Shifting strategies in a regional industry
Implications for long term workers’ interpretations of the workplace as a “place of work”

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• Explore the relationship between strategic practices and places of work

RQ: How do strategic changes in strategic practices influence workers’ sensemaking of their workplace?
Spaces and places of work

• Place as physical terrain vs. place as a location (space)

• Emphasis on how places are localized
  • People do their job in particular physical, material and social environments.
    • Through use these places are transformed in concrete and symbolic ways
    • We thus focus on processes of meaning making

• From such a perspective it becomes particularly relevant to ask how strategic changes affect the workers perception of spaces of work.
Method

Part of a three (four) year research study financed by the research council (MAROFF)

Qualitative interviews with «gold watch workers»

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<tbody>
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<td>Role</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Years of experience</td>
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<td>Rig/scaffolding</td>
<td>44 (on and off)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>27 years running, but have been there in periods since 1976</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Division coordinator</td>
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<td>44 (on and off)</td>
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Case company

- Family owned
- Traditionally had a strong regional affiliation
  - Local workers
  - Maritime industry key cultural marker

- Key strategic changes
  - From a strategy of holistic integration to specialization and outsourcing
    - From shipbuilding to outfitting
    - Products/components
    - Work
  - Local affiliation
  - Market
A working career at the shipyard

• Backgrounds
  • Wanted something besides school
  • Often alternated between different jobs in the maritime industry
  • Took formal qualifications at work

• Key qualities the workers highlight of what they have appreciated
  • The significance of creative zest (Skaparglede)
  • The value of acknowledgement at work and in the community
  • A shared sense of purpose
Strategic changes and its influence of the perception of their place of work

- The interviews show that the strategic changes largely affects the dimensions emphasized by the workers
  - From challenging in a positive sense to negative?
    - Less time, increased need to coordinate, too small to take on challenging tasks
  - Shared purpose?
  - Working environment
  - Acknowledgement and salary
    - At the yard
    - Overall community

- In a region that historically have been culturally and economically embedded with shipbuilding, these strategic changes also weakens the regional ties
  - Employment level effect
  - Affiliation/cultural emphasis?
  - Dialogue within the cluster
Thank you for the attention

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