



# A Cross-sectional Study of Sustainable Employment in Nordic Eldercare<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This study addresses the retention challenges of Nordic eldercare by investigating how care workers' work-time arrangements are associated with consideration to quit the job. Particular attention is paid to the mediating role of economic distress and work-life conflict. Based on a Nordic cross-sectional survey (Nordcare II), we investigate how different modes of shift work scheduling and involuntary part-time employment are directly and indirectly associated with consideration to quit the job. Parallel analyses from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden reveal that work-time arrangements are indirectly associated with consideration to quit the job in all countries. Perceived work-life conflict increases with the number of different shifts included in a shift schedule. Danish care workers, who more often work fixed shifts, report the lowest level of work-life conflict. Involuntary part-time employment, which is most widespread in Norway, is directly associated with financial distress in all countries, but with work-life conflict in Norway only.

### KEYWORDS

Consideration to quit / eldercare / financial distress / involuntary part-time / living hours / Nordic countries / survey data / work time / work schedules / work-life conflict

## Introduction

Like other countries, Nordic countries face immense recruitment and retention challenges in eldercare. The difficulty in creating a sustainable workforce to meet the needs of an ageing population is contingent upon a myriad of conditions (OECD 2020). Research from the eldercare sector indicates that issues concerning work schedules and work hours are high on the list of factors that contribute to consideration to quit the job (Peters et al. 2015). One problem relates to work schedules that require working unsocial hours such as evenings, nights and weekends. Another problem relates to involuntary part-time, that is, that employees work part-time because they cannot find full-time jobs. These problems can also coincide, as involuntary part-time employees take on extra work to meet employers' need for staff during busy hours (e.g. morning care) or unsocial hours such as evenings and weekends.

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In this study, we address both these problematic aspects of work-time arrangements. We investigate how various types of work schedules (fixed shift or rotating between different kind of shifts) and involuntary part-time are associated with consideration to quit the job. Inspired by the concept of ‘living hours’, we place special emphasis on the mediating role of financial distress and work-life conflict. Living hours refers to employees’ need for enough paid hours per week to earn a decent living, and a scheduling of those work hours to maintain a family and social life outside work. Ilsøe (2016) introduced the concept to demonstrate how marginal part-time employees in low-wage service occupations struggle to make ends meet. These employees are contracted for a short number of work hours per week, often during unsocial hours, which makes it difficult to raise a family. Eventually, these working conditions can increase staff turnover (Ilsøe 2016). Ilsøe’s description of a segmented workforce in the low-wage service sector corresponds with reports from the eldercare sector. Employers in eldercare will often value a combination of core employees working full-time and more flexible part-time employees who are willing to work extra shifts at the employer’s request. These part-timers feel they are ‘used as mops to clean up what is left over after the full-timers have finished using up time and benefits’ (Armstrong et al. 2009: 86).

Because work-time arrangements are highly flexible and negotiable, employees’ ability to obtain living hours depends on institutional settings and established employment practices (Larsen et al. 2019). A recent report from the OECD reveals that, although both shift work and part-time employment are widespread in the eldercare sector, significant institutional differences exist across countries, including Nordic countries (OECD 2020: 105). Previous research comparing eldercare in the Nordic countries (Armstrong et al. 2009; Szebehely et al. 2017) point in the same direction: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have developed different work-time patterns for how shift-work is scheduled and how part-time contracts are used.

Drawing on the Nordcare II survey, a cross-sectional survey conducted among eldercare workers in the four abovementioned Nordic countries, we will allude to these differences. We perform parallel analyses of the four countries to investigate to what extent unsocial work hours and involuntary part-time work are associated with financial distress, work-life conflict and consideration to quit the job. The analyses allow us to identify the profiles of employees who are at risk of lacking sufficient living hours and to ask whether they are associated with the distinctive institutionalized work-time arrangements in their respective countries.

## Background

### Different work-time patterns in Nordic countries

A full-time work week in Swedish and Finnish eldercare lasts for between 37 and 38 hours, compared to between 34 and 35 hours in Denmark and Norway (Szebehely et al. 2017). Cross-country comparisons based on Nordcare II data (Szebehely et al. 2017; Vabø et al. 2019) show that approximately 50% of Danish and 60% of Swedish and Norwegian care workers hold a part-time job, whereas the corresponding share in Finland is only 10%.

The widespread use of part-time work has historical origins from the era of service expansion in the 1970s and 1980s, when women had the opportunity to combine their role as housewives with paid work in the eldercare sector. The political scientist Helga Hernes coined the phrase ‘women-friendly welfare state’ to highlight that the gendered welfare policy of Nordic states enabled women to divide their time between their children, their work and public life (Hernes 1987). In Finland, however, full-time work was the norm from the beginning. This reflects a longstanding tradition for Finnish women to work outside the home. In fact, being a full-time housewife has never been common in Finland (Kapuppinen-Toropainen et al. 1988), and part-time work has generally been less prevalent than in the other three Nordic countries (Jensen 2000).

Operating around the clock, both institution-based and home-based eldercare require shift work. Again, based on Nordcare II data, we can identify some differences in how Nordic countries achieve full 24/7 coverage. These differences indicate that each country has its own distinct routine for scheduling work shifts (Armstrong et al. 2009; Szebehely et al. 2017). Whereas Danish care workers typically work fixed shifts – either fixed daytime shifts (including weekends) or fixed evening or night shifts (including weekends) – care workers from the other three countries work rotating shifts; in Norway and Sweden typically a combination of two shifts (e.g. day and evening, including weekends) and in Finland more often a mix of three shifts (day, evening, night, including weekends).

### **Involuntary part-time and workforce segmentation**

The Nordcare II survey reveals that involuntary part-time employment is more prevalent in Norway than in Sweden and Denmark (Armstrong et al. 2009; Szebehely et al. 2017; Vabø et al. 2019) and almost nonexistent in Finland. Although most employees are satisfied with their work hours, 33% of the Norwegian respondents report that they want to work more hours. The corresponding share in Sweden is close to 25% and in Denmark 12%. A likely reason for the higher levels of involuntary part-time in Norway is that Norway has many small part-time positions compared with Denmark and Sweden (Vabø et al. 2019). Cross-country comparisons show that 67% of part-time employees in Denmark work more than 30 hours (i.e. close to full-time), whereas 35% of Norwegian part-time employees work less than 25 hours. In Denmark, small part-time positions are almost non-existent. Sweden falls somewhere between Norway and Denmark with regard to the prevalence of long and short part-time positions (Szebehely et al. 2017; Vabø et al. 2019).

