Health, employability and social marginalization – the role of work and activation policies

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The Scandinavian countries have a long history of active labor market policy and over the years activation have with some success been used as a method to combat unemployment amongst unemployed with no problems beside not having a job. However activation policy is now permeating social policy within the field of social and economic protection for adults who for medical reasons cannot work. A strong emphasis on paid work as the main source to social participation and inclusion has legitimized work promoting activation targeting socially vulnerable groups such as adults with comprehensive medical problems. Groups that previously were considered unable to work.

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Donnerstag,
20. Oktober 2016
11:00 Uhr
Sitzungssaal 126a
Nevertheless little knowledge exists of the effects and consequences of activation to work targeting people with medical problems. Based on the results from Iben Nørup’s Ph.D. thesis “Work, Disability and Social Marginalization” the speech addresses the effects and social consequences of recent Danish labor market policy reforms targeting adults with existing and extensive health problems.