

## Hard/heart worker

Work intensification in purpose-driven organizations

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**Hard/heart worker - work intensification in purpose driven organisations**

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# Hard/heart worker – Work intensification in purpose-driven organizations

## Abstract

This article investigates the interrelations between purpose-driven organizations' quest for social sustainability and internal work conditions exemplified through experiences with work intensification. A governmentality studies approach is applied to investigate how employees' perceptions of doing greater good in the world also become a productive self-disciplining strategy that potentially increases work intensification and simultaneously result in an instrumentalization of working for greater sustainability. The analysis is based on a case study consisting of in-depth and focus group interviews with management and employees. The intersection between doing greater good in the world and the self-disciplining that comes along with it can, in some situations, create dilemmas that may decrease employee well-being, as it demands continuous negotiation of boundaries between paid work and free time, meaningfulness and work devotion, self-management and work intensification. The paper raises a discussion on how purpose-driven organizations with a sustainability focus should be concerned about internal social sustainability in order to maintain consistency between external purpose and internal well-being of employees.

**Key words:** work intensification, knowledge work, purpose, sustainability, technologies of the self, work devotion

## Introduction

*"You can either finish doing your job and make a difference in the world or you can choose to go home."* A manager in a non-profit purpose-driven organization founded on democratic and humanist values uses this phrase to demonstrate the work intensification dilemma faced by knowledge workers. This paper aims to investigate how this dilemma is played out. First the paper introduces recent research within the two fields of relevance to this paper, i.e. purpose driven organisations and work intensification. Next the analytical strategy is presented and the use of governmentality approach in structuring the analysis is explained. Third, a presentation of the purpose-driven case organisation that we collaborated with for the study is presented in the case section and the methods used to construct the empirical data is mapped out. Then comes the analysis of examples of employee perceptions of working in a purpose-driven organization. In the discussion section we sum up the analysis examples that show the psychosocial consequences of intermingling the organizational purpose with the personal one, that raise the need to discuss how working hard with the heart both may have psychosocial consequences and may challenge organizations' trustworthiness in their definition of a sustainability purpose. Also, inspired by other scholars within the field of organization and management studies it is discussed how new forms of identities in organizations redefine the norms of the individualized society and paves the way for consistently organizing sustainably. Finally, comes the

conclusion where we argue that organizing sustainably is both a political and a subjective question. The sustainability purpose is collective and, on an ideological level, obliges organizations to be consistent in terms of internal sustainability as well.

## (Re-)defining purpose

Purpose is present in nearly every organization's yearly report or mission statement. It has in recent years become revitalized as an important strategy for organizations to enhance trustworthiness and transparency between their mission and their actions (Grant, 2017). Its revitalization is based, on two aspects.

Firstly, on the fact that organizational scholars have previously typically referred to purpose as organizationally and managerially defined. It can in this respect be defined as knowledge about "the statement of a company's moral response to its broadly defined responsibilities." (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1993 in Rey et al. 2019, p. 33). In this definition purpose is broadly understood as the managerially defined reason for the being of the business itself. This simply requires the individuals in the organization to know it. When the organization's moral response is made explicit through its operational development purpose is then defined as action (Rey & Bastons 2019, p. 34) and: "...it becomes important how purpose is translated into actions that redesign work (Grant 2012). However, purpose both as knowledge and as action is still widely managerially defined. Therefore, research in employee perception is to an increasing extent suggesting to explore purpose as a concept focusing on the individual can feed into the organizational levels (Adla et al., 2020; Pircher, 2016; Rey et al., 2019, 11ff).

Secondly, in addition to a purely commercially defined purpose, purpose is to an increasing degree connected with doing good in society that goes beyond the mission statement of the company. Purpose represents an overarching commitment to society that includes broader aims, such as "making a difference," or 'improving lives,' or 'reducing harm' and '[Purpose] acknowledges the interdependence of business and society – [as] one cannot flourish without the other" (Hollensbe et al., 2014). Purpose in this respect has a normative dimension that implies changes in organizational practices and places organizations as part of an eco-system, in the sense that organizations are increasingly called to take responsibility in the societies they operate in.

