



NORDISK FÖRETAGSEKONOMISK FÖRENING • NORDIC ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT



**The 26th Nordic Academy of Management Conference**  
Bringing Research Together  
**24-26 August 2022**  
Örebro University School of Business, Sweden

**Call for Papers**

We invite you to submit your research to explore the theme of “*Bringing Research Together*” for the 26<sup>th</sup> biennial NFF Conference in Örebro. We are looking forward to receiving your submissions.

**Track 7.1 - Pandemicracy - Organizing Professional Work in Times of Crisis and Uncertainty - Insights from the Nordic Public Sector**

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**Description:**

In contemporary times, Western countries' public sector has not been affected by events that have had the power to fundamentally challenge the capacity, functionality and resilience of welfare professions. However, this has changed as the Covid-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 has created new challenges not only for large parts of the elderly and primary and specialist care but also for employees in areas such as social work, business support, culture, education and research, and many others. Moreover, Covid-19 appears increasingly as a crisis that is enduring, and we might also wonder to what extent the changes the epidemic enables will prevail. Based on the existing testimonies, it is obvious that working conditions for the many thousands of employees within the public sector have changed and in some cases even been radically redefined. With changing conditions and demands on public organizations, the tasks for many professions occupying the public sector have become more, intense, uncertain and unpredictable, emotionally charged and for some even dangerous and life threatening. At the same time we have also seen some indications that professions 'reclaim' parts of the ground and maneuvering space that have been lost in the process of ongoing bureaucratization and administrative managerialism.

Having said that, we lack a deeper knowledge about and insights into the working conditions of professions that, both figuratively and literally, have been operating at the front-line and in the shadow of the pandemic. What happens to capacity, functionality and resilience of these professions when the established ways of governing and organizing of their work are challenged? That is, while we – as scholars and society in general - have been primarily interested in specific groups and specific stories of healthcare professionals and other "front-line personnel", the measures taken to meet the pandemic have also affected the content and organization of work of other professions within the healthcare and

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professions operating in other parts of the public sector that face more indirect effects and challenges that the virus has brought with it.

There are also geographical and status aspects that seem to have a certain significance for the content and organization of many people's work. Testimonies that have leaked through the metropolitan-focused media coverage indicate that those who work in public organizations that are located and operate outside areas of the epidemic's 'hotspots' and that are not recognized as operating within "high status" areas face different types of challenges. Practical difficulties with transport to and from work, access to necessary materials such as protective equipment, hygiene items, technical equipment for teleworking; in parallel with difficulties connected to recruiting new or retaining existing staff, or managing cuts and downsizing that followed in the footsteps of the pandemic are examples of challenges that we suspect will have a different meaning and affect the working lives of many professions and professions differently depending on whether they operate in rural or metropolitan regions.

In this track we therefore welcome empirically oriented papers that seek to examine the everyday work of professions occupying the public sector - both front-line workers and those that ended up in "the shadow of the pandemic". Studies on physiotherapists, pharmacists, psychologists, teachers, administrators, social workers, researchers, librarians, judges, police officers, communicators are examples of professions that are especially (but not exclusively) welcome.

Theoretically we welcome contributions that seek to address the capacity and readiness of organization theory to describe, explain and hopefully also improve the challenges public sectors organizations and professions occupying these meet in times of turmoil and uncertainty.

#### Keywords:

Professions, COVID-19, Public Sector, Work, Organizing, Resilience

#### References:

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**Author guidelines:**

Go to [www.oru.se/NFF2022](http://www.oru.se/NFF2022) for more information about how to submit a paper. The deadline for abstract submission is 31 January 2022. Full paper due: 20 June 2022.

*We very much look forward to welcoming you in Örebro!*

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