



## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The fall issue of Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies features four original research articles from Finnish and Swedish researchers.

The first article, *Early Exit Decision in Finland: Investigating the Limbo between Unemployment and Retirement*, by Katri Keskinen and colleagues attempts to understand how underlying cultural notions of age shape decisions for early retirement in Finland. The authors have analyzed qualitative longitudinal interview data obtained from 14 individuals who were dismissed after a long-term career in the Finnish postal service. Using positional theory as a theoretical framework for the analysis, the study describes how the interviewees find themselves in a paradoxical situation. Despite choosing to exit, the interviewees expressed support for extending working life, ideologized active aging, and drew on discourses of active aging to reject negative portrayals of old age. The individuals in the Finnish unemployment pathway did not consider themselves retired or unemployed, but rather stuck somewhere in-between.

Next, Frederik Sjögren and Karolina Parding, in *Retention of Staff in Nordic Healthcare – A literature review*, explore how retention issues in the healthcare sectors have been researched in the Nordic context. The exploration was conducted as a rapid literature review, including 73 papers published between 2010 and 2020, addressing retention issues in the sector. The findings show that most studies were quantitative, often surveys, and mostly focusing on registered nurses and/or physicians/medical doctors. Further, high control, high levels of social support, good leadership, satisfactory opportunities for professional development, organizational continuity, reasonable demands, including absence of heavy physical exertion, were all shown to positively impact retention rates.

In *Knowledge Claims on Municipalities in the Swedish Labor Market policy*, Rickard Ulmestig has analyzed an official report on the role of the municipalities within Swedish labor market policy. The report comprises stakeholders' arguments about what is legitimate and effective means in the labor market policy, and thus serves as an ideal document to explore what is taken for granted and the power relations in the field of labor market policy. Using institutional theory as a theoretical lens, Ulmestig identifies competing institutional logics that structure policy initiatives: a municipal logic, a marketization logic, a research logic, and a corporatist logic. In this struggle, the municipalities legitimize and reproduce a dual system for labor market policy, and The Public Employment Service prioritizes unemployed persons who have unemployment insurance and a low threshold for entering the labor market, and the others are left to the municipalities to deal with.

Finally, Maria Wramsten Wilmar and Hanna Lesauvage, in *Adaptive, Persistent, and Available Support: The Crucial Way in Healthcare during Covid-19*, investigate the work of crisis managers in healthcare during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their study comprises semistructured interviews with 10 crisis managers who worked in crisis support for emergency care units, intensive care units, and other hospital care units. Inductive

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



thematic analysis of the interviews revealed several themes that were essential for the crisis managers. The crisis support provided was adapted to provide a stabilizing factor, promote stamina, and increase motivation. It also included a continuous assessment of mental health status and focused on strengthening management functions. Initially, the support was more focused on stress and anxiety, but then gradually shifted toward maintaining stamina and motivation.

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