

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions: A Comparison Across Ownership Models

Ivan Harsløf ¹, & Kirsti Klem Valset ^{1,2}

1. Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway.

2. Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, Norway.

Contact: Ivan Harsløf, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway. ivan.harslof@oslomet.no

Abstract

This study compares the working conditions and turnover intentions of professionals in Norwegian residential child protection institutions across public, for-profit, and non-profit ownership, using survey data from 870 professionals. Apart from work-family balance, professionals in for-profit institutions report less favourable conditions across key risk dimensions— notably, weaker collegial support, lower-quality professional leadership, and greater work pressure. Turnover intentions are significantly higher in for-profit institutions, which is largely attributed to a more limited scope for professionalism. These findings are discussed in light of institutional theory. In sectors where organisations compete for users, investment in professional expertise may be a strategy to enhance attractiveness. By contrast, in contexts where users are allocated providers, as in residential child protection, competition for public contracts may incentivise cost-cutting, flexible staffing, and selective bids for target groups that place particular demands on staff— dynamics that potentially heighten work pressures while reducing investment in professional competence.

Keywords

Child protection, scope for professionalism, working conditions, ownership models, Norway, turnover intentions

Introduction

Recent decades have seen structural changes in the mix of state, market and civil society involvement in the delivery of social services in most Western welfare states (Bode, 2008, 2024; Martinelli et al., 2017). Coming out of a tradition from the mid-1950s of strong state provision, this shift is also evident in Norway. From the 1990s onwards, there has been a growing trend towards public competitive tendering to secure contracts with private providers—non-profit as well as for-profit—for the delivery of publicly funded welfare services, as well as developments in other financing and regulatory mechanisms that in different ways increase the role of private services (Bjørn et al., 2019).

Notably, the Norwegian child protection sector has experienced substantial growth in private for-profit providers—a development that has sparked some controversy (Bogen & Grønningsæter, 2014; Wangberg et al., 2019). Norwegian trade unions have, from the outset, raised concerns about working conditions under for-profit ownership models (Shanks et al., 2021). However, some argue that private providers offer more career opportunities, with benefits such as greater flexibility and autonomy (Shanks & Lundström, 2023). At stake here is the scope for professionalism. In this article, drawing on institutional theory, we conceptualise the scope for professionalism as a normative ideal. As such, it comprises certified expertise, peer regulation and commitment to a service ideal (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). As an empirical condition, it may be manifested in the extent to which professional education, collegial collaboration and autonomous judgement are supported in practice (Eraut, 1994).

In light of critical turnover problems in the sector, working conditions for professionals have become a key area of concern (Johansen, 2014). Yet, whilst extensive research exists on child protection workers' psychosocial working conditions (Beer et al., 2021; Geirdal et al., 2024; Jacobsen, 2021; Olson et al., 2022), there is a notable lack of research that systematically compares working conditions across models of ownership (NOU 2020:13, p. 29). This gap is unfortunate, as how organisations interact with their employees is regarded as a key process in explaining employee well-being in the child protection field (Baldschun, 2014).

This study aims to advance our understanding of turnover intentions among child protection professionals by assessing the role of ownership-related organisational factors. Public-private distinctions in welfare services are more nuanced than traditionally assumed, as even formally private providers operate within a dense framework of public regulation (Bay & Røiseland, 2025). This implies that working conditions may not hinge on ownership alone, but also on how services are embedded in institutional and regulatory arrangements. In particular, an important distinction lies in how users gain access to services: in many private welfare

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

sectors, such as private schools or health clinics, users or their families actively choose the provider. In others, such as in residential child protection institutions, placement decisions are made by public authorities. This difference in access mechanisms may have implications for how market-oriented principles ultimately influence conditions for professionals working in these organisations. Derived from a survey conducted among a larger population of professionals in Norwegian child protection, we analyse a sub-sample of 870 employees working in residential settings (Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, 2022), examining turnover intentions and working conditions across several dimensions, including work time, pay, training, and leadership, professional environment and collaboration, and staff skill adequacy.

Background

Since the 1990s, Norway has seen a marked increase in the establishment of private residential institutions for child protection (Nordstoga & Støkken, 2018). The use of for-profit providers increased particularly during the Conservative-led government (2016–2018), with staffing levels rising sharply before later stabilising at a slightly lower level. The use of non-profit providers also increased during this period, although at a more moderate pace (Statistics Norway, 2024). Today, child protection is one of the most profitable areas for for-profit welfare organisations in Norway, and of the four largest private providers in residential child protection, three are commercial and controlled from abroad (NOU 2020:13).

Upon taking office, the current Social Democratic government pledged to take measures to phase out for-profit organisations, partly due to concern about the working conditions (Meld. St. 4 (2023–2024)). However, observers have recently detected considerable ambivalence in the government's general position concerning commercial actors in the welfare state (Slettholm, 2024). Moreover, recent changes in the financial framework of child protection—decentralising the choice of providers to the financially strained municipalities—are likely to encourage more purchases from cheaper for-profit actors (Alsos et al., 2019).

There are notable differences between institutional types. Employees at for-profit institutions tend to be younger, with around 45 per cent under age 35, compared to roughly 30 per cent in public institutions. As Bengtsson (2020) notes, younger social workers are generally less ideologically resistant to employment in the for-profit sector, which may partly explain this pattern. The share of staff with relevant professional education has increased in for-profit institutions over recent years. Still, it lags behind public and non-profit providers by close to ten percentage points. The proportion of employees without any tertiary education is one in three in the for-profit institutions, compared to a little more than one in five in the public and non-profit institutions (Statistics Norway, 2024).

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

Proponents argue that for-profit organisations are less bureaucratised, and can offer more personalised care—for example, in the form of workers staying day and night for more extended periods of time (Omdal, 2023). Furthermore, their ability to scale their activities according to varying needs is appreciated—particularly in a Norwegian context, which is characterised by many small municipalities and fluctuating needs. Recently, the authorities gave priority to the acquisition of “flexible capacity” without purchase guarantees—a segment largely dominated by for-profit providers (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Families, 2022). This flexibility, however, also entails rapid adjustments and quick recruitment by for-profit organisations, thereby implying less-than-optimal conditions for the staff.

Non-profit institutions appear to cater more to the part of the target group that is struggling with substance abuse. Non-profit organisations are known for offering advantages in social service provision, particularly for this target group, as their non-profit roots provide greater trust and legitimacy in the eyes of users (Harsløf, 2003). Although quasi-market regimes may exert pressure on non-profits to adopt business-like practices and compete on similar terms as for-profit providers (Mosley, 2020), the deeper institutional context of non-profit organisations, which will be discussed in the next section, may still create a better interplay between users and staff, as well as between staff and management.

