



Introduction¹

This issue of Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies consists of four articles and a book review that thematize and discuss issues of working life in the Nordic countries from various angles.

In the first article, *Nationality Diversity in Academia: What is the Problem Represented to be?*, Tatiana Maximova-Mentzoni and Cathrine Egeland discuss how nationality diversity in academia is perceived, represented, and enacted in Norway and other Nordic countries. Equipped with Carol Bacchi's discourse analytic approach, the authors ask 'What the problem is represented to be?' in the research literature on national diversity. This material is supplemented with a case study conducted in three Norwegian research institutions. Here, the authors reviewed policy documents and conducted interviews with foreign-born academic staff and representatives of the academic administration to provide empirical material for the analysis. The article finds more problem representations, for example, access to academia is more challenging for foreign-born academic staff; subjectification of nationality diversity has become an important means of addressing the challenges; workplace inclusion is more challenging for foreigners. Interestingly, the institutional policy efforts seem to reproduce an 'us-them' difference through their embracement of agendas of internationalization, excellence, and innovation.

In *Older Jobseekers' Temporal Identity Work: Relating to Past, Present, and Future*, Tytti Steel and Annamari Tuori investigate identity work among 50+ year old unemployed jobseekers in a small community in the South-Eastern part of Finland. The authors conducted semi-structured interviews with 30 participants in an employment project in order to illuminate how the participants experienced and coped with their situation as unemployed. Here, identity work is related to temporality in the sense that identity work is understood as a process of becoming where people relate past, present, and future in constructing meaning. The authors identify three essential types of identity work employed to construe identities of the 'respectably unemployed': 'Relying on the past' by emphasizing traditional working life values; 'renewing oneself' by stressing future demands of flexibility and lifelong learning; and 'tweaking one's working identity' by searching for viable immediate solutions in the present.

Article three, *Working-hour Trends in the Nordic Countries: Convergence or Divergence*, by Aart-Jan Riekhoff, Oxana Krutova, and Jouko Nätti is a comparative study of how the number of hours spend on work has developed between 1996 and 2016 in Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Based on data from the European Labor Force Survey, it pays attention to the different developments between the four countries, between men and women in each country, and the differences between countries in the working-hour trends of men and women. In general, the study finds that part-time work has increased in Norway and Denmark, while it is more stable in Sweden and Finland. Furthermore, the gender gap in working hours was diminished due to the general higher educational level of women and the sectoral shifts for male workers from agriculture and manufacturing to service-sector employment.

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



The fourth article, by Gunnar Aronsson, Marina Taloyan, Hugo Westerlund, and Per-Olof Östergren, *Associations Between Being 'Locked-In' and Health. An Epidemiological Study*, explores the relation between self-rated health and self-reported psychological well-being. The empirical material of the study is retrieved through a survey questionnaire distributed among the working population in southern Sweden. The authors investigate the relationship between health and well-being as mediated by the respondents' level of control over their labor market position, that is, whether the respondents perceive a correspondence between their actual and preferred job position. Limited opportunities for exit or for moving into a preferred job position in relation to occupation and workplace result in a 'locked-in' situation.

Finally, Jan Karlsson reviews a recent published anthology on job quality and flexibility edited by Tommy Isidorsson and Julia Kubisa.

Enjoy your reading!

Anders Buch
Editor-in-chief