



Introduction

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In this issue, two of the articles present studies on the creation of working conditions through work place communication—informal communication at the workplace and at formal meetings, respectively. An article examines how young unemployed people position themselves in relation to the dominant discourse on unemployment. An article examines the impact of collective agreements on the employment of older workers, and finally, an article presents a study on employment in the third sector.

Eva Terkelson, Kristoffer Holm, and Martin Bäckström examine *workplace incivility* in a Swedish context. Workplace incivility is a milder but more common form of workplace aggression than bullying. The authors suggest that the extend of incivility may be related to changing nature of working life with an erosion of traditional norms and with blurred lines demarcating inappropriate behavior. The study is based on a survey. Three quarters of the respondents have been the target of coworker incivility and half of the respondents have been the target for supervisor incivility in the last year. Incivility is strongly related to well-being. Those who have witnessed incivility have more often instigated incivility themselves. Compared with American studies, incivility is more common among coworkers in Sweden and less common among supervisors. This may be related to a less hierarchical work organization and a smaller power distance in Sweden.

Eveliina Pennanen and Leena Mikkola present a study about how the *working conditions of nurses are constructed in a social interaction process in nursing staff meetings*. Studies of quality of work are often based on individual assessment of own working conditions. Here, it is investigated how the quality of work is constructed in interactive processes in formal meetings. The authors have observed eight staff meetings in a hospital ward. The authors find that the coordination of the working conditions that occurred during the meetings consisted of (1) sense-making work-related information, (2) sense-making action, (3) managing emotions, and (4) managing positions. The article thus contributes to studies of the quality of work by not only emphasizing the importance of communication and social support but also conceptualizes the communication in which working conditions to some extent are created.

Jennifer Hobbins presents a study of how *young long-term unemployed are positioning themselves to the dominant discourses on unemployment*. Hobbins argues that the responsibility for unemployment increasingly is understood as an individual matter, and unemployment policy has gradually become more oriented toward activation. Eighteen young people in a medium-sized Swedish city have been interviewed. Hobbins identifies three discursive positions among the young unemployed: Conformity, where the dominant discourse is internalized and its ideals made one's own. This position is related to self-reproach. In an alternative positioning, the dominant discourse is problematized, pointing to the difficulties that exist to live up to the discourse of individualized accountability. In a third positioning, resistance toward the dominant discourse is



expressed, saying that the dominant discourse is both unrealistic and unfair. The article thus provides an understanding of how young unemployed do position themselves in relation to family, friends, employers, etc.

The demography of the Nordic countries makes it relevant to examine whether labor market systems are supporting that employees remain on the labor market at a higher age. Carin Ulander-Wänman presents a study of whether *the Swedish collective agreements stimulates employers' willingness to hire and retain older workers in employment*. She has conducted interviews with employers in three industrial companies and five companies in the service sector. Ulander-Wänman finds that none of the interviewed employers have experienced collective agreements that stimulated the hiring and retaining of older workers. However, the employers have experienced a number of agreements, which makes it less attractive to hire older workers. These are agreements relating to wages, pension schemes, working hours, and agreements related to transitions in the companies. Employer's experiences with collective agreements may be one reason why age discrimination is reported at the Swedish labor market.

The third sector, different from both the private and public sectors, has played a less important role in the Nordic countries in the development of social, cultural, and health issues, compared with neighboring countries. However, the third sector plays an increasing role in the Nordic 'welfare societies.' It is a widespread assumption that people working in the third sector are strongly motivated by intrinsically rewards. The meaning of work is a key motivator. Kirsikka Seland and Petri Ruuskanen examine *the motivation of employees in the third sector*. They have conducted a survey among the 75,000 people employed in the Finnish third-sector institutions. Their surprising result is that among employees in the third sector, the proportion of employees intending to leave their job is higher than both in the private and the public sectors. They also find a variety of explanations: Public service motivation is very important for the employees in the third sector, but it is essential that organizational values are consistent with the values of the employee. In addition, the quality of work in the third sector seems to be an issue, making many employees in the sector consider a job change.

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