The problem of involuntary part-time employment has proven difficult to solve (Ingstad 2017; Jonsson, 2011). Although employers acknowledge the recruitment and retention issues in eldercare, they continue to value the flexibility of employees who are willing and able to work unsocial hours (Ede & Rantekeisu 2015; Kavli et al. 2019). Qualitative researchers have provided vivid descriptions of the lack of work-life balance among eldercare workers. Several studies from Norway show how irregular shifts and on-call work schedules make it difficult to plan their private life and to participate in regular activities outside work (Amble & Ingstad 2017). Rasmussen and Kjevik-Wyherley (2019) show how newly qualified practical nurses were allocated small part-time positions (less than 20 hours per week) and spent all their time being available for extra



work, hoping to get a foothold in the sector. Young care workers had started their career highly motivated for care work, but gradually became disillusioned as they experience how difficult it is to find a full-time position. Working part-time under these conditions was perceived to be as stressful, or even more so, than working full-time (Abrahamsen et al. 2012; Ingstad & Kvande 2011).

In Sweden, as in Norway, the problem of involuntary part-time work has been debated for several decades. The Swedish HELA project, initiated in 2002, stimulated new research and developmental projects. Reports summing up findings from the project concluded that the number of full-time positions increased without costs for employers, though in some cases with costs for employees who had entered full-time positions on the conditions set by employers (Jonsson 2011). A widespread strategy for remodeling the work-time system was to introduce time scheduling models with elements of ‘unscheduled work hours’, that is, where up to 20% of full-time employees’ work hours was excluded from the work schedule and reserved for periods when employers needed substitute workers or to temporarily relocate staff. Working full-time on these conditions, employees had to accept being constantly available to work extra shifts and being ready to adapt to co-workers and clients in unfamiliar workplaces (Ede & Rantakeisu 2015), a situation similar to that of involuntary part-time employees. According to Ede and Rantakeisu (2015), the new time scheduling model left employees having to deal with a situation of organized insecurity. Because the employees were responsible for finding enough hours, they frequently had to hunt for extra shifts to avoid wage reductions (Jonsson 2011). In this struggle to find extra shifts, some employees felt pressured to work split shifts, that is, shifts with only 1–4 hours of time off between them (Landén 2017). Moreover, as the responsibility for temporary staffing was delegated to work teams in which vacancies occurred, employees felt a social obligation to take on extra shifts in solidarity with co-workers. The unpredictable aspects of unscheduled work hours implied that some employees constantly felt they had to sacrifice scheduled activities in their private life (Ede & Rantakeisu 2015). These findings from Sweden indicate that the distinction between full-time and marginalized involuntary part-time workers has become blurred.

The Nordcare II data indicate that, between 2005 and 2015, Denmark increased the levels of full-time and large part-time employment to a larger extent than Norway and Sweden (Vabø et al. 2019). A recent analysis of work-time issues in eldercare commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs (Epinion 2020) corroborate the finding that Danish municipalities have increased the levels of full-time and large part-time employment. Yet, the Nordcare II data reveal that the level of involuntary part-time employment in Denmark increased from 9% to 12% between 2005 and 2015 (Vabø et al. 2019). The abovementioned Epinion (2020) report documents that 82% of Danish part-timers report that they are happy with part-time work, even though it was not their first choice. Nevertheless, the report shows that approximately half of part-time employees work extra shifts, on average two hours per week. Almost 20% have a second job. Furthermore, over 25% of younger care workers (< 50 years) want to work more hours, while approximately 10% of older care workers (> 50) want to reduce their work hours.

Not surprisingly, we find no previous research on part-time and involuntary part-time employment in Finland. However, this does not mean that some degree of segmentation exists among full-time employees regarding the extent of unsocial hours they work.

## Shift work scheduling

Employees who work unsocial hours are more likely to experience work-life conflict than those working standard work hours. Evening and night shifts, weekend work and quick turnarounds are all associated with work-life conflict (Karhula et al. 2017). A longitudinal study of hospital nurses in Finland revealed that the level of work-life conflict changed proportional to changes in unsocial work hours, but not to changes in the length of the work week. More nuanced research indicates that sustainable employment is related to the type of work schedule. Peters et al. (2015) find that rotating shift schedules, such as rotating between day, evening and night shifts, is worse than working fixed shifts. The findings from the Nordcare II survey point in the same direction, indicating that working a combination of different kind of shifts increases the level of work-life conflict, whereas working fixed shifts (as in Denmark) tends to lower the level of work-life conflict (Armstrong et al. 2009; Szebehely et al. 2017).

In a survey of care workers who graduated in 2004, Nabe-Nielsen et al. (2007) found that respondents who worked fixed shifts in eldercare were more satisfied with their work schedules than employees who worked rotating shifts. Comparing the experiences of day and evening workers, Nabe-Nielsen et al. (2009) found that the latter group more often reported that they lacked job control and support from leaders. In a later study, Nabe-Nielsen et al. (2010) found that preference played a significant role when it came to the impact of work schedules on consideration to quit work. For instance, working non-day shifts was only associated with consideration to quit among those who *preferred* to work fixed day shifts. It is likely that preference for a particular work schedule will vary over the life span (Peters et al. 2015). For instance, working unsociable hours – and especially irregular unsociable hours – will create conflicts for those with dependent children (Craig & Powell 2012).

