

# Call for Papers: Making Sense of Institutional Changes in the Welfare Professions

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The Nordic welfare sector is under transformation. Trends, such as increasing administration, increased demands of accountability, demands of professionalization, auditing and market orientation – create a fundament for a new, complex and paradoxical professional landscape (Alvehus & Andersson, 2018). The demise, or at least increased questioning, of New Public Management (Hood, 1991) and its programmatic ways of auditing (Power, 2000) opens up for new models for governing the public sector.

The transformation of welfare sector also affects the working conditions in welfare service professions. The Nordic model is known for high taxes and bureaucratic organization, but also for providing universal, general and legitimate social insurance systems of high quality (Esping-Andersen, Gallie, Hemerijck, & Myles, 2002; Korpi & Palme, 1998). The purpose of the model is to make citizens' lives less dependent on the opportunistic whims of the market and reciprocal familial bonds (Loodin, 2018). Nevertheless, the welfare model is costly and requires large public resources (Ahlbäck Öberg & Rothstein, 2014). Reforms, often implemented top down, change operational principles of the welfare system and working conditions for its professions. In the wake of reforms, working conditions for e.g. teachers, police, social and health care workers, also changes – for better, worse or both. At the same time, it is not always that institutional changes impact everyday work as expected. Loose couplings (Orton & Weick, 1990; Weick, 1976), organizational hypocrisy (Brunsson, 1989), contradictions between fundamental principles (Offe, 2018) and lack of managerial legitimacy (Empson & Alvehus, 2019) may lessen the impact of managerial reforms on everyday work. The outcome for everyday work and organizing is ambiguous and contradictory (Alvehus & Andersson, 2018).

The aim of this special issue is to capture and create an understanding for these changes, especially as they are enacted and experienced in the welfare service process. The focus is on how these institutional changes impact the 'coalface' of working life (Alvehus, Eklund, & Kastberg, 2019; Barley, 2008). We call for papers that problematize and discuss aspects of the changing institutional conditions for welfare professions, in particular from a work process point of view. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Professionalization, deprofessionalization, and re-professionalization
- Marketisation
- Hybrid forms of organizing
- Management in and after New Public Management
- Trust and control in and of public services
- Working conditions and work life balance in welfare professions
- Loose couplings and organizational hypocrisy
- Contradictory consequences of organizational change in the welfare professions
- Violence and threat of violence in welfare service professions

- Trans-national comparisons between the Nordic countries
- Intersectionality, gender and segregation
- Quality and efficiency in welfare services
- Social policy and welfare management
- Emotional labour and vulnerability in welfare professions

## Deadline

A letter of interest in participating in the special issue together with an abstract (250-300 words) of the proposed paper should be sent to the guest editors by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The deadline for this Special Issue is November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. We aim to publish the Special Issue in 2021. All submissions will be subject to double-blind peer review in line with the Journal's standards and policy.

## Guest Editors

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