When an organization calls itself "purpose-driven" we take on board these two aspects of revitalization. Namely, bringing the discussion of purpose to the employee perspective and second to a sustainability agenda. Organizational purpose in this respect thus means that the organization defines itself as committed to doing good not only in relation to its own profitability, but also in acknowledgement to its interdependence to society, and it does so through engaging with the employee perspectives and actions in different levels internally and externally of the organization.

## Linking the organizational purpose with personal purpose

Defining purpose has on a personal level particularly been done through the concept of motivation within the field of psychology through a whole range of different theoretical perspectives, e.g. humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1954, 1971; Herzberg 1959; Alderfer 1972;

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4 Rogers, 1961), existential psychology (Frankl 1959), psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989),  
5 meaning research (Steger, Dik, & Duffy 2012) and not least Self-determination theory (SDT)  
6 involving competence, autonomy and relatedness explaining intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan  
7 1985; Deci, Olafsen & Ryan 2017). Each approach offer important insights into understanding  
8 motivation on a personal level. However, they also contain some limitations in applying them  
9 into an organizational and management setting. For example, Gagné and Deci (2005) forwards  
10 that earlier versions of SDT were mostly tested in laboratory experiments rather than  
11 organizational studies. More practically, many activities in work organizations are not  
12 intrinsically interesting and the use of strategies such as participation and involvement of  
13 employees to enhance intrinsic motivation is not always feasible. Also, often approaches to  
14 personal motivation seem to imply that managers would have to focus on either intrinsic or  
15 external motivation - that is, either on promoting intrinsic motivation through participation and  
16 empowerment while minimizing the use of extrinsic factors or, alternatively, on using rewards  
17 and other extrinsic contingencies to maximize extrinsic motivation while ignoring the  
18 importance of intrinsic motivation.  
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23 While we acknowledge the important contributions of personal motivation approaches and  
24 agreeing a sense of purpose as being integral to psychological well-being (Weidemann 2019,  
25 p.16), giving a person a sense of direction in life (Ryff 1989) and that purpose is an individual's  
26 motivation to do what the person is meant for (Maslow 1954;1971), we also aim to bring an  
27 awareness to the interest of managers has widely been to use personal motivation strategically  
28 in order to increase employees' willingness to work more, and purpose is then communicated  
29 from a top-down perspective to the employees as an important driver in motivating them to  
30 more productivity and work devotion (Murray, 2017).  
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33 Therefore, we argue that the interrelation between organizational and personal purpose can be  
34 fruitfully analysed through investigating employee's perception of the concrete organizational  
35 practices to explore how the personal and organizational purpose are closely and dynamically  
36 interrelated and culturally and discursively defined. Further, it is important to recall that purpose  
37 from an organizational perspective can be, but is not necessarily interrelated with the  
38 individuals in the organization. Which calls for further investigation of the interrelations  
39 between the two. Rey et al. (2019) suggest that the focus on purpose should be strengthened by  
40 a bottom-up approach to defining organizational purpose. as: 'It endows any task with deeper  
41 meaning, while reinforcing the individual's value system.' Rey et al. (2019) develop the  
42 'management logic of purpose' that entails: personal purpose, self-management and unity,  
43 where 'unity' is the idea of connecting individual purpose with that of the organization, inviting  
44 employees to engage with defining not only their own purpose but also with that of the  
45 organization.  
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### 50 Putting sustainability on the purpose agenda