## Theoretical model

This article draws attention to the way in which work-time arrangements affect care workers' personal life – their financial situation as well as their social life with family and friends – and, consequently, consideration to quit their job. To capture both the financial and social aspects of care workers' life situation, we have used the concept of 'living hours' (Ilsøe 2016). Ilsøe (2016 p. 41) introduced the concept of living hours to describe the pressures that arise among employees in low-wage service jobs. High coverage of collective wage agreements in Nordic private and public sectors, including the eldercare sector, ensures most employees a standard minimum wage and fixed wage rates for working unsociable hours, etc. Yet, wage regulations are futile in the absence of sufficient work hours from which to earn a living wage (Ilsøe 2016). The concept of living hours addresses two aspects of work hours, namely the length of the work week and the scheduling of the work week. The length of the work week relates to the financial aspect of work and the importance of earning enough to support oneself and one's family. The scheduling of the work week relates to the importance of maintaining a good work-life balance, that is a balance between time allocated to work and time allocated to other aspects of life such as caring for children, taking part in leisure activities or simply getting enough sleep and relaxation between work shifts. In this regard, both lack of

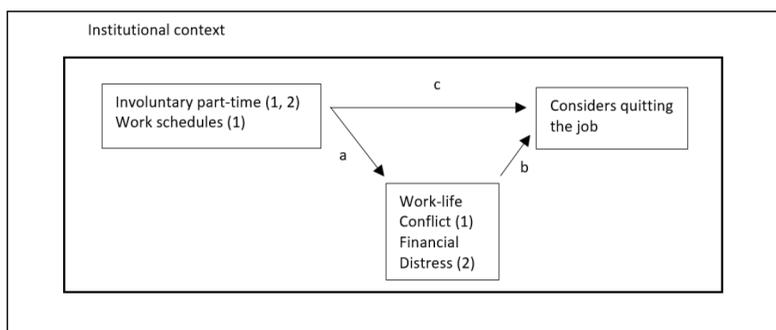


hours and unsociable hours (i.e. evening, night and weekend shifts) have the potential to conflict with living hours, though more so when the two are combined.

According to Ilsøe (2016), access to living hours is often unevenly distributed among employees, and it is often young employees who hold (marginal) part-time employment and work unsocial hours. Therefore, our first research question concerns the age composition and work experience of employees in involuntary part-time employment. Larsen et al. (2019) highlight that dualization depends on the institutional framework for work-time conditions. Hence, Norwegian eldercare, with its many small part-time positions, has greater potential for dualization than do Danish and Finnish eldercare, which rely more on long part-time and full-time positions.

We assume that insufficient living hours due to financial difficulties and work-family conflicts will give rise to high levels of consideration to quit the job. Our second research inquiry tests this expectation with data from the eldercare sector. Figure 1 summarizes our hypotheses regarding (1) work-life balance and (2) financial distress. We expect involuntary part-time work to increase the level of work-life conflict and financial distress, and that these factors mediate the relationship between involuntary part-time and consideration to quit the job.

**Figure 1** Path diagram.



We assume that these paths are present in all countries. However, as each country has distinct institutional contexts for work-time arrangements, they may be interpreted differently in each country. For instance, given the comparably high number of Norwegian employees in eldercare work on very short part-time contracts (Vabø et al. 2019), we expect to find that Norwegian employees report a comparably high level of work-life conflict and financial distress, simply because it is harder to top up very small part-time positions (20%) than the large part-time positions (80%) typical for Danish employees. Moreover, because unscheduled work hours and split shifts are widespread in Sweden, even among full-time employees, we expect to find less variation between full-time and involuntary part-time employees in Sweden than in Norway.

## Data and methods

This research uses data from a Nordic cross-sectional survey (Nordcare II) conducted in 2015. Data were collected among unionized employees in Norwegian, Danish, Finnish

and Swedish eldercare. Care workers were randomly selected from membership lists of care workers' unions. Table 1 shows the net sample and response rates across countries.

**Table 1** Sample response rates

Country	2015	
	Net sample	Response rate
Denmark	1904	59.3
Finland	1770	55.1
Norway	1794	51.6
Sweden	1438	53.5

We apply sample restrictions and exclude respondents with partial responses. The number of eligible respondents is 3273. The sample consists of 95% women. Approximately 62% work in residential care, 25% in home care and 8% in a combination of the two. The remaining 4% work in other areas of eldercare, such as day care centers. The majority of the respondents are vocationally trained as practical nurses/nursing aids; 51% have at least 2 years of relevant education, 37% have 1–2 years of relevant education and the remaining respondents work as unqualified nursing assistants. The sample does *not* include personnel with tertiary degrees, such as registered nurses (RNs).

## Methods

We use a combination of methods to answer the research questions. First, we use a linear probability model (LPM) to investigate the age composition and work experience of those who are involuntary part-time employees in the four countries. We prefer a LPM estimation to a logit estimation because the coefficients from LPM give the increase in the probability of being involuntarily part-time employed, adjusted for controls. LPM can give predictions that are out of bounds (below 0 and above 1). In our case, some predictions fall below zero. We have tested the results with a logit regression (not shown), which gave very similar results.

Second, we use structural equation models with linear probability (LPM) to investigate the relationship between involuntary part-time work, work-life conflict or financial distress, and consideration to quit. Because Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden constitute different institutional contexts, we estimate separate models for these countries. Generalized structural equation models with logistic regression show results similar to those from the LPM SEM (results not shown).

We test mediation by means of *medsem* for Stata (Mehmetoglu 2018). Complete mediation occurs when three criteria are met: first, the independent variable, here involuntary part-time work, must show significant correlation with the mediator variable, here work-life conflict and financial distress. Second, the mediator variable must show significant correlation with the outcome variable, here consideration to quit the job, adjusted for the independent variable. Third, the correlation between the dependent and independent variable is zero in the presence of the mediator variable. The mediation is partial if a significant correlation also exists between the dependent and the independent

variable in the presence of the mediator variable (Mehmetoglu 2018; Zhao et al. 2010). According to the path diagram in Figure 1, we expect involuntary part-time work to have a direct path to consideration to quit the job, as well as an indirect path through work-life, that is, partial mediation.

## Variables

Involuntary part-time employment is assigned a value of 1 if a part-time employee reports wanting to work more hours.<sup>1</sup> Those who report no wish to work more hours (neither part-time nor full-time) are assigned a value of 0. Work schedules comprise a set of dummy variables that indicate whether employees work shifts on a double, triple or quadruple rota system.<sup>2</sup> The reference category is single shift.

Consideration to quit the job is a dichotomous variable based on the question: ‘Have you during the past few years seriously considered quitting your job?’ to which respondents responded 1 ‘yes’ or 0 ‘no’.

The work-life conflict variable is based on the question: ‘How well does your work-time arrangement fit with your family life and social activities outside work?’, and the responses are on a four-item scale. For the analysis, we distinguish between responses 0 and 1, which correspond to ‘not at all’ and ‘not especially well’ respectively, and between responses 2 and 3, which correspond to ‘yes, quite well’ and ‘yes, very well’, respectively. The first two responses indicate the presence of work-life conflict.

