

# 11th NOVO symposium



*Measures to meet Nordic challenges  
for sustainable health care organizations*

*Gothenburg 9-10 November, 2017*



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### **Abstract book**

The 11th Novo symposium

Measures to meet Nordic challenges for sustainable health care organizations

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### Workshop:

#### **“The Nordic model”: historical origins and its significance for the work place dialogue towards increased organizational sustainability**

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The vision of the NOVO network is “a Nordic Model for development of more sustainable production systems in healthcare”. It is based on the assumption that the Nordic countries, through high levels of trust and justice (social capital), have unique opportunities to carry out dialogue-based change processes, cf. “the Nordic Model”. This seems important due to the frequent negative impact of rationalization on ergonomics and vice versa (see previous abstract by Winkel et al). The Nordic model has been the subject of extensive discussions and studies (e.g. Schiller et al., 1993).

The Nordic exceptionalism might first be noticeable in the Middle Ages in the weak feudalism compared to the Continent. The peasants of the North were personally free and owned their land. They paid taxes and were the direct subjects of the Crown. Correspondingly, the nobility was weak.

At the time of the industrial breakthrough in the 19th century, industrial workers were recruited from the landless, often sons and daughters of self-owning farmers. Before the advent of the labour movement, dialogue instead of violence was the trusted way for the popular movements to advance their cause. The international revolutionary orientation of the trade unions was already during the 1890s subordinated to negotiations with national employers.

The collective agreement is the counterpart to the share contract (in Danish: “Andelskontrakt”), which created and structured social capital in the agricultural development in Denmark. The collective agreement also begun its successful spread in Denmark and became dominant in the whole of the North.

The class conflicts took place in countries without major ethnic, cultural and religious splits. In a European comparison class differences were relative moderate. The state had a limited record of active repression and corruption.

To-day we still have the best organized trade unions in the world, close cooperation with important social democratic parties, strong employer organizations, early recognition of trade unions and established policy of collective bargaining with close to total coverage of the labour market and a principle of no-state intervention in industrial conflicts. Thus, the industrial relations in the Nordic countries still seem to be exceptional.

Key research issues are now to further investigate the Nordic Model in terms of:

- ✓ critical prerequisites for a positive environment for dialogues based on workplace agreements,
- ✓ how such insights can be measured and further developed,
- ✓ how they can be made available to a wider audience in an applicable way