51 The second aspect of redefining purpose has to do with its increasing obligation not only to the  
52 profit and economic growth of the organization itself, but to a broader definition of doing good  
53 in society. Purpose represents the 'why' of our actions and efforts, whether collective or  
54 individual (Sinek, 2009). 'It specifies our contribution to this world and to the society in which  
55 we live' (Rey et al., 2019, p. 4). Organizations are increasingly held accountable for how they  
56 participate in making the world sustainable through the production of their products and  
57 services. It is no longer enough for organizations to state that they are complying with good  
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4 governance and triple bottom line (the three 'p's: people, profit, planet, that Elkington [1997]  
5 came up with 25 years ago).  
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8 Unfortunately, in spite of the greater inclusion of sustainability in the definition of an  
9 organization's purpose, we still see a primary focus on the output of the organization and not  
10 on the human factor or what is also called 'social sustainability' (i.e. well-being, equality and  
11 solidarity; see Dupret & Langergaard, 2020) within the organization. Rather, management and  
12 organization studies have to a great extent looked upon the possible links between profitability  
13 and sustainability as well as the factors that cause organizations to pursue different  
14 sustainability strategies (e.g. Ambec & Lanoie, 2008). Even when there is a concern with how  
15 the formulation of organizational purpose has social effects, these concerns are mostly directed  
16 to the consequences of economic development and resource exploitation (Pfeffer, 2010, p. 36)  
17 rather than the consequences on every employee's health and well-being and the richness of  
18 social life as assessed by participation in meaningful civic activities. Jeffrey Pfeffer (2010)  
19 focuses on employees' health and well-being within sustainable organizations. Inspired by the  
20 concern of balancing the outer sustainability purpose with the inner, this paper focuses on how  
21 employees shape and are shaped by conditions of work in a strongly purpose-driven  
22 organization.  
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## 26 Challenges in the decrease of personal purpose - Work intensification