The variable for financial distress is based on the question: ‘When thinking of your job, are you worried that your pay will not cover your living expenses?’ The responses follow a four-point Likert scale. For the analysis, we divide between responses 0 and 1, which correspond to ‘no, not at all’ and ‘no, rather little’, respectively, and between responses 2 and 3, which correspond to ‘yes, quite a lot’ and ‘yes, very much’, respectively. The two latter responses indicate the presence of financial distress.

We include controls for confounding variables such as marriage, children, age, education, work experience and part-time employment.

Marriage status is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as married, and 0 if otherwise, and the family status variables are three dummies that indicate whether the respondent has children below the age of seven and/or children between ages of seven and 12 and/or between 13 and 19. The comparison groups have either adult children aged above 20 years or no children. Employees who are married may experience less work-family conflict and economic distress because they share a household, care tasks and expenses with their partner. Employees who have children may experience more work-family conflict because children’s time commitments are fixed. Furthermore, raising children is expensive, and may therefore increase financial distress. Moreover, both marriage and children may impact on employment status in that married women and/or mothers more often choose part-time employment.

We measure age in years, and we add age squared to account for a curvilinear age function. Age can confound the correlation between work-time arrangements and work-family conflict, financial distress and consideration to quit. Education is a dummy variable that indicates employees with education in care (from minimum one month of training to more than 2 years of training) and those with no relevant care education. Work experience is a set of dummy variables that distinguishes between four different lengths

of experience: 0–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–20 years and over 20 years (the reference category). We include controls for work experience and education because these variables may affect work-time arrangements and can identify employees with a stronger commitment to the eldercare sector. Finally, we adjust the analyses for part-time employment to purge any differences between those who work full-time and those who work part-time.

Table 1 shows the dependent and independent variables. We comment on the descriptive statistics in Table 1 from the top.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics across countries

	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Consider quitting	42%	37%	34%	52%
Work-life conflict	8%	31%	16%	39%
Involuntary part-time	5%	2%	21%	14%
Part-time	38%	12%	36%	45%
Financial distress	26%	61%	39%	58%
Education	98%	98%	89%	92%
Age	49.2	45.4	49.7	46.6
Married	80%	75%	75%	70%
Children < 7 years	11%	14%	10%	12%
Children 7–12 years	11%	13%	10%	11%
Children 13–19 years	25%	22%	23%	22%
<b>Rota system</b>				
Single shift	30%	13%	22%	27%
Double shift	57%	5%	24%	21%
Triple shift	11%	41%	47%	49%
Quadruple shift	2%	41%	7%	3%
<b>Work experience</b>				
0–5 years	13%	26%	9%	18%
6–10 years	17%	17%	11%	14%
11–19 years	33%	28%	32%	33%
> 20 years	38%	28%	47%	34%
N	1 017	876	727	653

First, the proportion of Norwegian employees who have considered quitting their job is 34%. The corresponding figures in Denmark, Finland and Sweden are 42%, 37% and 52%, respectively. We observe that more care workers in Sweden and Denmark consider quitting.

Next, the level of work-life conflict among Norwegian workers is 16%, whereas the corresponding figures for Finland and Sweden are 31% and 39%, respectively. Work-life conflict is barely an issue in Denmark, with 8% reporting that their job interferes with their family and social life. A likely explanation for the higher figures in Finland and Sweden is the widespread use of rota systems, with four shifts in Finland and split shifts in Sweden.

Third, the level of financial distress is substantial among Finnish workers, at 61%, followed by Sweden at 58%, Norway at 39% and Denmark at 26%. The Finnish figures are notable because full-time work is the norm and is therefore not associated with short part-time or involuntary part-time work, as is probably the case in Norway and Sweden.

Turning to the independent variables, Table 1 clearly illustrates that involuntary part-time employment is a Norwegian phenomenon. The proportion of respondents expressing a wish to work more hours in Denmark and Finland is 5% and 2%, respectively. The corresponding figures for Norway and Sweden are 21% and 14%, respectively.

The respondents are quite old in all countries, the mean age being approximately 49 years in Denmark and Norway, and 45 and 46 years in Finland and Sweden, respectively. The variables for marriage and family status reinforce the impression of an ageing occupational group. Fewer employees have dependent children under the age of seven than have children aged between seven and 19. Finally, the variables for work experience show a high percentage of workers with long service in the eldercare sector.

## Limitations

To sample care workers through their trade unions implies that the survey is not necessarily representative of the entire eldercare workforce. Young employees tend to have lower union membership rates compared with older employees, and employees with atypical employment relationships, such as temporary or part-time employment, have lower union membership rates compared with employees in permanent full-time positions (Nergaard et al. 2015; Rie et al. 2011). A possible consequence of the underrepresentation of young employees and employees with weaker labor market attachment is that the estimates for involuntary part-time employment, work-life conflict, financial distress and consideration to quit are conservative (i.e. smaller) compared with the situation in the sector as a whole. However, the Nordic countries have high union membership rates, especially among employees in the public sector and the health sector (Nergaard et al. 2015; Rie et al. 2011). Hence, the results do reflect the situation for the stable core of eldercare workers.

## Results

### Employment

Table 2 shows the regression for involuntary part-time work. The reference group includes those who do not want to work more hours (they can be either part-time or full-time employees).

In Norway, involuntary part-time employment varies with age, work experience and children's age. Young employees report higher levels of involuntary part-time employment, but only the age group 46–57 displays a significant difference from the reference group. Moreover, the association between children's age and involuntary part-time employment suggests that it is the family situation rather than age that is decisive for whether or not young employees perceive themselves as involuntary part-time employees. Furthermore, involuntary part-time employment shows a negative correlation with

work experience, as those with short experience in the eldercare sector report higher levels of involuntary part-time employment.

In the Swedish data, only work experience shows significant correlation with involuntary part-time employment. Involuntary part-time employment is more common among employees who have worked less than 6 years in the sector, compared with those who have worked 20 years or more. These results underscore that involuntary part-time work is mainly a problem among Norwegian and Swedish care workers.