These sectoral differences in staffing and specialisations are particularly consequential in residential settings, where the intensity of care demands can amplify the effects of poor working conditions on turnover and the professional environment (Simmons et al., 2022). High turnover can lead to increased workloads for remaining staff and may deplete the organisation of professional knowledge (Svensson, 2008). As such, working conditions and turnover also have wider implications for the scope for professionalism—a theoretical perspective that we shall now consider.

Institutional theory and scope for professionalism

Experiencing limited scope for professionalism is linked to turnover intentions among social workers (Astvik et al., 2020). To understand how such constraints may emerge, this section examines institutional theories on the relationship between public, private and non-profit ownership models and working conditions for professionals.

The theoretical perspective of new institutionalism relates the functioning of organisations to institutional orders based on their anchoring within specific societal sectors, each associated with distinct logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Thornton et al., 2012). In this perspective, public institutions tend to be governed by bureaucratic and regulatory logics that emphasise stability, equity and accountability, prioritising adherence to rules and standardised procedures (Sirris, 2020). For-profit institutions, on the other hand, are driven by market logics that emphasise competition, efficiency, profitability and customer satisfaction (which in child protec-

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

tion primarily concerns the commissioners of services). These logics prioritise cost-effectiveness and responsiveness to shifting demands. Although children in public institutions are seen as cost-bearers, they represent a revenue source in market-based settings, which may incentivise efforts to maximise occupancy (Wiborg, 2010, pp. 25-26). A critical perspective on how for-profit institutions affect the scope of professionalism is found in the work of Derber (1983). His analysis emphasises how professionals may lose control over both the processes and objectives of their work as they are compelled to align their practices with institutional priorities, which, in commercialised contexts, may be shaped by the demands of securing and maintaining state contracts:

Profit-making organizations seek to institute [...] client selection practices and client processing and case procedures that are profit-maximizing. Since salaried service professionals, while they may maintain autonomy in exercising technical skills with clients, typically do not formulate organizational policies, they are routinely faced with contradictions between service goals and the commercial interests of their employers. (Derber, 1983, p. 322)

Non-profit residential institutions are expected to be influenced by a community-oriented logic rooted in civil society. This logic emphasises mission-driven goals, social impact and civic engagement. Although staff in such organisations are salaried, their motivation may also stem from a sense of calling or collective identity. In this view, the non-profit institution can function as a “moral community” (Sirris, 2020, p. 68), foregrounding participatory service delivery and responsiveness to user needs.

However, the institutionalist framework also emphasises processes that may alter and align such logics within and across organisations. In this literature, such processes are conceptualised as institutional isomorphism, encompassing pressures stemming from state regulation, competition between organisations and broader societal culture that impose homogeneity in organisational practices (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

This phenomenon has significantly shaped the evolution of governance in welfare systems, particularly in challenging the traditional roles of public-sector professions. Scholars have noted that these professions have been increasingly subjected to criticism for being monopolistic and inefficient, and have faced pressures to conform to market-driven norms that prioritise responsiveness and efficiency (Freidson, 2001). These isomorphic pressures align with trends that have been observed in the Nordic countries, where the alleged statist institutional landscape has faced dual critiques: first, a social critique from the left invoking civil society values, followed by a liberalistic critique from the right, invoking market values, both converging on the notion that state dominance hindered innovation and user empowerment (Kaukonen & Stenius, 2008). Åkerstrøm Andersen (1996, p. 63) demonstrates how, in the 1990s, commercial actors seeking to develop the emerging market for public services in Denmark adopted argumentative frameworks that tapped into the values that were associated

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

with social movements. These arguments emphasised freedom and human dignity, aiming to demonstrate how outsourcing public services could counteract disempowering statist monopolies. Hence, whilst different types of service providers may suggest different practices, ultimately reflected in distinct working conditions, institutional convergence may have reduced these differences.

In summary, we have examined a set of institutional and organisational dynamics that may reinforce, counteract or obscure one another, thereby complicating any straightforward interpretation of observed differences in turnover intentions or professional working conditions. Although institutional logics provide valuable insight into how different ownership models may shape the organisational environment, they should be understood as underlying tendencies rather than as fixed determinants (Fleetwood, 2005).

Even so, it is possible to formulate expectations based on the combination of structural conditions, staffing patterns and institutional affiliations. For-profit institutions, where staff are on average younger, less experienced and more likely to lack relevant professional education, and where organisational priorities often emphasise flexibility and cost-efficiency, are expected to offer weaker conditions for professionalism. In contrast, public institutions, which operate under bureaucratic logics that promote standardisation, legal compliance and formal accountability, are more likely to offer stable conditions for professionalism. Although these conditions may be highly formalised, they nonetheless support core features of a professional environment, such as consistent role expectations, institutionalised training routines and predictable oversight. Non-profit institutions are anticipated to fall somewhere in between. Although they are not immune to the pressures of competitive tendering, their mission-oriented values, participatory ethos and closer ties to civil society may foster a more supportive environment for professional judgement and peer collaboration.

In this article, we broadly consider constraints on the scope of professionalism to involve both a quantitative reduction in the proportion of staff with relevant education and experience and a qualitative shift in the dominant logic of professionalism—from occupational forms based on peer regulation and discretion to organisational forms characterised by a relatively poor professional-collegial environment and poor professional management (Evetts, 2009).

Method

This research used data from the 2022 Employee Turnover Survey (Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, 2022). The survey was designed to capture a wide range of determinants related to employee turnover and was distributed electronically to all employees within the national child welfare services, encompassing both front-line services and institutional care settings. Invitations to participate in the survey, along with information about the study's purpose and the anonymity of responses, were distributed via email. Two reminders were sent.

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

As it is not known how many actually received or noticed the email with the survey link before the deadline, it is not possible to determine the exact response rate. However, it can be calculated that the number of respondents from child welfare institutions represents 25 per cent of all registered full-time equivalents (Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, 2022). This must be considered a relatively low response rate, and it should be noted that full-time and permanent staff are over-represented.

The survey was conducted anonymously, and the background questions were formulated to avoid indirect identification; however, this also entailed that key background variables, such as ethnic background, were excluded. This is an important limitation, as previous research suggests that workplace stressors may be more strongly associated with turnover intentions among minority ethnic professionals (Deery et al., 2011). Despite the anonymity, the fact that data were produced under the auspices of the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs may have influenced how some respondents chose to answer.

This article uses a subset of the survey data, with 870 respondents working at residential child protection institutions, which were: state-owned (547), non-profit (190) or for-profit (133). To determine the professionals' own intention to leave the job, this study used the question: "I'm likely to actively search for a new job during the next year" (as a dummy variable where those who fully agreed with the proposition were coded as "1" and the remaining group as "0"). This single item for measuring an employee's inclination to find new employment has proven to be a valid predictor of actual turnover (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2004). Further questions concerned working conditions that were likely to be associated with turnover intentions. These concerned satisfaction with structural employment conditions, relations with management, professional working environment and psychosocial working environment. Pertaining to all questions concerning such determinants, respondents could answer on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all" to "to a very great extent." To explore how various determinants of turnover cluster into broader identifiable dimensions, while preserving as much of the original variance as possible, we first ran a principal component analysis with varimax rotation (MacCallum et al., 1999). We then compared the means of each factor (component) across the three types of service providers using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. Finally, we estimated the professionals' inclination to leave the organisation as a function of the type of organisation they were employed in, again using OLS regression (Hellevik, 2007). To assess the importance of professional leadership—a key factor in a field that is inherently tied to high emotional stress (Wiborg, 2010)—we created an interaction term between the level of strain experienced by the professionals and their evaluation of the quality of leadership at their institution, as a composite factor based on the items listed in Table 2.