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29 In the last decades, despite improved living standards and wealth in general, researchers in  
30 industrialized countries have registered a sense of increasing work intensification (Eurofond,  
31 2016). This is surprising because the quality of working life was predicted to improve with  
32 fewer hours of work, more holiday and better work conditions (Green, 2006, p. 66). Since WW2  
33 there has in fact been a decrease in working hours in most industrialized countries. On average  
34 people work far less than in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. And in recent years, working hours have  
35 decreased even further. Despite statistics that show a general decline in working hours, people  
36 report increasing pressure at work: *'This disjuncture between widespread perceptions and the*  
37 *most obvious nationally representative statistic warrants investigation: either perceptions of*  
38 *increasing pressures of work on life are based on a popular illusion, or the perceptions relate*  
39 *to something other than the average of work hours'* (Green, 2006, p. 45–46).  
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43 The quality of work life does not only depend on the amount of work hours, but also the ways  
44 in which the work is conducted, i.e. qualitative and emotional aspects. Since 1991, the Eurofond  
45 has monitored work conditions in Europe. The results are published in the European Working  
46 Conditions Survey (EWCS). One of the seven indicators is work intensity (Eurofond, 2016).  
47 Work intensity is selected as an indicator on the basis of its proven negative impact on the  
48 health and well-being of workers. Regarding work intensity, the report concludes that there is  
49 an increased level of work demands in the job; for instance, working at high speed and under  
50 time pressure while at the same time experiencing emotional demands. This is especially the  
51 case within the group of highly skilled jobs. Evidence supporting the view that work continued  
52 to intensify in the 1990s comes from the 1998 Workplace Employment Relations Survey  
53 (WERS98) (as cited in Green, 2006, p. 56).  
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57 The findings about the development of work intensity are to be specified in relation to the group  
58 of employees and the type of intensity referred to. It is also important to bear in mind that it is  
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4 different from work performance or efficiency<sup>i</sup>. ‘Work intensity’ is an ambiguous term<sup>ii</sup>. First,  
5 one can distinguish the time spent at work from work intensity, meaning the intensity of labour  
6 effort during that time at work. Conceptually, work intensity/effort is the rate of physical and/or  
7 mental input to work tasks during the working day (Green, 2006, p. 48). Additionally, the  
8 Socially Innovative Knowledge Work (SIW) research project<sup>iii</sup> that this paper draws upon  
9 defines work intensification using the following indicators: the amount of work, unforeseen  
10 tasks, increased complexity of skill required to master the job without the allocation of extra  
11 resources, heightened pace and deadlines that are difficult to comply with and constant  
12 connectivity. This is difficult to measure as discrete units, and the experience of work  
13 intensification is subjective. With the reservation of possible measuring difficulties, an increase  
14 has been shown in both work load and work intensity in industrialized countries (e.g. SCEL)<sup>iv</sup>  
15 (Green, 2006, p. 51).  
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19 While the exact definition of increasing work pressure appears to vary, the issue is frequently  
20 linked to ill health, either metaphorically or literally (as an ‘epidemic of stress’ and the epidemic  
21 of ‘hurry sickness’, a virus engineered in California that causes people to fear that ‘time is  
22 running out and it’s driving us crazy’) (Greene, 2006, p. 44). While stress is only the extreme  
23 manifestation of increased pressures at work<sup>v</sup>, there is a certain amount of psychological  
24 evidence about the impact of work overload on well-being (Johnson et al., 1998, cited in  
25 Greene, 2006; Van den Berg & Schalk, 1997; Warr, 1987). Overall, with increased skill  
26 requirements, tight deadlines and increased task flexibility (Gallie et al., 1998), the pace of  
27 work has been blamed for deteriorating workplace health (Cartron & Gollac, 2002, cited in  
28 Greene, 2006, p. 44).  
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32 Specifically within knowledge work, work intensification is increasingly self-driven and  
33 influenced by subjectification processes in the context of trends of individualization and self-  
34 management that explain this groups’ increased experience with work intensification (Pérez-  
35 Zapata et al., 2016). This is in line with the so-called ‘stress of higher status’ hypothesis, that  
36 suggests that higher-level occupations may suffer increased stress because of additional job  
37 demands, work-family conflicts and exposure to resources that might exacerbate demands  
38 (Damaske, Zawadzki, & Smyth, 2016; Koltai & Schieman, 2015; Schieman & Glavin, 2016;  
39 Schieman et al., 2006). What we learn from these findings is that, in spite of knowledge  
40 workers’ autonomy, learning abilities, independence and material and symbolic rewards such  
41 as being part of a highly acknowledged organization, there seems to be an increasing tendency  
42 for knowledge workers to take individual responsibility for their extensive quantitative and  
43 qualitative workload and work intensity. Consistent with the ‘stress of higher status’ hypothesis,  
44 Michel (2014) and Lupu and Empson (2015) have highlighted how highly qualified knowledge  
45 workers with apparent high levels of autonomy work beyond their limits, burning out and  
46 severely harming their health and personal relationships. These workers frequently refer to their  
47 activities and efforts as self-chosen, an emerging contradiction that is beginning to be known  
48 as the ‘autonomy paradox’ (Lupu & Empson, 2015; Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013,  
49 cited in Pérez-Zapata, 2016; Michel, 2014). This we find particularly interesting in relation to  
50 finding out whether there is a similar connection to why knowledge workers seem to work  
51 harder in purpose-driven organizations.  
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56 Classical critical management and organization literature has addressed similar paradoxes in  
57 the past. Particularly well known is Burawoy’s (1979) Manufacturing Consent, where workers  
58 treat the labour process and its piece rate system as a shop floor ‘game’, which, in turn,  
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4 generates feelings of being in control that end up contributing to an intensification of work  
5 (Burawoy, 1979). Moving towards a knowledge work context in engineering, the ethnographic  
6 study by Kunda (1992) discusses the so-called normative controls and how maintaining a  
7 corporate culture was the way to get workers to want what the organization wanted them to  
8 want (i.e. full commitment and sustained effort). This is also in line with Bunting's (2004)  
9 'willing slaves' thesis. These landmark studies, carried out in different contexts, suggest that it  
10 is not autonomy, but a perception of autonomy in the workplace that seems to be the critical  
11 factor that shapes workers' attitudes and sustains work intensification (Peters, Waterman, &  
12 Jones, 1982; Willmott, 1993, cited in Pérez-Zapata, 2016).  
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16 It follows that work intensification is seen through the experience of not only quantitative  
17 accumulation of tasks and responsibilities but also through the balancing of the increased  
18 complexity in the demands of self-management in relation to a sustainability purpose. As  
19 employees are subjected to an individual responsibility to understand and manage an  
20 exploration of the self while handling the norms of self-exploitation that a self-management  
21 culture creates (Muhr et al., 2012), the moral imperatives of doing good creates different kinds  
22 of social dynamics to be handled.  
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#### 25 26 27 28 Analytical strategy – Technologies of self aiming for the collective good