**Table 3** Involuntary part-time work

Involuntary part-time	Denmark		Finland		Norway		Sweden	
	b	se	B	se	b	se	b	se
<b>Age (ref: over 62 years)</b>								
> 26 years	0.002	0.059	0.034	0.036	0.044	0.108	-0.066	0.077
26–35 years	0.002	0.045	0.011	0.035	0.145	0.085	0.060	0.066
36–45 years	0.005	0.041	-0.001	0.035	0.093	0.073	-0.032	0.063
46–57 years	0.015	0.036	0.014	0.032	0.140*	0.059	-0.025	0.052
58–62 years	0.004	0.037	0.001	0.033	0.088	0.062	-0.006	0.061
<b>Work experience (ref: over 20 years)</b>								
< 6 years	0.055*	0.025	0.027	0.015	0.210**	0.064	0.223***	0.049
6–10 years	0.023	0.022	0.006	0.016	0.154**	0.054	0.150**	0.046
11–19 years	0.018	0.018	-0.005	0.013	0.106**	0.036	0.007	0.034
<b>Education</b>	0.052	0.049	0.017	0.031	-0.049	0.048	0.078	0.053
<b>Married</b>	-0.004	0.018	-0.005	0.011	-0.049	0.035	-0.035	0.030
<b>Children’s age (ref: no children/adult children)</b>								
Under 7 years	0.032	0.028	0.009	0.017	0.133*	0.065	-0.041	0.050
7–12 years	-0.005	0.025	0.016	0.017	-0.048	0.055	0.010	0.046
13–19 years	0.025	0.017	-0.002	0.013	0.105**	0.040	0.080*	0.037
<b>Constant</b>	-0.032	0.060	-0.014	0.043	0.083	0.072	0.029	0.075
N	1017		876		727		653	
Adj. R2	0%		1%		7%		5%	

**Work-life conflict and consideration to quit the job**

Table 3 shows the regressions for Model 1, Figure 1. In this model, we expect a direct and indirect correlation between involuntary part-time work and consideration to quit the job. The indirect correlation is through work-life conflict. Because it is a LPM, the coefficients can be read as percentage point increases in the dependent variable from one unit change in the independent variables.

**Table 4** SEM regression. Consideration to quit the job mediated through work-life conflict

Dependent variable: Consideration to quit	Denmark		Finland		Norway		Sweden	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
<b>Work-life conflict</b>	0.410***	0.057	0.251***	0.035	0.177***	0.048	0.281***	0.040
<b>Involuntary part-time</b>	0.090	0.070	0.224*	0.112	0.030	0.047	0.028	0.058
<b>Part-time</b>	-0.015	0.032	0.120*	0.048	-0.014	0.039	0.067	0.040
<b>Married</b>	-0.025	0.038	-0.025	0.036	-0.007	0.040	0.035	0.041
<b>Children's age (ref: no children/adult children)</b>								
<7 year	0.008	0.059	-0.047	0.051	-0.012	0.069	0.011	0.065
7–12 years	0.055	0.053	-0.023	0.051	0.059	0.062	-0.023	0.062
13–19 years	0.026	0.038	-0.071	0.042	-0.041	0.047	0.030	0.050
<b>Education</b>	0.067	0.105	0.084	0.101	0.129*	0.057	-0.066	0.073
<b>Work schedule (ref: fixed shift)</b>								
Double shift	-0.024	0.034	0.101	0.082	-0.046	0.051	-0.060	0.055
Triple shift	-0.077	0.054	-0.049	0.050	-0.074	0.045	-0.074	0.046
Quadruple shift	-0.086	0.111	-0.094	0.051	-0.124	0.077	-0.170	0.112
<b>Age</b>	-0.004	0.003	-0.009***	0.002	-0.007**	0.003	-0.011***	0.002
<b>Age<sup>2</sup></b>	-0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Work experience (ref: &gt; 20 years)</b>								
0–5 years	-0.077	0.056	-0.081	0.051	-0.100	0.075	-0.104	0.069
6–10 years	0.042	0.048	-0.042	0.052	-0.028	0.063	0.004	0.064
11–19 years	0.000	0.039	-0.019	0.043	-0.025	0.042	0.008	0.046
<b>Constant</b>	0.414***	0.121	0.418***	0.117	0.345***	0.083	0.538***	0.098
<b>Mediating variable: work-life conflict</b>								
<b>Involuntary part-time</b>	0.067	0.038	0.001	0.109	0.097**	0.036	0.005	0.057
<b>Part-time</b>	-0.001	0.018	-0.089	0.047	-0.005	0.030	-0.062	0.039
<b>Married</b>	0.035	0.021	0.030	0.036	0.009	0.031	0.041	0.040
<b>Children's age (ref: no children/adult children)</b>								
<7 year	0.112***	0.032	0.124*	0.050	0.063	0.054	0.120	0.064
7–12 years	0.038	0.029	-0.004	0.049	0.070	0.048	0.061	0.060
13–19 years	0.020	0.021	0.068	0.041	-0.028	0.036	0.028	0.049
<b>Education</b>	0.025	0.058	0.042	0.099	0.057	0.044	0.060	0.071
<b>Work schedule (ref: fixed shift)</b>								
Double shift	0.048*	0.019	0.065	0.080	0.073	0.040	0.257***	0.053
Triple shift	0.119***	0.030	0.222***	0.049	0.084*	0.035	0.376***	0.043
Quadruple shift	0.221***	0.061	0.277***	0.049	0.171**	0.060	0.329**	0.109
<b>Age</b>	-0.002	0.001	-0.006**	0.002	-0.003	0.002	-0.003	0.002
<b>Age<sup>2</sup></b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Dependent variable: Consideration to quit	Denmark		Finland		Norway		Sweden	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
<b>Mediating variable: work-life conflict</b>								
<b>Work experience (ref: &gt;20 years)</b>								
0–5 years	0.031	0.031	-0.030	0.050	0.014	0.059	-0.018	0.067
6–10 years	0.026	0.027	0.013	0.050	-0.018	0.049	-0.047	0.063
11–19 years	0.017	0.022	0.002	0.042	0.041	0.033	-0.046	0.045
<b>Constant</b>	-0.064	0.067	0.039	0.114	0.018	0.065	0.075	0.096
N	1017		876		727		653	
R2 Consideration to quit	0,08		0,13		0,06		0,13	
R2 Work-life conflict	0,07		0,1		0,06		0,13	
R2 Overall	0,09		0,016		0,09		0,19	

Standard errors in second column. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

The dependent variable in the upper panel indicates whether employees are seriously considering quitting their job. The dependent variable in the lower panel indicates whether the job interferes with family and social life. Because work-life conflict is a mediating variable in our model, we use *medsem* to test for mediation (Mehmetoglu 2018).

