



Introduction¹

This final 2023 issue of Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies comprises five research articles from researchers in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

The first article, *The Corona Pandemic and Working Life: Findings from a Longitudinal Danish Study*, by Thomas Bredgaard, explores how the pandemic crisis and the resulting lockdowns and reopenings affected working life in Denmark. Workers and professionals from different occupational groups were interviewed in four rounds in 2020 and 2021 (nurses, teachers, employees in grocery stores, people in liberal professions, hotel and restaurant employees – ranging from N = 105, 96, 89, and 80 in the four interview rounds) about their experiences of the changes in their work life during the different phases of the crisis. The longitudinal study shows that both minor and major changes were experienced by individuals from the different occupational groups, but the overall conclusion of the article holds that the corona pandemic did not produce any fundamental transformation in Danish working life. However, the crisis reinforced attention to the role of the workplace as a social arena and awareness of work-life balance. Furthermore, the crises reinforced the potentials of homework and online meetings and demonstrated that many jobs and tasks could be handled by homeworking and through online meetings.

The Association Between Part-time Employment and Social Assistance Reciprocity in Norway, by Bård Smedvik, explores the relationship between non-standard employment and welfare reception in Norway, with a focus on how part-time employment is associated with reciprocity periods for receivers of minimum income support. Based on register data of a subset of the Norwegian population, consisting of all individuals between 18 and 65 years of age who received social assistance at least on month between 2015 and 2019, Smedvik sets out to test the hypothesis that welfare recipients in Norway who held full-time jobs have shorter reciprocity periods than those who worked part-time. The data from the study indicate a significant link between a lower percentage of employment and longer welfare reciprocity, and the author urges policy-makers to pay attention to the tendency that individuals who are vulnerable to the labor market face risks when it comes to part-time work – compared to full-time work.

The third article *Ethnic Diversity and Firm Performance in Norway*, by Janis Umblijs and colleagues, sets out to analyze whether changes in ethnic diversity among staff and in management affect firm performance. Drawing on Norwegian register data about employee characteristics such as age, gender, education, country of origin, and parents' country of origin, and register data that provides information on firm-level outcomes, the authors analyze the correlation between the sets of data between 2008 and 2018. The overall conclusion drawn from the data is that changes in ethnic diversity within firms, on average, either display positive or no association with firm-level performance. Furthermore, firms that predominantly hire immigrants in low wage jobs tend to be negatively associated with productivity effects. The authors thus argue that profitability of diversity depends on firm-internal characteristics, such as ethnic diversity at the management level, but also on firm-external characteristics, such as the type of industry.

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



Still in the Norwegian context, the article *Help and Care to Older Parents in the Digital Society*, by Heidi Gautun and Christopher Bratt, examines the extent and predictors of employees' help and care to their old parents. Based on national web-based survey conducted in Norway in the spring of 2022, Gautun and Bratt focus their analysis on respondents who are employees between 45 and 67 years old and having at least one living parent (3332 employee respondents) and they identify frequencies of different help and care types that they provide for their parents. Among the most frequent care and help types were assistance with digital technology and various types of practical support, whereas personal care provision was rarer. The findings emphasize the family as a comprehensive care provider when the welfare state falls short of providing these services. With an aging population, these observations prompt the authors to pose the fundamental question: Will adult children in employment still be able to provide the necessary help and care to their aging parents?

The final article of the issue is authored by Oscar Björkenfeldt: *Addressing Online Harassment in Swedish Journalism: An Institutional Perspective on Management*. The study scrutinizes Swedish news organizations' strategies to navigate the psychosocial implications of online harassment toward journalists, drawing from interviews with 14 media managers across local and national media outlets. The interviews show that managers prioritize the physical safety of the journalists, whereas the mental strain caused by online harassment of journalists tends to be undervalued. The exposure of journalists to online harassments is thus not comprehended by the managers as an organizational challenge. Discussing these findings in the framework of institutional theory helps Björkenfeldt to not only identify these barriers for providing a healthy working environment for journalists, but also to identify the institutional structures and practices that tend to reproduce them.

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