Findings

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the background variables used in the analyses. We observed that there were major differences in the composition of the workforce. There were fewer employees with a relevant educational background (child protection/social work) in the for-profit institutions, and there were also fewer employees with continuing educational courses/supplementary training of relevance to the field. Respondents from for-profit institutions were about half as likely to hold a master's degree as their counterparts in the other types of institutions. Similarly, relevant work experience was markedly lower among for-profit staff. These findings suggest important differences in the levels of professional qualifications across the various institutional types. We observed that the professionals in for-profit institutions were much more inclined than their counterparts in the other types of institutions to state that they were likely to actively search for a new job in the coming year.

Table 1

Descriptives

	Public (n 547)	Non-profit (n 190)	For-profit (n 133)
<i>Age</i>			
Below 30 years of age	19%	23%	27%
30–45 years of age	42%	41%	37%
Above 45 years of age	40%	36%	36%
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	38%	36%	39%
Female	62%	64%	61%
<i>Education</i>			
Upper secondary education	12%	16%	19%
Bachelor's degree	71%	67%	71%
Master's degree	13%	15%	7%
Educational background in child protection/social work	82%	78%	74%
Completed continuing educational courses/supplementary training relevant to the field	49%	52 %	40 %
<i>Work experience within the field of child protection</i>			
Below one year of work experience	6%	11%	14%
1–3 years of work experience	17%	21%	24%
1–4 years of work experience	23%	21%	24%
More than 8 years of work experience	54%	46%	38%
<i>Characteristics of current employment</i>			
Permanent employment	91%	91%	89%
Management role	17%	23%	20%
Full-time employment	79%	87%	92%
Part-time employment	21%	13%	8%
Likely to actively search for a new job next year	22 %	17 %	34 %

n = 870

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

Table 2 presents the results of the principal component analysis using all questions regarding reasons to consider leaving the job. The analysis identifies seven factors (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = 0.912, minimum eigenvalue > 1, accounting for 64% of the variance), emphasising features of the professional and psychosocial working environment. One can regard the identified factors as distinctive risk dimensions, representing empirically grounded tendencies that, when negatively evaluated, may contribute to professionals' turnover intentions.

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

Table 2

*Reasons why professionals may leave jobs in residential child protection institutions:
Principal component analysis results with varimax rotation*

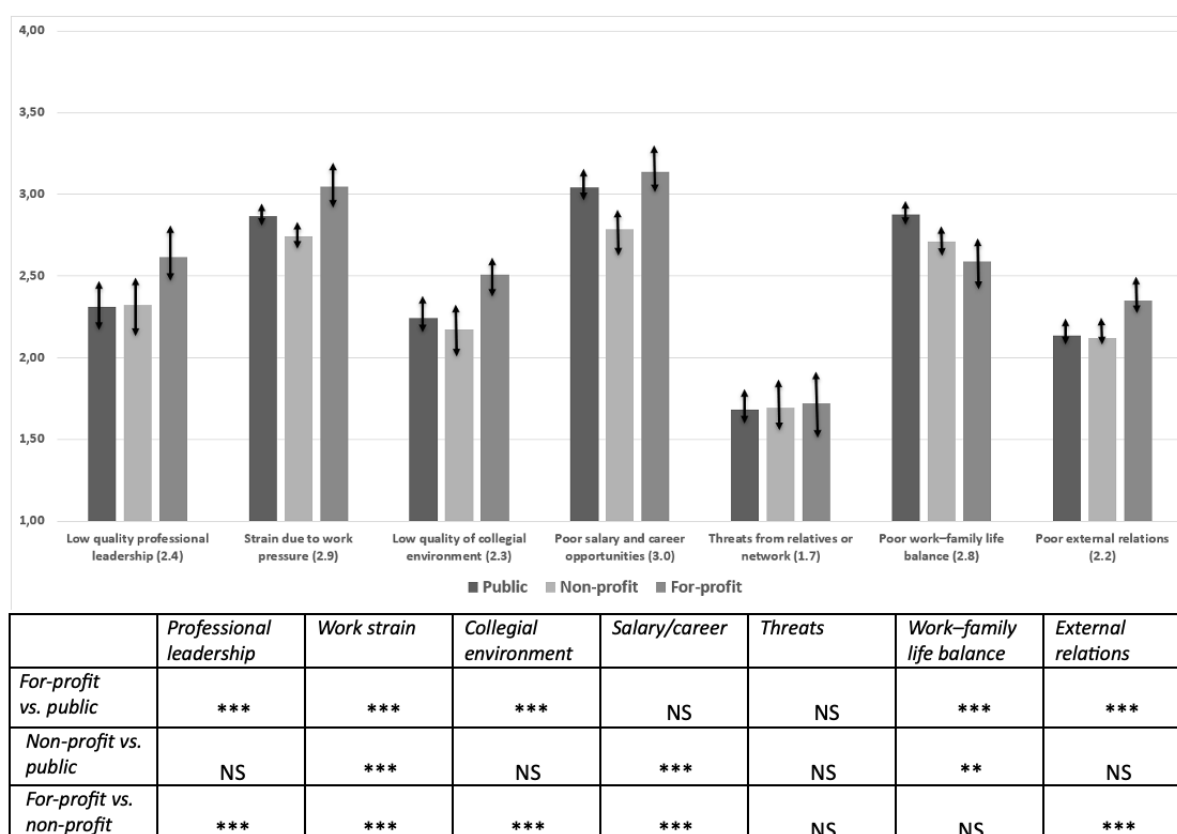
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Factor descriptions
"Manager lacks competence in managing"	0.863	0.087	0.134	0.040	-0.004	0.010	-0.020	
"Manager lacks professional competencies"	0.825	0.026	0.149	0.061	0.113	0.024	0.009	
"Lack of support and recognition from management"	0.783	0.187	0.212	0.058	-0.034	0.047	0.007	
"Lack of routines for debriefing and supervision"	0.709	0.155	0.189	0.178	0.015	0.057	0.107	Quality of the
"Insufficient routines for training new recruits"	0.661	0.148	0.186	0.196	0.008	0.070	0.130	professional
"Professional disagreement with management"	0.660	0.237	0.320	-0.077	0.020	0.056	0.142	leadership
"Lack of facilitation for professional development/further education for employees"	0.540	0.013	0.162	0.376	0.143	0.133	0.175	
"Frequent turnover of leaders"	0.530	0.073	0.192	0.007	0.068	0.007	0.345	
"Too wide a gap between professional ideals and realities"	0.449	0.288	0.370	0.064	-0.026	0.068	0.412	
"Threats or risk of violence from users"	0.079	0.838	0.079	0.101	0.246	-0.009	0.019	
"The work itself is too psychologically demanding"	0.099	0.772	0.175	-0.021	0.008	0.090	0.068	Degree of strain due
"Exposed to aggressive behaviour or physical violence from users"	0.113	0.768	0.077	0.122	0.321	-0.057	0.002	to work pressure,
"Harassment from users, relatives or users' networks (including online harassment)"	0.094	0.730	0.099	0.052	0.347	0.002	0.064	excessive
"Insecurity due to low safety at work"	0.312	0.639	0.139	0.234	0.092	0.038	0.098	responsibility and
"Too high work pressure"	0.184	0.625	0.086	0.131	-0.234	0.195	0.292	insecure work
"Too much responsibility"	0.199	0.501	0.028	0.200	-0.239	0.161	0.423	environment
"Poor working environment among colleagues"	0.288	0.037	0.821	0.065	0.122	-0.008	-0.039	
"Lack of support among colleagues"	0.262	0.114	0.796	0.084	0.135	0.055	-0.020	
"Professional disagreements among colleagues"	0.232	0.135	0.731	-0.025	0.025	0.047	0.155	Quality of collegial
"There is no one to discuss difficult cases with"	0.504	0.148	0.510	0.121	0.124	-0.008	0.230	environment
"Too few colleagues with the right competencies"	0.330	0.174	0.455	0.107	0.061	-0.040	0.341	
"Good colleagues have left"	0.334	0.248	0.409	0.163	0.007	0.116	0.119	
"Low wage compared with alternative employers"	0.070	0.072	0.012	0.866	0.040	-0.015	-0.017	
"Low wage in proportion to responsibility and workload"	0.103	0.269	0.051	0.748	-0.055	0.135	0.097	Salary and career
"Few possibilities for promotion"	0.255	0.045	0.106	0.506	0.080	0.307	0.069	opportunities
"Exposed to aggressive behaviour or violence from relatives or others in the users' network"	0.073	0.171	0.174	0.076	0.799	0.034	0.116	Threats from
"Threats of violence from relatives or others in the users' network"	0.066	0.339	0.090	0.017	0.765	-0.003	0.134	relatives/network
"Difficult to combine work and family life"	0.061	0.087	0.034	0.027	0.049	0.873	0.030	Work-family life
"Inconvenient work schedule"	0.066	0.045	0.034	0.209	-0.040	0.842	0.043	balance
"Challenging relations with external collaboration partners"	0.207	0.107	0.061	0.021	0.259	0.039	0.733	
"Insufficient professional status and negative public reputation"	0.059	0.129	0.140	0.446	0.108	0.035	0.476	External relations