The regression in the lower panel, with work-life conflict as the dependent variable, shows that involuntary part-time work is associated with more work-life conflict in Norway, but not in the other three countries. Furthermore, the correlations between work-life conflict and number of shifts show a clear and increasing gradient in all four countries. In the Danish and Swedish samples, respondents working two or more shifts report significantly higher levels of work-life conflict compared with those working single shifts. In the Finnish and Norwegian sample, employees whose rota systems consist of three or more shifts report higher levels of work-life conflict. Taken together, the findings indicate that employees working different kinds of unsociable hours in a rota system or ‘chasing extra shifts’ as involuntary part-time employees are more likely to experience that work hours do not fit well with their family and social life.

The regression in the upper panel of Table 3, with consideration to quit the job as the dependent variable, shows a positive and significant association between work-life conflict and the dependent variable. This means that those who report that their job interferes with their family and social life outside work (work-life conflict) are more inclined to consider quitting their job. The relationship is strongest in Denmark and weakest in Norway. Interestingly, there is no significant relationship between consideration to quit the job and any of the work-time arrangement variables, part-time and involuntary part-time work included.

Table 4 presents the indirect effects (partial and complete mediation effects) of involuntary part-time employment and type of work schedule on consideration to quit the job.<sup>3</sup> We only display the size of the indirect effect and their confidence intervals, if the analyses confirm such an effect.



**Table 5** Indirect effects of involuntary part-time work and rota systems on consideration to quit the job

		Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Involuntary part-time	Indirect effect			0.017	
	Confidence intervals			(0.002–0.033)	
Two shifts	Indirect effect	0.020			0.072
	Confidence intervals	(0.004–0.035)			(0.037, 0.107)
Three shifts	Indirect effect	0.049	0.056	0.017	0.106
	Confidence intervals	(0.021–0.076)	(0.027–0.084)	(0.000–0.029)	(0.068, 0.143)
Four shifts	Indirect effect	0.091	0.069	0.030	0.092
	Confidence intervals	(0.036–0.146)	(0.039–0.100)	(0.004–0.056)	(0.027–0.157)

The mediation analyses reveal an indirect association between involuntary part-time work and employees' consideration to quit the job in the Norwegian data. The association is mediated through a higher level of work-life conflict among involuntary part-time employees. The strength of the association is weak, but statistically significant.

Type of work schedule affect employees' consideration to quit their current job in all countries, but only insofar as work schedules are associated with higher levels of work-life conflict. The associated increase in consideration to quit the job is weak to moderate.

### Financial distress and consideration to quit the job

Table 5 shows the regressions for Model 2, Figure 1. The expectation for this model is similar to that for Model 1, only with financial distress as the mediating variable between involuntary part-time work and consideration to quit the job. The dependent variable in the upper panel is still whether or not employees are seriously considering quitting their job, but the mediating variable and the dependent variable in the lower panel indicate whether or not employees are concerned that their pay will not cover living expenses.

The regression in the lower panel reveals that financial distress shows a strong and significant association with involuntary part-time work in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, but the coefficient is larger and more strongly significant in Norway and Sweden, where involuntary part-time work is more widespread.

We find that financial distress significantly increases consideration to quit the job. The coefficient is, however, weakest in Norway. Involuntary part-time work does not correlate with consideration to quit the job in Denmark, Norway or Sweden. Hence, there is no direct path from involuntary part-time employment to consideration to quit the job.

**Table 6** SEM regressions for consideration to quit the job mediated through financial distress

Dependent variable:	Denmark		Finland		Norway		Sweden	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Consideration to quit								
Financial distress	0.173***	0.036	0.164***	0.033	0.115**	0.038	0.277***	0.039
Involuntary part-time	0.082	0.071	0.211	0.114	0.023	0.048	-0.026	0.059

Dependent variable:	Denmark		Finland		Norway		Sweden	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
<b>Consideration to quit</b>								
<b>Part-time (voluntary)</b>	-0.012	0.033	0.094	0.049	-0.014	0.040	0.057	0.040
<b>Married</b>	0.009	0.040	0.004	0.037	0.010	0.041	0.056	0.041
<b>Children's age (ref: no children/adult children)</b>								
<7 year	0.038	0.060	-0.017	0.052	-0.029	0.071	0.019	0.066
7-12 years	0.059	0.054	-0.020	0.052	0.052	0.063	-0.013	0.062
13-19 years	0.022	0.039	-0.076	0.043	-0.049	0.047	0.024	0.050
<b>Education</b>	0.076	0.107	0.107	0.103	0.152**	0.058	-0.082	0.075
<b>Work schedule (ref: fixed shift)</b>								
Double shift	-0.012	0.035	0.150	0.084	-0.015	0.052	0.034	0.054
Triple shift	-0.023	0.055	0.012	0.051	-0.047	0.046	0.036	0.044
Quadruple shift	0.020	0.121	-0.016	0.051	-0.082	0.078	-0.067	0.111
<b>Age</b>	-0.004	0.003	-0.009***	0.002	-0.008**	0.003	-0.011***	0.002
<b>Age^2</b>	-0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Work experience (ref: &gt; 20 years)</b>								
Experience < 1 year	-0.089	0.057	-0.088	0.053	-0.125	0.077	-0.116	0.069
Experience 1-5 years	0.032	0.050	-0.036	0.052	-0.041	0.064	-0.011	0.064
Experience 6-10 years	0.003	0.040	-0.023	0.044	-0.024	0.043	-0.019	0.046
<b>Constant</b>	0.348**	0.124	0.284*	0.122	0.284***	0.086	0.422***	0.102
<b>Mediating variable: Financial distress</b>								
<b>Involuntary part-time</b>	0.148*	0.063	0.061	0.115	0.212***	0.047	0.190**	0.059
<b>Part-time</b>	0.004	0.029	0.006	0.050	-0.072	0.039	-0.006	0.041
<b>Married</b>	-0.139***	0.035	-0.097*	0.038	-0.065	0.040	-0.065	0.042
<b>Children's age (ref: no children/adult children)</b>								
<7 years	0.112*	0.052	0.028	0.053	0.049	0.070	0.183**	0.067
7-12 years	0.098*	0.047	0.007	0.052	0.114	0.062	0.002	0.063
13-19 years	0.083*	0.034	0.117**	0.043	0.069	0.047	0.102*	0.051
<b>Education</b>	0.013	0.094	-0.069	0.104	-0.024	0.057	-0.037	0.076
<b>Work schedule (ref: fixed shift)</b>								
Double shift	0.023	0.030	-0.117	0.086	-0.048	0.052	-0.089	0.055
Triple shift	0.004	0.049	-0.034	0.051	-0.066	0.045	0.016	0.045
Quadruple shift	-0.009	0.107	-0.053	0.052	-0.053	0.077	-0.052	0.112
<b>Age</b>	-0.003	0.002	-0.008***	0.002	-0.006*	0.003	-0.005*	0.002
<b>Age^2</b>	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000