29 In order to operationalize the intersection between the organizational and personal purpose  
30 through the experiences of work intensification further, this paper uses a poststructuralist  
31 governmentality perspective (Cruikshank, 1996; Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1982, 2008; Rose,  
32 1999). This means, that to the extent that employees internalize the organizational purpose  
33 through organizational practices and disciplining techniques, it affords them an opportunity to  
34 transcend the definition of purpose themselves, giving them new ways of positioning and  
35 manage themselves.  
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38 Foucault used 'governmentality' to denote a diffuse and heterogeneous form of decentred  
39 power that, in various ways, makes available a possible action field by promoting and restraining  
40 specific behaviours and understandings rather than determining them (Foucault, 1982, 2008).  
41 When Foucault uses 'governmentality' in relation to neoliberalism or advanced liberal states,  
42 the term refers to the multiple ways in which societies are organized with decentred power,  
43 where citizens play an active part in their self-government (Foucault, 2008). Governmentality  
44 is, simply put, the organized practices (mentalities, rationalities and techniques) through which  
45 subjects are governed and come to govern themselves. This active self-governing is inherent in  
46 Foucault's definition of governmentality which is also widely quoted in the expression  
47 'conduct of conduct' (Dean, 1999, p. 10) and technologies of power  
48 characterizing governmentality as a diffuse power that works 'at a distance' (Burchell et al.,  
49 2003), crucial in the identity building of the devoted self-managed knowledge worker.  
50 Technologies of power are those 'technologies imbued with aspirations for the shaping of  
51 conduct in the hope of producing certain desired effects and averting certain undesired ones'  
52 (Rose, 1999, p. 52). Technologies of self are technologies of power applied on an individual  
53 level that reduce the scope of explicit government on individuals. They refer to the practices  
54 and strategies by which individuals represent to themselves their own ethical self-  
55 understanding.  
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4 In organization and management studies, a governmentality approach is often used to analyse  
5 self-management and employees' understanding of themselves in relation to their working lives  
6 (e.g. Bardon et al., 2012). A paradoxical saying is that the more self-control and freedom  
7 employees experience, the more productive they are and they will in turn give more of  
8 themselves (Bains, 2007, p. 241, cited in Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p. 569). When working in a  
9 purpose-driven organization, the norms of sustainability become part of the moral imperatives  
10 of conduct formulated in the technologies of power, and likewise in the technologies of self that  
11 may raise new types of inherent conflicts.  
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15 Indeed, we find signs in the narratives of doing good through work that raise new kinds of  
16 conflicts that are strongly connected with the previously stated dilemmas of knowledge work  
17 of self-control, freedom and work intensification. Further, the technologies of self that are  
18 practised through responsabilization, in particular, seem to be of central importance when  
19 working in purpose-driven organizations. In other words, argumentations of doing good for  
20 others both in general (in a sustainable sense) and towards colleagues become key in  
21 understanding the dynamics of technologies of self, where they come to take responsibility for  
22 others but potentially also creating intensified conditions for themselves. The analytical themes  
23 are structured around these potential conflicts and also show examples of staff that thrive in  
24 these dynamics.  
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27 The analysis will explore what kind of practices, self-managing technologies and organizational  
28 narratives make employees work harder in ways that are simultaneously consistent or raise new  
29 dilemmas/paradoxes in relation to the sustainability purpose of the organization.  
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## 32 33 Case