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

We constructed seven indexes from the principal component analysis to capture the different risk dimensions. Figure 1 shows how professionals at the different institutions scored on these risk indexes. We observe that professionals in the for-profit institutions reported significantly worse working conditions than those in public institutions on four of these indexes. They more frequently had issues with low-quality professional leadership within the organisation; they reported more strains due to work pressure; they found the quality of the collegial environment to be poorer, and they more frequently reported challenging relations with external actors and inferior status in the public. There were no significant differences with regard to the factor of salary/career and experiencing threats from users' relatives or network. On the important issue of work-family life balance, we observe the opposite pattern; professionals in for-profit institutions found it easier to combine work and family life. For all parameters but work-family balance and threats, professionals in non-profit institutions reported working conditions that were significantly better than those enjoyed by their counterparts in for-profit institutions.

Figure 1

Differences in mean scores on seven negative risk indexes by institutional affiliation



Annotation: Index scores range from 1 (low risk) to 4 (high risk). 95% confidence intervals are indicated with arrows. Mean scores for each affiliation are shown in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; NS = not significant; $n = 870$.

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

We subsequently analysed turnover intentions as determined by the type of service provider, individual characteristics of the professionals and their scores on the identified risk dimensions. In the latter respect, we omitted the factor of threats from relatives or network, as it was not significantly correlated with the dependent variable, neither in the bivariate nor the multivariate model. Table 3 presents the results. The first model shows that, compared with those employed in public institutions, there was a stronger inclination among professionals working in for-profit institutions to agree to the proposition that they intended to search for a new job. This propensity was lower among newly employed workers (those with less than one year of work experience), permanent employees and employees who indicated that they had some kind of management role.

The second model introduces the index measuring strain due to work pressure. As expected, scoring high on this risk dimension was associated with increased turnover intention. This association, however, diminished when, in Model 3, additional risk dimensions covering other aspects of working conditions were added. This finding suggests that inadequate management practices within a given residential institution and poor professional environment among colleagues were more important determinants of professionals' turnover intentions than the experience of work strain in itself. We observe that the explanatory power of the for-profit variable diminished when the working condition variables were included in the model. This indicates that the elevated turnover rate was partly attributable to for-profit institutions providing a poorer professional environment in terms of leadership and collegial community. A somewhat peculiar association between what we have termed poor external relations and turnover was observed. This suggests that, when accounting for the other risk dimensions, those who found it challenging to collaborate with external partners, such as the municipal child protection services, were *less* inclined to search for a new job.

Underscoring the importance of management, we find that professionals who both experienced their job as a strain and reported poor professional leadership were particularly inclined to declare intentions to search for a new job (Model 4). Figure 2 illustrates this point. Despite these findings, one discerns that the full model only has a moderate ability to explain the variation (16.5 per cent). This indicates that other unmeasured factors are likely to have played a significant role in professionals' intentions to search for a new job.

