): 561–576. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304615616593>.
- Falkum, E., Hagen, I. M., & Trygstad, S. C. (2009). Bedriftsdemokratiets tilstand. Medbestemmelse, medvirkning og innflytelse i 2009 [The state of working life democracy 2009]. (Fafo-note 2009:35), Oslo: Fafo.
- Fauske, H. (2008). Profesjonsforskningens faser og stridsspørsmål [Phases and key questions in the studies of professions]. In A. Molander & L. Terum (Eds.), *Profesjonsstudier* [Studies of professions], Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Frege, C. M., & Kelly, J. (2004). *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freidson, E. (2001). *Professionalism, the Third Logic*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Friedland, R., & Alford, R. R. (1991). Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices and institutional contradictions. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Goodrick, E., & Reay, T. (2011). Constellations of institutional logics: changes in the professional work of pharmacists, *Work and Occupations* 38(3): 372–416. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888411406824>.
- Greenwood, R., Oliver, C., Lawrence, T. B., & Meyer, R. E. (2017). Introduction: Into the Fourth Decade. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, T. B. Lawrence, & R. E. Meyer (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (2nd ed.), London: SAGE Publications.
- Grove, K., & Michelsen, S. (2014). Lektorene [Upper secondary school teachers]. In R. Slagstad & J. Messel (Eds.), *Profesjonshistorier* [Profession stories]. Oslo: Pax forlag.
- Haave, P. (2014). Legene [The physicians]. In R. Slagstad & J. Messel (Eds.), *Profesjonshistorier* [Profession stories] (pp. 277–311). Oslo: Pax forlag.
- Hagen, I. M., & Trygstad, S. C. (2009). Local flexicurity: Resolving the conflict between direct and representative participation, *Transfer: European Review of Labour Research* 15(3–4): 557–577. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F10242589090150031901>.
- Heiret, J. (2012). Three Norwegian varieties of a Nordic model—a historical perspective on working life relations, *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies* 2(4): 45. doi: <https://doi.org/10.19154/njwls.v2i4.2304>.

- Hodder, A., & Edwards, P. (2015). The essence of trade unions: understanding identity, ideology and purpose, *Work, Employment and Society* 29(5): 843–854. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017014568142>.
- Ibsen, C. L., & Tapia, M. (2017). Trade union revitalisation: where are we now? Where to next? *Journal of Industrial Relations* 59(2): 170–191. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185616677558>.
- Irgens, E. J. (2018). Historical amnesia: on improving Nordic schools from the outside and forgetting what we know, *Nordic Journal of Comparative International Education* 2 (2–3): 25–38. doi: <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.2806>.
- Kerchner, C. T., & Koppich, J. E. (1993). *A Union of Professionals: Labor Relations and Educational Reform*, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Knudsen, H. (1995). *Employee Participation*, London: SAGE.
- Knudsen, H., Busck, O., & Lind, J. (2011). Work environment quality: the role of workplace participation and democracy, *Work, Employment and Society* 25(3): 379–396. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017011407966>.
- Kocka, J. (2003). Comparison and beyond, *History and Theory* 42(1): 39–44. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2303.00228>.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews*, Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Larson, M. S. (1977). *The Rise of Professionalism*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Liljegren, A., Dellgran, P., & Höjer, S. (2008). The heroine and the capitalist: the profession's debate about privatisation of Swedish social work [Hjältinnan och kapitalisten: den fackliga debatten om privatisering av socialt arbete i Sverige], *European Journal of Social Work* 11(3): 195–208. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691450802220933>.
- Madsen, C. U., & Hasle, P. (2017). Commitment or compliance? Institutional logics of work environment management, *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies* 7(S2): 17–38. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18291/njwls.v7iS2.96688>.
- Mausethagen, S. (2013). *Reshaping teacher professionalism. An analysis of how teachers construct and negotiate professionalism under increasing accountability.* (PhD-thesis). Oslo: Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus.
- Meyer, R. E., & Hammerschmid, G. (2006). Changing institutional logics and executive identities: a managerial challenge to public administration in Austria, *American Behavioral Scientist* 49(7): 1000–1014. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764205285182>.
- Molander, A., & Terum, L. (2008). Profesjonsstudier—en introduksjon. [The study of professions—an introduction]. In M. A. & T. L. I. (Eds.), *Profesjonsstudier*, Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget.
- Murray, G. (2017). Union renewal: what can we learn from three decades of research? *Transfer: European Review of Labour Research* 23(1): 9–29. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1024258916681723>.
- Nerland, M., & Karseth, B. (2015). The knowledge work of professional associations: approaches to standardisation and forms of legitimisation, *Journal of Education and Work* 28(1): 1–23. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2013.802833>.
- Noordegraaf, M. (2015). Hybrid professionalism and beyond: (New) Forms of public professionalism in changing organizational and societal contexts, *Journal of Professions and Organization* 2(2): 187–206. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpo/jov002>.
- Ocasio, W., Thornton, P. H., & Lounsbury, M. (2017). Advances to the Institutional Logics Perspective. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, T. B. Lawrence, & R. E. Meyer (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (2nd ed.), London: SAGE Publications.
- Parsons, T. (1978). *Action Theory and the Human Condition*, New York: The Free Press.
- Ragin, C. (1987). *The Comparative Method. Moving beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, California: University of California Press.



