Introduction[1]

This issue contains six articles that reflect on various aspects of working life, as it unfolds in contemporary Nordic contexts. They bring out new empirical material and theoretical reflections that – as small mosaics – can help us better understand what is going on in the Nordic labor markets, in business enterprises and public service organizations, and in the private spheres of social life. Some of the articles even suggest how we might change what is going on, in order to improve working conditions and policies. However, I dare not venture to put the mosaics together to get the 'big-picture'. I guess many interesting 'minor-pictures' can be composed upon reading the articles. Instead, let me briefly introduce the themes that the articles touch upon.

In the first article, *Without a Safety Net: Precarisation among young Danish employees*, Mette Lykke Nielsen and her coauthors set out to investigate how precarious working conditions in the neo-liberal economy affect the production of subjectivity among young Danish employees. On the basis of ethnographic studies and qualitative interviews with young Danes, the article adopts a Foucaultian perspective to investigate how the youngsters partake in the practices through which they come to understand themselves as individuals. Reading across the material, the authors find that the precarious working contexts of the youngsters tend to stimulate processes of subjectification through an awareness of dispensability, individualization, and an imposed shortsightedness of life perspective.

The second article, *Between Money and Love: Work-family Conflict Among Swedish Low-income Single Mothers*, written by Christine Roman, focus on one of the most vulnerable groups in Scandinavia, namely the working-class, low-income single mothers. On the basis of interviews with Swedish single mothers, Roman reports how their work life is influenced by inconvenient and unpredictable working hours, and how their parenting is conducted on little economic resources and a high dependency on the active support by their social networks. Conflicts and dilemmas arise when the single mothers are struggling to navigate, and a 'structural ambivalence' appears as the mothers' aspiration to fulfill cultural norms associated with mothering are hampered by the lack of opportunities to act as ideal mothers.

In their article, *Orchestration in Work Environment Policy Programs*, Peter Hasle and coauthors are discussing policy initiatives to improve the work environment in companies. Through three policy cases from Denmark, the authors analyze the initiatives and detect a tendency to move away from government regulation of the work environment toward models that prioritize governance in networks that include central stakeholders in the process. They suggest that 'orchestration' among different players is a much more effective strategy for improving working conditions. By invoking a perspective from institutional theory, they develop an orchestration approach on strategy that includes and combines regulative measures with active participation of stakeholders to foster effective policies.

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

Using mixed-methods in a multiyear case study of a Swedish manufacturing company, Malin Håkansson and coauthors investigate how *Managerial Practices Support Lean and Socially Sustainable Working Conditions*. Their investigations identify four managerial practices that were conducive in bringing about socially sustainable working conditions in the case study: 1) a coherent long-term and locally adapted perspective on the lean approach, 2) a caring and value creating leadership style, 3) employee involvement, and 4) promoting meaningful jobs and health. However, the authors recognize that the effectiveness of the practices is dependent on contextual factors.

In *Understanding the Challenges Facing Occupational Health Services in the Swedish Public Sector*, Lisa Schmidt and coauthors investigate the effectiveness of employing external services from the Occupational Health Service as a means to improve working conditions in Swedish public service organizations. Their discourse analytic study shows that the contributions from the provider are limited due to several factors, and the analysis suggests that the service does not support the public organizations according to the legislative intentions.

Finally, in *Measuring employability for disadvantaged unemployed people? Evidence from survey and register data,* Sofie Dencker-Larsen sets out to investigate a proposal to assess disadvantaged unemployed people's employability. On the basis of data from a Danish survey, she discusses whether variables measuring disadvantaged unemployed persons' health, well-being, self-efficacy, alcohol use, and drug use can be used as indicators for subsequent reemployment. Her conclusion is negative, but the analysis of the correlations of the factors with subsequent reemployment points toward further research.

I hope that readers will find these six mosaics useful in providing nuances to the pictures they compose in their own research.

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