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

Table 3

OLS regression analysis of intent to search for a new job

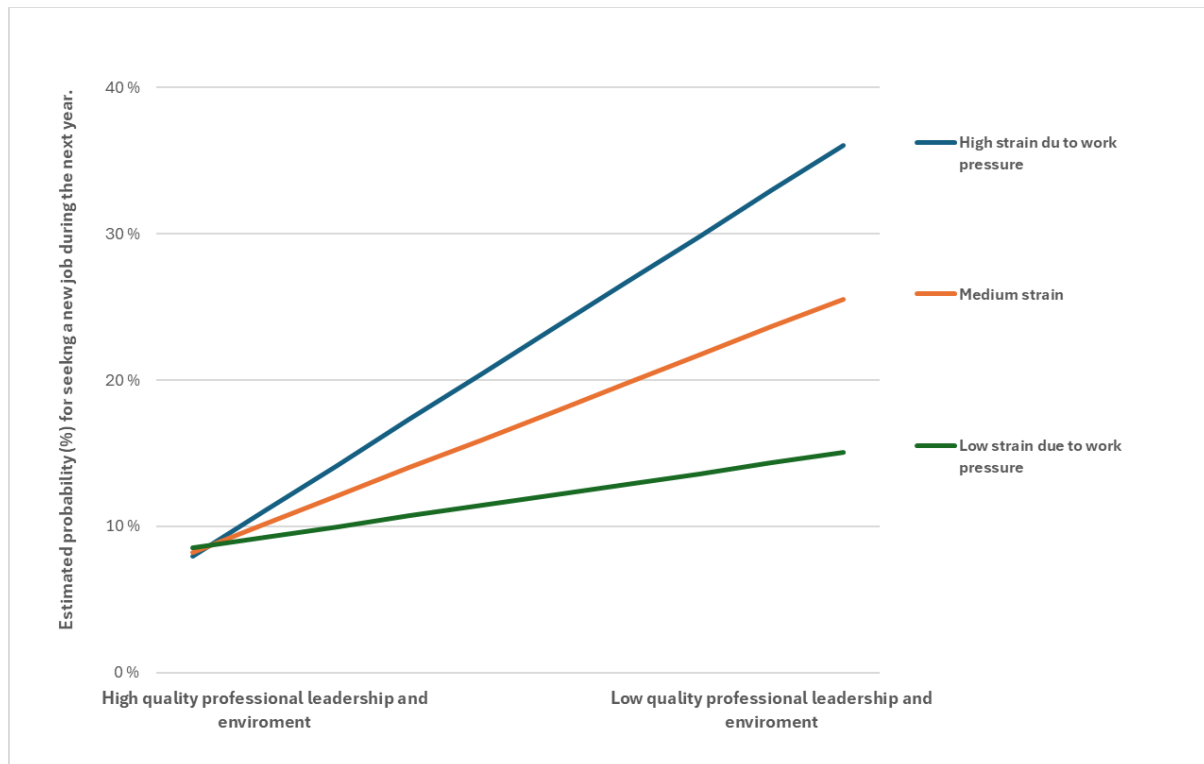
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
(Constant)	0.179	0.051	0.16	0.050	0.147	0.048	0.141	0.048
Operational model (ref: public)								
Non-profit	-0.052	0.036	-0.042	0.035	-0.033	0.034	-0.039	0.034
For-profit	0.155***	0.041	0.133**	0.041	0.105*	0.041	0.103*	0.040
Male (ref: female)	0.026	0.030	0.027	0.030	0.049	0.029	0.048	0.029
Age (ref: 30–45 years)								
< 30 years	-0.025	0.045	-0.037	0.044	-0.024	0.043	-0.025	0.043
> 45 years	-0.065	0.034	-0.056	0.034	-0.045	0.033	-0.047	0.033
Education (Ref: Bachelor)								
Upper secondary school	0.017	0.046	0.025	0.046	0.024	0.044	0.018	0.044
Higher university	0.077	0.046	0.082	0.045	0.057	0.044	0.059	0.043
Completed continuing educational courses (ref.: no)	0.017	0.031	0.02	0.031	0.014	0.030	0.014	0.03
Education child protection/social work (ref.: no)	0.084*	0.036	0.094**	0.036	0.086*	0.035	0.081*	0.034
Work experience (ref: > 8 years)								
Below one year of work experience	-0.166*	0.065	-0.149*	0.064	-0.146*	0.062	-0.145*	0.062
1–3 years of work experience	0.057	0.048	0.071	0.048	0.069	0.046	0.065	0.046
1–4 years of work experience	-0.034	0.039	-0.022	0.039	-0.011	0.038	-0.014	0.037
Part-time (< 90%) (ref: full-time)	0.039	0.043	0.024	0.043	0.017	0.041	0.021	0.041
Has management role (ref.: no)	-0.152***	0.039	-0.143***	0.039	-0.085*	0.038	-0.086*	0.038
Temporarily employed (ref: permanently employed)	0.168**	0.055	0.193***	0.054	0.183	0.052	0.178**	0.052
Strain due to work pressure (z)			0.073***	0.014	0.019*	0.016	0.022	0.016
Low quality of professional leadership (z)					0.079***	0.02	0.077***	0.020
Low quality of collegial environment (z)					0.052**	0.02	0.053**	0.020
Poor salary and career opportunities (z)					0.023	0.016	0.027	0.016
Poor work–family life balance (z)					0.026	0.015	0.027	0.014
Poor external relations (z)					-0.044**	0.015	-0.041**	0.015
Interaction work pressure x low-quality leadership (z)							0.032*	0.013
Adjusted R2	0.067		0.095		0.159		0.165	

Dependent variable: ^aI am likely to actively search for a new job during the next year ^bYes ^c = 1; ^dNo ^e = 0 *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05; B = unstandardised coefficient; S.E. = standard error; Z = standardised. Sig. F Change: p < 0.001 for each successive model. n = 830.

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

Figure 2

Interaction between assessed leadership quality and work strain on the likelihood of intending to search for a new job



Discussion

Our findings show systematic variation in self-reported working conditions across ownership types. The analysis indicates a reduced scope for professionalism in for-profit institutions, as reflected in the respondents' reports of significantly poorer collegial environments and poorer professional leadership. They further link professionals' turnover intentions to these specific risk dimensions. Although the analysis does not directly measure organisational strategies, these differences can be interpreted in light of broader patterns discussed in the literature.

Research comparing working conditions for professionals across public and private sectors has linked private settings to better working conditions for certain professionals, including doctors (Heponiemi et al., 2011) and schoolteachers (Brady, 2020). However, it can be argued that the influence of market logics is not uniform but varies with the nature of the service context—that is, whether professionals operate in environments that are characterised by user choice, such as health clinics and schools, or in settings where users are allocated. In the former context, where more resourceful users actively select services, organisations may prioritise the recruitment and retention of professional expertise to enhance their attractiveness

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

to users. Conversely, in the latter context, the market logic may assert itself as private organisations compete for public contracts by positioning themselves to serve users with particularly high needs, offering flexible service arrangements and prioritising cost-minimising strategies.

The apparent specialisation among for-profit institutions in serving users referred on the grounds of behavioural problems is observed in both Norway and Finland (Toikko, 2017; Statistics Norway, 2024). This pattern may reflect a deliberate market-segmentation strategy, targeting a niche with particularly complex needs. Such a high-stakes niche arguably requires especially high levels of professional competence and stable staffing—a requirement that stands in contrast to the lower scores for professional leadership and collegial environments identified in this study.

Social workers most often work in contexts characterised by users having little choice of provider. In this regard, our analysis of such a context aligns with that of Healy and Meagher (2004), which highlights how the privatisation of social services contributes to the employment of less-qualified workers, thereby increasing the potential fragmentation of social work professionalism. In line with this, we find lower levels of staff with relevant education, Master's degrees and tenure in for-profit institutions compared to other institutions with other ownership. However, the study cannot determine whether this reflects management decisions in for-profit institutions or professionals' preference to work elsewhere.