- Reay, T., & Hinings, C. R. (2009). Managing the rivalry of competing institutional logics, *Organization Studies* 30(6): 629–652. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840609104803>.
- Reay, T., & Jones, C. (2016). Qualitatively capturing institutional logics, *Strategic Organization* 14(4): 441–454. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127015589981>.
- Roulston, K. (2014). Analysing interviews. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 297–312), Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Rovde, O. (2014). Lærarane [The teachers] In R. Slagstad & J. Messel (Eds.), *Profesjonshistorier [Profession stories]* (pp. 346–379). Oslo: Pax forlag.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, Sage.
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes, *Field Methods* 15(1): 85–109. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1525822X02239569>.
- Scheuer, S. (1986). Fagforeninger mellem kollektiv og profession [Unions between collectivism and professionalism], København, Danmark: Nyt fra samfundsvidenskaberne.
- Stevenson, H., & Gilliland, A. (2015). The teachers' voice: teacher unions at the heart of a new democratic professionalism. In K. R & E. J (Eds.), *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Ground up* (pp. 108–119), Abingdon: Routledge.
- Thornton, P. H., & Ocasio, W. (1999). Institutional logics and the historical contingency of power in organizations: executive succession in the higher education publishing industry, 1958–1990, *American Journal of Sociology* 105(3): 801–843. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1086/210361>.
- Thornton, P. H., & Ocasio, W. (2008). Institutional logics. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, R. Suddaby, & K. Sahlin-Andersson (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (pp. 99–128), London: Sage Publications.
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure, and Process*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Torstendahl, R. (1997). Professionell ock facklig strategi [Professional and union strategy]. In J. A. L. (Ed.), *Fackliga organisationsstrategier [Unions' organizational strategies]* (pp. 39–48), Solna, Sverige: Arbetslivsinstitutet.
- Trygstad, S. C., Alsos, K., Hagen, I. M., & Steen Jensen, R. (2015). Den norske modellen på virksomhetsnivå [The Norwegian model in the workplace] (Fafo-report 2015:18), Oslo: Fafo.
- Wilensky, H. L. (1964). The professionalization of everyone? *The American Journal of Sociology*, 70(2), 137–158. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1086/223790>.

Appendix

Table I Data material

	The Norwegian Medical Association (NMA)	The Union of Education Norway (UEN)	The Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees (NUMGE)
Policy documents	NMA (2015) [<i>Principles for the Norwegian Medical Association 1.9.2015 – 31.8.2019 and work program for the Norwegian Medical Association 1.9.2015 – 31.8.2017</i>]. Prinsippprogram 1.9.2015 – 31.8.2019 for Den norske legeförening og Arbeidsprogram 1.9.2015 – 31.8.2017 for Den norske legeförening. Oslo: Den norske legeföreningen. NMA (2017) [<i>Work program for the Norwegian Medical Association 1.9.2017 – 31.8.2019</i>]. Arbeidsprogram 1.9.2017 – 31.8.2019 for Den norske legeförening. Oslo: Den norske legeföreningen.	UEN (2016) [<i>We Educate Norway – Policy and Resolutions for 2016–2019</i>]. Vi utdanner Norge – overordnet politikk og vedtatte innsatsområder for landsmøteperioden 2016–2019. Oslo: Utdanningsforbundet.	NUMGE (2013) [<i>Principles and Action Plan 2013–2017</i>]. Prinsipp- og handlingsprogram 2013–2017. Oslo: Fagforbundet. NUMGE (2017) [<i>Principles and Action Plan 2017–2021</i>]. Prinsipp- og handlingsprogram 2017–2021. Oslo: Fagforbundet.
Speeches given by political leaders to the national congresses	Speech given by Hege Gjessing, 2015 Speech given by Marit Hermansen, 2017	Speech given by Ragnhild Lied, 2015	Speech given by Jan Davidsen, 2013 Speech given by Mette Nord, 2017
Handbooks for elected representatives	NMA (2009) [<i>The Handbook for Elected Representatives</i>]. Tillitsvalgthåndboka. Oslo: Den norske legeföreningen.	UEN (2017) [<i>Handbook for New Elected Representatives in the Workplace</i>]. TV-guiden. Håndbok for nye arbeidsplassstillitsvalgte. Oslo: Utdanningsforbundet.	NUMGE (2015) [<i>The Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees’ Handbook for Elected Representatives Elected on a General Agreement</i>]. Fagforbundets Håndbok for tillitsvalgte valgt etter en hovedavtale. Oslo: Fagforbundet.
Interviews (carried out between November 2017 and February 2018)	Interviews with four elected representatives in a hospital	Interviews with four elected representatives in basic schools	Interviews with four elected representatives in municipal care work