Dependent variable: Consideration to quit	Denmark		Finland		Norway		Sweden	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
<b>Mediating variable: Financial distress</b>								
<b>Work experience (ref: &gt; 20 years)</b>								
0–5 years	0.149**	0.050	0.042	0.053	0.052	0.077	0.007	0.070
6–10 years	0.074	0.044	–0.012	0.053	0.090	0.063	0.009	0.065
11–19 years	0.014	0.035	0.022	0.044	–0.006	0.042	0.035	0.046
<b>Constant</b>	0.252*	0.109	0.831***	0.121	0.492***	0.083	0.644***	0.100
N	1002		871		716		683	
R2 Consideration to quit	0,05		0,1		0,06		0,15	
R2 Work-life conflict	0,06		0,9		0,12		0,1	
R2 Overall	0,09		0,15		0,15		0,15	

Standard errors in second column. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

The mediation analyses reveal that involuntary part-time work affects employees' consideration to quit the current job in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, but only through financial distress. Again, the analyses show modest indirect effects.

**Table 7** Indirect effects of involuntary part-time work on consideration to quit the job

	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Indirect effect of involuntary part-time	0.026		0.024	0.053
Confidence interval	(0.002–0.049)		(0.006–0.043)	(0.017–0.088)

## Discussion

Nordic governments face great urgency to build a sustainable workforce for future eldercare needs (Jonsson 2011; Nordic Council of Ministers 2014; OECD 2020). This article has drawn attention to work-time conditions and the way in which these conditions may impact sustainable employment in the sector. Drawing on a Nordic cross-national survey conducted among eldercare workers in 2015, we have paid particular attention to problems related to involuntary part-time employment and work scheduling of 24/7 shift work. We have investigated the scope of involuntary employment and the type of work schedules, and how these variables impact on care workers' perceptions of their personal financial situation and work-life balance and – directly and indirectly – on considerations to quit their job. Parallel analyses in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have allowed us to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the respective countries' work-time arrangements.

We have argued that the concept of *living hours* is a useful sensitizing concept to capture the dual aspects of sustainable employment, namely to ensure that employees be allocated sufficient work hours per week to financially support a family *and* a to ensure

a scheduling of work hours that allows for enjoying a social life and raising a family (Ilsøe 2016; Larsen et al. 2019). Because employees' living hours are contingent on established work-time arrangements and institutional regulation of work hours, we also find the concept to be analytically useful for exploring how work-time arrangements can be better accommodated to enhance sustainability of eldercare workforce.

### **The problem of involuntary part-time employment**

Previous research demonstrates how part-time employees looking for full-time contracts struggle to find enough employment to make a living and to lead a normal social and family life (Rasmussen & Kjevik-Wycherley 2019). This kind of involuntary part-time employment indicates a mismatch between employers' needs for flexibility and employees' preference for a predictable work schedule. Our analysis reveals that involuntary part-time work is far more prevalent in Norway (21%) and Sweden (14%) than in Denmark (5%) and Finland (2%). This is logical, considering the different usage of part-time employment in the four countries. The problem of insufficient hours is less pressing in Denmark and Finland because of Finland's institutionalized full-time norm and Denmark's full-time/large part-time norm. In Norway and Sweden – where the workforces comprise a patchwork of small and large part-time positions – it is more likely to find employees who are struggling to top up their salary by working extra shifts.

Involuntary part-time employees in Norway and Sweden are mainly employees with short work experience. Nevertheless, we find that they have distinct profiles. Whereas Swedish involuntary part-time employees are concentrated among those with 0–10 years of experience, Norwegian care workers with 19 years of service continue to report higher levels of involuntary part-time employment. Still, the most striking characteristic of the Norwegian sample of involuntary part-time employees is that they tend to be young. These findings corroborate the findings in previous research (Vabø et al. 2019; Rasmussen & Kjevik-Wycherley 2019).

### **Involuntary part-time work and consideration to quit the job**

Because involuntary part-time employees would like to work more scheduled hours per week – either in a full-time or a long part-time position – it is not surprising to find no direct association between involuntary part-time and consideration to quit the job. Nevertheless, we do find an *indirect* association between involuntary part-time and consideration to quit through work-family conflict and financial distress.

Among the Norwegian involuntary part-time employees, only those who find their work hours difficult to combine with family and social life outside work report having considered to quit their job. This finding substantiates the explanation proposed by qualitative researchers that having to constantly be prepared to respond to employers' unpredictable need for substitutes and extra staff is almost unbearable for employees. As they realize that work hours are almost never pre-scheduled, they become discouraged from pursuing this career trajectory (Amble & Ingstad 2017; Rasmussen & Kjevik-Wycherley 2019).

Our analyses reveal that the level of work-family conflict among involuntary part-time employees compared with other employees is more distinct in Norway than in



Denmark and Sweden. This may of course indicate that Norwegian employees more often experience a lack of extra shifts and unpredictable work hours than do their Danish and Swedish counterparts. In addition, it takes more effort to top up a (Norwegian) short part-time position with extra shifts than to top up a (Danish) long part-time position. A plausible explanation for the comparatively weaker distinction between involuntary part-time employees and other employees in Sweden may also be related to the existence of full-time positions with a contractual share of ‘unscheduled hours’. As noted by Jonsson (2011) and Ede and Rantakeisu (2015), these full-time contracts implied that employees continued to feel that their private life was governed by employers’ needs for flexibility. Although the Nordcare II data provide no information about the prevalence of these employment contracts, a generally high level of work-life conflict indicates that Swedish employees may lack control over their work hours. Nordcare II data indicate that four out of 10 Swedish care workers complain about work hours being incompatible with private life. That is the highest level among the four Nordic countries (Szebehely et al. 2017).