Following the theory of institutional isomorphism, as institutions across ownership models are essentially subject to the same regulation, including norms for staffing, one would expect only minor differences in this regard. The fact that we observe significant differences may be explained by a decoupling between formal standards and day-to-day practices, rooted in the underlying institutional logics that prevail within residential institutions (Suddaby et al., 2010). For example, the state's specific competency standards for staff in leadership roles apply to all, but the propensity for seeking exemptions may be higher among for-profit institutions. International studies have even found for-profit institutions to be more likely to violate legal requirements regarding staffing (Sen et al., 2024).

Moreover, the interaction between the state as commissioner and service providers shapes not only the latter but potentially also the former. In line with system-theoretical perspectives (la Cour, 2012; Åkerstrøm Andersen, 1996), such interaction may induce public authorities to adopt elements of market logic themselves. In contexts where the state relies on external providers to fulfil statutory responsibilities, authorities may have practical incentives to grant exemptions or overlook regulatory breaches in order to ensure service continuity, contain costs or avoid political liability. From this view, decoupling between formal standards and actual practice may emerge not only from providers' strategies but also as a mutually sustained configuration shaped by interdependent interests. Empirical examples of such dynam-

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

ics can be found in adult social care in the UK, where regulators have been observed to systematically overlook providers' violations so as to sustain service capacity (Goodair et al., 2024). However, such mechanisms may only be at play to a limited extent in Norway, where the licensing of residential care in child protection places great emphasis on professionalism and professional methods, also in comparison with the Nordic countries of Sweden and Finland (Pålsson et al., 2022).

The findings reveal an interesting pattern when comparing non-profit and state-owned institutions. Despite operating within the same competitive tendering market as for-profit institutions, non-profit institutions align closely with state-owned institutions in key dimensions that are indicative of the scope for professionalism, such as the quality of professional leadership and the professional collegial environment. This parity is notable, given that non-profits report significantly higher work strain and poorer salary and career opportunities compared with their public counterparts. These differences suggest that non-profits face unique operational and resource-related challenges, yet their civil-society-oriented logic appears to sustain professional environments that rival those of state-owned institutions.

It is notable that the analysis did not find professionals in for-profit institutions scoring higher on the risk dimension regarding threats from relatives, given that these institutions have a higher proportion of placements based on behavioural issues, as discussed above. Somewhat unexpectedly, professionals in for-profit institutions reported a better work-family life balance. We know that there are notable differences in the regulation and practice of working hours across for-profit, non-profit and public child protection institutions, with the latter much more likely to work extended shifts, or shifts exceeding 24 hours (NOU 2024:17). Self-selection into these institution-specific work-time regimes, based on individual family circumstances that were not accounted for in our analysis, may lie behind this finding.

Another unexpected association was that professionals who reported greater difficulties in collaborating with external partners were, when other factors were accounted for, less likely to express intentions to leave their jobs. It is possible that experiencing the surrounding environment as hostile, or as critical to one's methods or approach, brings about a sense of entrenchment or defensiveness, making professionals feel compelled to remain in their current position.

Conclusion

Using survey data, this study has compared working conditions and intentions to look for a new job across public, for-profit, and non-profit residential child protection institutions. The study offers insights into important contrasts between them. We have highlighted the relevance of distinguishing between contexts where users choose service providers and contexts, as is the case in residential child welfare, where allocation is controlled by the authorities. This distinction helps to interpret how market logics in for-profit settings, where providers

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

compete for state contracts rather than for users, may reduce the scope for professionalism by potentially weakening incentives to invest in staff qualifications, professional collegial structures, etc. This dynamic may occur even in Norway's relatively stringent regulatory environment, where licensing procedures place strong emphasis on professionalism and professional methods. Although we can only point to plausible mechanisms suggested by theory and extant literature, this perspective adds nuance to new institutionalism and contextualises our empirical finding that the level of professional qualifications, broadly understood, is substantially lower in for-profit residential institutions. This finding is in itself notable, as research on work environments suggests that workplaces with a stable and higher proportion of professionally trained staff are more likely to develop a collective, participatory environment. This is because professions tend to develop shared standards and norms, a stronger sense of occupational identity and greater engagement, all of which contribute to a supportive psychosocial work environment (Knudsen et al., 2011). High staff turnover, in contrast, can erode these collective dynamics.

Indeed, the study finds that professionals in for-profit institutions are more likely to express intentions to leave their jobs. This is consistent with research in other social service fields that has found that, where users are allocated by the authorities, working conditions appear to be worse in for-profit settings (Kröger, 2011). Two risk dimensions seem to be particularly important in explaining professionals' turnover intentions. First, the quality of management, in terms of leadership and professional competencies within child protection as well as routines for attending to the strain involved in this form of intensive care work, stands out as important. Second, our findings indicate that the quality of the collegial working environment plays a significant role in shaping turnover intentions. This risk dimension, concerning informal social norms and support among workers, is known from classical workplace sociology to act as a buffer against poor management (Lysgaard, 2001 [1961]). In line with findings from other social service fields, where collegial mechanisms are crucial for managing high workloads (Berlin et al., 2022), our study also highlights the importance of the professional-collegial environment in residential child protection institutions. On one aspect, the for-profit institutions stood out positively—the study suggested that the work-time arrangements provided at these institutions often align with their employees' preferences.

The study underscores the importance of management quality and the professional-collegial environment. With regard to management, we highlight structural factors such as the level of professional competence and relevant experience. In this sense, our analysis differs from Tham's (2007) Swedish study, which emphasises affective and relational aspects of management—such as employees feeling “rewarded,” “valued,” and “taken care of by management.” Although important, we suggest that these factors should be situated within the broader structural-institutional conditions that make meaningful professional support possible. Despite regulations aimed at ensuring uniform professional standards across different types of service providers, as well as sociocultural processes that may work to further the convergence

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

of management strategies, the contrasting institutional logics discussed in this paper still seem to play a significant role. At a time when the group of users placed in child protection institutions is presenting increasingly severe challenges, particularly in terms of mental health (NOU 2023:24), it becomes crucial to address the structural conditions of turnover associated with ownership models, with their implications for continuity of care and the erosion of professionalism.

Authors' Note

The authors wish to thank Professor Ingo Bode for comprehensive and insightful comments. We are also sincerely grateful to the two reviewers and to the journal editors for their constructive feedback. Any remaining shortcomings are the responsibility of the authors.

