



Introduction¹

This summer issue of Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies compiles four research articles from Sweden, Iceland, and Finland.

The first article of the issue, *Opportunities and Obstacles in Individualized Pay-setting From a Manager Perspective*, by Sofia Malmrud and colleagues, explores how managers experience and handle the pay-setting process in private companies. Based on empirical material collected from seven semi-structured group-interviews (N = 28) with managers from four private sector companies in Sweden, the author conducted a thematic analysis that identified three main themes from the interviews: The prerequisites for the managers' work in setting pays, the assessment of employees' performances and feedback provision, and the managers' experiences with the pay rewards and incentives. The exploratory study reveals the tensions and conflicts that managers experience between the general intentions of individualized pay-setting and the difficulties of enacting these intentions. Especially, the managers were struggling to find and justify a transparent relationship between employee pay and their performance that would stimulate motivation among the employees.

In *Wages, Demographics, and Gender: Register Analysis among Doctorate Holders in Iceland*, Maya Staub, Andrea Hjalmsdóttir, and Guðbjörg Linda Rafnsdóttir analyze the earnings of Icelandic doctorate holders in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities that are employed within and outside academia. Based on longitudinal individual register data derived from the Icelandic statistical office, they explore the wages of individuals who in 2017 held a 5 to 20-year-old doctorate in Iceland and were active on the Icelandic labor market at some point during this 20-year period (N = 814). Even though Iceland is recognized as a global leader in gender equality, the authors found a continuous gender gap in total earnings between the fifth and tenth career years regardless of the field of study or the employment being within or outside academia. The findings thus suggest that a PhD does not improve women's earning power enough to close the general gender pay gap.

Renegotiating Work-Home Boundaries: Reconciliation of Remote Work and School During COVID-19, by Mari Karhu and her colleagues, explores the radical transformation of everyday lives in Finnish families caused by lockdowns in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The authors' study is based on online surveys (N = 92), interviews, online diaries, and sampled experiences from 16 remote working parents. The study explores in detail how the parents renegotiate and realign the boundaries between work and family life. This extreme case of remote working provides knowledge about the effects and challenges of technology-enabled transformations of work. The reported challenges include interruptions and fragmentation of remote work task, non-optimal work ergonomics with computer-mediated work, and rescheduling of work times, but the findings also included positive aspects, such as increased family time together and the ability to pace the day more flexibly.

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



Essi Hanhikoski and colleagues explore expectation of teamwork and related emotions among Finnish early childhood education practitioners in *(Un)expected Emotions and Teamwork: Narratives of Early Childhood Education Practitioners*. The article is based on data consisting of video-cued interviews with 15 practitioners, and the data are examined with narrative-discursive analysis methods. The study reveals how the practitioners' emotions are constructed in relation to expectations about conditions of work that enable or challenge teamwork. The analysis identifies three narratives based on teamwork expectations: 1) a narrative of inadequacy, 2) a narrative of injustice, and 3) a narrative of support. The narratives describe how time constraints and unexpected changes in teamwork dictated from the top-down produce negative emotional narratives, as well as how the team's expected support for each other evokes positive emotions and builds communality.

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