Employees working in eldercare report economic distress to varying degrees: 26% in Denmark, 39% in Norway, 58% in Sweden and 61% in Finland. The level of economic distress among involuntary part-time employees increases by 14 percentage points in Denmark, by 19 percentage points in Sweden and by 29 percentage points in Norway. Hence, involuntary part-time work is a key predictor of financial distress in those countries. The association between involuntary part-time work and economic distress illustrates a key element in the living hours concept, that is, that wage regulation does not protect employees from falling below the poverty line as long as there is no regulation of minimum work hours (Larsen et al. 2019: 135–136). Employees need both decent wages and access to enough work hours per week to make ends meet. The flexibility in part-time employment thus seems to benefit employers more than employees. Employers have the prerogative to set work hours and work schedules without any requirements placed on work hours, whereas employees bear the risk of low wages and a distorted work-life balance (Larsen et al. 2019). This background explains the strong correlation between financial distress and care workers’ considerations to quit their job.

The comparative analysis indicates that in Norway, involuntary part-time work is an important underlying factor for both financial distress and work-life conflict. It is however important to note that Norway does not stand out as a problem country in terms of the general level of economic distress or level of work-life conflict. The difference is that in Norway, these problems are disproportionately experienced among the involuntary part-time employees.

### **Shift work scheduling and consideration to quit**

According to our theoretical model, we expected to find both a direct association between type of work schedule and consideration to quit, and an indirect association, mediated through the variable work-family conflict. The results revealed only an indirect link. This implies that work scheduling in itself is not associated with consideration to quit in any country, and that it is primarily when the work schedule makes it difficult to combine work and social/family life that employees are more likely to consider quitting.

In Norway and Sweden, shift work is normally organized in a rotating shift schedule; full-time and part-time employees regularly work combinations of three kinds of

shift (day, evening and weekend). As demonstrated in the previous section, the burden of working unsociable hours is not necessarily evenly distributed in these patchy full-time/part-time systems. The Swedish and Norwegian work schedules are apparently similar, but we find that the response patterns in the two countries differ. Sweden has the highest level of work-life conflict of the four countries, at 39%, whereas only 16% of Norwegian care workers report work-life conflict. Moreover, the indirect association between work schedules and consideration to quit is substantially stronger in Sweden than in Norway. This indicates that Swedish care workers more often experience that their employment contracts entail unpredictable or inconvenient work hours; that is, work hours incompatible with a good social and family life. Our findings corroborate previous Swedish research on contracts with unpredictable and unscheduled work hours (Ede & Rantakeisu 2015).

Finnish care workers, who often work quadruple shifts – day, evening, night and weekend – also report a comparably high level of work-life conflict. Although the burden of working unsociable hours is apparently more evenly distributed in a full-time system, rotating between shifts at all hours is obviously arduous. Approximately 33% of Finnish care workers report that their work hours do not fit well with their family and social life. This indicates that, despite a childcare system that accommodates rotating shift work, and despite a stable level of full-time workers, they experience that working all hours of the day in a full-time position is at odds with a good life outside work. Those who combine three or four shifts show an indirect association between work scheduling and consideration to quit.

Denmark stands out with its rather different work schedule model whereby care workers often work fixed shifts – either fixed day shifts or fixed evening or night shifts. The Danish model seems to provide a more predictable work situation for employees in the sense that they go to work at the same time every day. Denmark has a notably low level of work-life conflict due to its system of fixed shifts. Only 8% of Danish care workers experience work-life conflict. Nonetheless, we observe an indirect association between work scheduling and consideration to quit the job in the Danish context. In fact, we observe that working multiple shifts in a rotating schedule is associated with higher levels of work-life conflict in all national contexts and, consequently, increased consideration to quit the job. This is in line with previous research comparing different types of shift work schedules (Peters et al. 2015). However, the effects of rotating shift work on the employees' family and personal life are more comprehensive in Finland, where 82% work three or four shifts compared to 13% in Denmark. Research comparing different types of shift work schedules (Peters et al. 2015) suggests that sustainable employment is higher among staff working fixed shifts than among staff working rotating shifts.

## Conclusion

The comparative analysis among eldercare workers working under different work-time arrangements brings forth interesting differences in how these arrangements affect the financial situation and social life of these care workers. The analyses reveal that Norway has a distinct problem of involuntary part-time employment, induced by a system that combines small part-time positions with irregular and rotating work schedules. The emergent picture of Norway is one of labor market dualization, where some part-timers experience more of the negative effects that follow from low-wage shift work.



Considering that those who work involuntarily part-time are young employees with short work experience, it clearly signals that the dualization is disproportionately present among those who represent the future workforce in eldercare. This has consequences not only for individual careers, but also for employers, who are urged to build a sustainable workforce for the future long-term care system.

Involuntary part-time employment is a considerable problem in Sweden, too. However, we find that the contrast between involuntary part-timers and other employees are less distinct in Sweden than in Norway. Nonetheless, given Sweden's comparably high level of work-life conflict, we suggest that this may reflect that the fact that irregular and unpredictable work hours sometimes are included in the employment contracts of Swedish care workers.

Type of shift schedules has significant impacts on the work-life balance of care workers. Employees who rotate between two or more shifts report higher work-life conflict in all countries, which illustrates that working unsociable hours will always interfere with family and social life. However, the impact of rotating shift work is more comprehensive in Finland, where the majority works three or four shifts. Denmark has a notably low level of work-life conflict due to work schedules based on fixed shifts rather than rotating shifts.

The Swedish and Finnish care workers generally report a comparably high level of economic distress and work-life conflict. This, in combination with the long work weeks and multiple shifts in Finland, and with the unpredictable shift work and split shifts in Sweden, should certainly be addressed in future research.

Denmark stands out with its comparably lower levels of both economic distress and work-life conflict. Only one in four experiences economic distress and less than 10% experience work-life conflict. Hence, the Danish fixed-shift system appears to be a promising example of a more family-friendly way of organizing 24/7 shift work.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This definition differs from the one used by the Labour Force Survey, which also requires involuntary part-time employees to be able to increase employment within four weeks.

<sup>2</sup> We have information about split shifts in the data. Split shifts are uncommon, although most frequent in Sweden. However, the majority works split shifts on an occasional basis, that is, once a month or less. We do not find any pattern in work-family conflict or consideration to quit from working split shifts. The work scheduling is already accounted for in the analyses by including the number of shifts.

<sup>3</sup> The indirect effect is the product of the independent and mediating variable on the dependent variable. In the case of Norway, the indirect effect of involuntary part-time on consideration to quit the job is  $0.104 * 0.180 = 0.019$ .