Article history

Received: 15 Nov 2024

Accepted: 18 Aug 2025

Published: 31 Oct 2025

References

- Alsos, K., Bergene, A. C., Bjørn, E. C., Hippe, J. M., Holte, J. H., Ibenholt, K., & Røtnes, R. (2019). *Lønns-, arbeids- og pensjonsvilkår i offentlig og privat barnevern* [Wage, work and pensions in public and private child protection]. Fafo.
- Astvik, W., Welander, J., & Larsson, R. (2020). Reasons for staying: A longitudinal study of work conditions predicting social workers' willingness to stay in their organisation. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 50(5), 1382–1400.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcz103>
- Baldschun, A. (2014). The six dimensions of child welfare employees' occupational well-being. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 4(4), 69–87.
<https://doi.org/10.19154/njwls.v4i4.4708>
- Bay, A.-H., & Røiseland, A. (Eds.). (2025). *Offentlige eller private velferdstjenester: Politiske spenninger og faglige nyanser* [Public or private welfare services: Political tensions and professional nuances]. Scandinavian University Press.
- Beer, O. W. J., Phillips, R., Letson, M. M., & Wolf, K. G. (2021). Personal and professional impacts of work-related stress alleviation strategies among child welfare workers in child advocacy center settings. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 122, Article 105904. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105904>
- Bengtsson, M. (2020). *Karriär och profession: Om positioner, statushierarki och mobilitet inom socionomyrket* [Career and profession: On positions, status hierarchies and mobility within the social work occupation] [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Lund]. Lund University Research Portal.
<https://portal.research.lu.se/sv/publications/karri%C3%A4r-och-profession-om-positioner-statushierarki-och-mobilitet/>

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

- Berlin, J., Szücs, S., Höjer, S., & Liljegren, A. (2022). How do street-level bureaucrats manage high workloads? Collegial mechanisms at the organisational level—Experiences from public healthcare organisations. *European Management Review*, 19(2), 299–312. <https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12480>
- Bjørnu, E. C., Hippe, J. M., Holte, J. H., Røtnes, R., Trygstad, S., & Bergene, A. C. (2019). *Når velferd er til salgs: Ideelle og kommersielle leverandører av velferdstjenester* [When welfare is for sale: Non-profit and for-profit providers of welfare services]. Fafo.
- Bode, I. (2008). *The culture of welfare markets: The international recasting of pension and care systems*. Routledge.
- Bode, I. (2024). *The fate of social modernity: Western Europe and organised welfare provision in challenging times*. Edward Elgar.
- Bogen, H., & Grønningsæter, A. B. (2014). *Kommuners kjøp av private tjenester—eksempler fra barnevern og andre områder*. [The municipalities' purchase of private services]. Fafo.
- Brady, J. (2020). *Workload, accountability and stress: A comparative study of teachers' working conditions in state and private schools in England* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge]. Apollo—University of Cambridge Repository. <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/308758>
- Deery, S., Walsh, J., & Guest, D. (2011). Workplace aggression: The effects of harassment on job burnout and turnover intentions. *Work, Employment and Society*, 25(4), 742–759. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017011419707>
- Derber, C. (1983). Ideological proletarianization and post-industrial labor. *Theory and Society*, 12(3), 309–341. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00171555>
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(6), 147–160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095101>
- Eraut, M. (1994). *Developing professional knowledge and competence*. Falmer Press.
- Evetts, J. (2009). The management of professionalism: A contemporary paradox. In S. Gewirtz, P. Mahony, I. Hextall, & A. Cribb (Eds.), *Changing teacher professionalism: International trends, challenges and the way forward* (pp. 19–30). Routledge.
- Fleetwood, S. (2005). Ontology in organization and management studies: A critical realist perspective. *Organization Articles*, 12(2), 197–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508405051188>
- Freidson, E. (2001). *Professionalism: The third logic*. Polity Press.
- Geirdal, A. Ø., Nerdrum, P., & Olkowska, A. (2024). Mental health and quality of life among Norwegian child welfare service workers. *European Journal of Social Work*, 27(4), 748–761. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2024.2317907>
- Goodair, B., McManus, A., Esposti, M. D., & Bach-Mortensen, A. (2024). How outsourcing has contributed to England's social care crisis. *British Medical Journal*, 387, Article e080380. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2024-080380>

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

- Harsløf, I. (2003). *De frivillige organisasjonenes rolle i aktivisering og arbeidstrening av personer med marginal eller ingen tilknytning til arbeidsmarkedet: En litteraturstudie* [The role of voluntary organisations in activating marginalised persons: A literature review] (NOVA skriftserie 7/03). Norwegian Social Research.
<https://bibliotek.nav.no/record/801?ln=en>
- Healy, K., & Meagher, G. (2004). The reprofessionalization of social work: Collaborative approaches for achieving professional recognition. *British Journal of Social Work*, 34(2), 243–260. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bch024>
- Hellevik, O. (2007). Linear versus logistic regression when the dependent variable is a dichotomy. *Quality & Quantity*, 43(1), 59–74. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-007-9077-3>
- Heponiemi, T., Kuusio, H., Sinervo, T., & Elovainio, M. (2011). Job attitudes and well-being among public vs. private physicians: Organizational justice and job control as mediators. *European Journal of Public Health*, 21(4), 520–525.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckq107>
- Jacobsen, A. (2021). Trygghet i en utfordrende arbeidshverdag [Safety in a challenging workday] [Master's Thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology]. NTNU Open. <https://hdl.handle.net/11250/2783436>
- Johansen, I. (2014). *Turnover i det kommunale barnevernet* [Turnover in municipal child welfare services] (Rapporter 2014/18). Statistics Norway.
https://www.ssb.no/arbeid-og-lonn/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/175497?_ts=145d565f0d8
- Kaukonen, O., & Stenius, K. (2005). Universalism under re-construction: From administrative coercion to professional subordination of substance misusers. In N. Kildal & S. Kuhnle (Eds.), *Normative foundations of the welfare state: The Nordic experience* (pp. 130–148). Routledge.
- Knudsen, H., Busck, O., & Lind, J. (2011). Work environment quality: The role of workplace participation and democracy. *Work, Employment and Society*, 25(3), 379–396.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017011407966>
- Kröger, T. (2011). The adoption of market-based practices within care for older people: Is the work satisfaction of Nordic care workers at risk? *Nordic Journal of Social Research*, 2(1), 91–104. <https://doi.org/10.7577/njsr.2048>
- la Cour, A. (2012). The love affair between the policy and the voluntary organizations. In N. K. Andersen & I. J. Sand (Eds.), *Hybrid forms of governance: Self-suspension of power* (pp. 46–63). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lysgaard, S. (2001). *Arbeiderkollektivet: En studie i de underordnedes sosiologi* [The worker collective: A sociological study of subordinates]. Scandinavian University Press. (Originally published 1961)
- MacCallum, R. C., Widaman, K. F., Zhang, S., & Hong, S. (1999). Sample size in factor analysis. *Psychological Methods*, 4(1), 84–99. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.4.1.84>

