



Introduction¹

This fall issue of Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies brings four research articles from Sweden and Denmark.

The first article *Inequality Regimes in Grocery Stores: Intersections of Gender, Hierarchies, and Working Conditions* by Gunilla Olofsdotter and colleagues explores the extent to which spatial and hierarchical divisions of work in grocery stores intersect with gender, and resulting inequalities in employees' working condition. Based on qualitative individual and group interviews with store managers and employees in two grocery stores in Sweden, the case study illustrates how inequalities are created and maintained in the organization of everyday work. Functional and gendered divisions of the workforce are accompanied by differences in working conditions and career opportunities. Women employees—who typically worked at check-out desks—had restrained mobility opportunities, and thus limited opportunities to enhance competence and skills by practicing in other spaces. The functional and gendered division of labor was legitimized in terms of profitability and productivity and reinforced the differences in status and hierarchy between departments and functions.

Still in the Swedish context, *Late Work in Sweden: Exit Pathways Express Unequal Exclusion Risks* by Gülin Öylü and colleagues investigate the social structure of exclusion risks in late working life by analyzing exit from working life, employment breaks, and late employment trajectories according to gender and education. Based on register data of individuals born in 1950, the study explores how the generations are exiting employment between 2010 and 2018. Results from the study highlight that women with low education exit working life earlier and have a higher risk of employment breaks due to working ability, while men with low education have a higher risk of employment breaks due to unemployment. People with higher education, and men in particular, have a higher probability of moving into self-employment in late working life. The authors discuss the implications of their findings for aging policies toward the equal and inclusive prolongation of work in an aging society.

Marcus Persson and his co-authors are also concerned with the aging population in Sweden. In *Working with Robotic Animals in Dementia Care: The Significance of Caregivers' Competences*, the authors address the use of robotic animals as a solution to challenges connected with the limited resources in elderly care services. They explore competences that caregivers draw upon when facilitating interaction between elderly residents at dementia homes and robots. Through an ethnographic study and interviews with caregivers, the study explores the notions of 'competence' as ways of working and valued social norms in the community of practice of caregivers. The findings show that caregivers' use of robotic animals as caregiving tools rests on embodied, social, and ethical competencies that are developed as a result of informal collegial learning. Based on the findings of the study, the authors recommend that the training in using robots should not emphasize technological knowledge, but rather be rooted in collegial learning in the community of practice of the caregivers.

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



The final article of this issue brings us to Denmark. In *Migrants' Work Environment in the Danish Construction Sector: a Scoping Study*, Charlotte Overgaard and co-authors map existing research to give a status of what is known about the work environment of migrant workers employed in the construction sector in Denmark. They identify an overall paucity of research concerned specifically with the health and safety of migrants. However, existing literature shows that migrants are vulnerable workers who are channeled into dirty, dangerous, and demanding jobs and face job insecurity as well as poor treatment and segregation. In concluding the scoping literature review, Overgaard and colleagues identify a number of gaps in the literature, including a lack of valid evidence concerning accidents and risks.

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