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

- Martinelli, F., Anttonen, A., & Mätzke, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Social services disrupted: Changes, challenges and policy implications for Europe in times of austerity*. Edward Elgar.
- Meld. St. 4 (2023–2024). *Anmodnings- og utredningsvedtak i stortingssesjonen 2022–2023* [Request and investigation decisions in the parliamentary session 2022–2023]. Statsministerens kontor. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-4-20232024/id2997412/>
- Mosley, J. E. (2020). Social service nonprofits: Navigating conflicting demands. In W. W. Powell & P. Bromley (Eds.), *The nonprofit sector: A research handbook* (3. ed., pp. 251–270). Stanford University Press.
- Nordstoga, S., & Støkken, A. M. (2018). Professional work in the squeeze: Experiences from a new control regime in residential care for children and youth in Norway. *Journal of Comparative Social Work*, 6(2), 88–105. <https://doi.org/10.31265/jcsw.v6i2.69>
- Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs. (2022). *Turnover blant ansatte i barnevernet—Hvorfor slutter så mange?* [Turnover among employees in the child welfare services—Why are so many quitting?]. Bufdir. <https://kudos.dfo.no/documents/32680/files/29119.pdf>
- Norwegian Ministry of Children and Families. (2022). Skriftlig spørsmål fra John-Peder Denstad (R) til barne- og familieministeren [Written question from John-Peder Denstad (R) to the Minister for Children and Families] (Document no. 15:141). <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Sporsmal/Skriftlige-sporsmal-og-svar/Skriftlig-sporsmal/?qnid=76746>
- NOU 2020:13. (2020). *Private aktører i velferdsstaten: Velferdstjenesteutvalgets delutredning I og II om offentlig finansierte velferdstjenester* [Private actors in the welfare state: The Welfare Services Committee's partial report I and II on publicly funded welfare services]. Norwegian Committee for Welfare Services. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/nou-2020-13/id2788017/>
- NOU 2023:24. (2023). *Med barnet hele vegen: Barnevernsinstitusjoner som har barnas tillit* [With the child all the way: Child welfare institutions that have the children's trust]. Barne- og familiedepartementet. <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/3448ea4c535f4d20bbbb1ef4e05fc994/no/pdfs/nou202320230024000dddpdfs.pdf>
- NOU 2024:17. (2024). *Kommersielle og ideelle aktørers rolle i fellesskapets velferdstjenester* [Commercial and non-profit actors' role in delivering welfare services]. Digitaliserings- og forvaltningsdepartementet. <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/86a768da997a425fb5c78b7e020078b0/no/pdfs/nou202420240017000dddpdfs.pdf>
- Olson, B. H., Aarseth, E. S., & Stokken, R. (2022). *Statusrapport: Ivaretagelse av ansatte. Kartlegging av arbeidsmiljøet i barnevernstjenestene i Møre og Romsdal* [Employee well-being and work environment in child welfare services in Møre og Romsdal] (Rapport nr. 119). University College Volda. <https://hdl.handle.net/11250/3038409>

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

- Omdal, O. O. (2023, February 19). Det som går galt i norsk barnevern, skyldes ikke at barnevernet er privat [What goes wrong in Norwegian child welfare is not caused by the child welfare being private]. *Civita*.
<https://civita.no/okonomi/velferdsstaten/velferdstjenester/det-som-gar-galt-i-norsk-barnevern-skyldes-ikke-at-barnevernet-er-privat/>
- Pålsson, D., Backe-Hansen, E., Kallioma-Puha, L., Lausten, M., & Pösö, T. (2022). License to care – Licensing terms for for-profit residential care for children in four Nordic countries. *Nordic Welfare Research*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.18261/nwr.7.1.2>
- Sen, R., Ulybina, O. A., & Holmes, L. (2024). Charting the 21st century rise of for-profit residential child care. *Youth*, 4(1), 272–287. <https://doi.org/10.3390/youth4010019>
- Shanks, E., & Lundström, T. (2023). Social workers in private sector employment: The case of Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Social Research*, 14(1), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.18261/njsr.14.1.7>
- Shanks, E., Backe-Hansen, E., Eriksson, P., Lausten, M., Lundström, T., Ranta, H., & Sallnäs, M. (2021). Privatisation of residential care for children and youth in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. *Nordic Welfare Research*, 6(3), 128–141.
<https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.2464-4161-2021-03-02>
- Simmons, C., Rodrigues, R., & Szebehely, M. (2022). Working conditions in the long-term care sector: A comparative study of migrant and native workers in Austria and Sweden. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(5), 2191–2202.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13657>
- Sirris, S. (2020). Institutional complexity challenging values and identities in Scandinavian welfare organisations. In H. Askeland, G. Espedal, B. Jelstad Løvaas, & S. Sirris. (Eds.), *Understanding values work* (pp. 57–77). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Slettholm, A. (2024, 30 August). Går det an å tjene både penger og samfunnet? [Is it possible to make money while also serving society?]. *Aftenposten*, 22.
- Sousa-Poza, A., & Henneberger, F. (2004). Analyzing job mobility with job turnover intentions: An international comparative study. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 38(1), 113–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2004.11506667>
- Statistics Norway. (2024). *Barnevernsinstitusjoner* [Child welfare institutions] [Dataset]. Statistics Norway. Available at: <https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/11648>
- Suddaby, R., Elsbach, K. D., Greenwood, R., Meyer, J. W., & Zilber, T. B. (2010). Organizations and their institutional environments—Bringing meaning, values, and culture back in: Introduction to the special research forum. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(6), 1234–1240. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.57317486>
- Svensson, L. G. (2008). *Profesjon og organisasjon* [Profession and organization]. In A. Molander & L. I. Terum. (Eds.), *Profesjonsstudier* (pp. 130–143). Scandinavian University Press.
- Tham, P. (2007). Why are they leaving? Factors affecting intention to leave among social workers in child welfare. *British Journal of Social Work*, 37(7), 1225–1246.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcl054>

Professionals' Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions in Norwegian Child Protection Institutions

- Thornton, P. H., & Ocasio, W. (2008). Institutional logics. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, R. Suddaby, & K. Sahlin (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 99–129). Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849200387.n4>
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The institutional logics perspective: Foundations, research, and theoretical elaboration*. Oxford University Press.
- Toikko, T. (2017). What is the best outsourcing strategy? Nonlinear association between the outsourcing degree of institutional care and the costs of substitute care in child welfare within Finnish municipalities. *Human Service Organizations, Management, Leadership & Governance*, 41(1), 30–43.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1190435>
- Wangberg, I. S., Herning, L. K. K., & Sander, A. (2019). *Velferd uten profitt: Fakta og argumenter mot velferdsprofitørene* [Welfare without profit: Facts and arguments against profiting from welfare]. Forlaget Manifest.
- Wiborg, L. H. (2010). *Mellom barn og budsjett: Hvordan forstå barnevernsledelse* [Between children and budget: How to understand the management of child protection services]. Kommuneforlaget.
- Åkerstrøm Andersen, N. (1996). *Udlisering: Når det private bliver politisk* [Outsourcing: When the private becomes political]. Nyt Fra Samfundsvidenskabernes.