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35 Several case organizations are involved in the research project, SIW. The case organization  
36 providing empirical material for this paper is a large non-profit organization working with  
37 cultural events and concerts. It is built around a huge annual event arranging a big music  
38 festival. The organization was established in the 70s and, ever since its origin, has been founded  
39 on values of sustainability, democracy and non-profit. It is a social enterprise, as the profit  
40 solely serves social sustainability purposes, such as diversity, solidarity and empowering  
41 projects, and this is an inherent part of the values of the organization.  
42

43 In the part of the organization that we are investigating, there are around 95 members of staff  
44 (both knowledge workers and other professionals, most of them with a high degree of self-  
45 management and with self-governing teams). In addition to paid employees there are also  
46 30,000 volunteers, of whom 2,450 volunteer more than 100 hours during the entire year (and  
47 not only during or coming up to the big yearly music festival). In addition to scaling up and  
48 down in employees in relation to the annual cycle and peaking in summertime with the biggest  
49 event of the year, the organization offers coaching, consultancy work, helping with logistics for  
50 big events, etc. The staff is rather heterogeneous; for example, young newly graduated  
51 academics work alongside senior scaffolders. As such, employees vary greatly in terms of both  
52 age and educational background. The balancing of social relations and collaborative decision-  
53 making processes inside the organization and with stakeholders outside is of central importance  
54 in nearly all corners of the organization. Much of the work being done is operative, while  
55 business development, strategy, working with volunteers and community building is  
56 developing and requiring strategic independent and analytical competences central to  
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4 knowledge work (Alvesson, 2001). The values of inclusion, diversity and democracy, for  
5 instance, that underlie the organization's purpose play a key role both in attracting employees  
6 and in the daily work, establishing a sense of meaningfulness among employees. The case  
7 organization is an interesting case because the social sustainability purpose that is embedded in  
8 the case puts at stake how much you do at work, while at the same time imposing a limit on  
9 what changes one can achieve in the world.  
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## 12 13 Methods

14 The focus of the study was defined in close collaboration with the case organization. The  
15 interest was directed at the work conditions and collaborations of employees with different  
16 occupational status, such as casual and permanent staff. The actual role of working in a strongly  
17 purpose-driven organization became a primary concern when analysing the material, as it  
18 became clear that the organizational purpose strongly related to issues of work intensification  
19 and motivation.  
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22 The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted from May 2019 to January 2020. The case study  
23 involves informal observations of employees at meetings with different stakeholders and  
24 organizational seminars and generally following employees around. Subsequent semi-  
25 structured interviews with employees and management (N=15) were conducted with both  
26 middle managers and employees that were all classified as knowledge workers with substantial  
27 elements of independent and self-managed work tasks. The interviews were based on and  
28 qualified through the field work observations, informal conversations and research within  
29 particularly the field of self-management in knowledge work. Analytical workshops were  
30 conducted as focus group interviews with three managers and three employees in order to  
31 qualify analytical patterns and to develop organizational interventions in the form of digital  
32 consulting games.  
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36 All the material has been treated according to research ethical standards and anonymously. In  
37 the interviews, we focused on issues related to employment status, work intensification,  
38 organizational culture, well-being, collaboration and psychosocial work environment from the  
39 point of view of the individual staff member. The interview material was transcribed verbatim.  
40 Initially we read the transcripts and identified relevant themes and conducted a thematic  
41 analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). During the analytical process, we were inspired by the  
42 empirical material and drew on our theory, and we generated categories such as 'value', 'job  
43 insecurity', 'emotional labour', and 'invisible work' in the coding process. They were all  
44 categories relating to the complexity of the interrelation between personal motivation and  
45 organizational purpose. As such, we identified purpose as both a personal motivation and  
46 organizational practices that pose key dilemmas in understanding work intensification  
47 demanded of all staff. From that, we formulated a coding manual in the team focusing  
48 particularly on a set of dilemmas relating to the intersections between purpose and experiences  
49 with work intensification. The manual and analytical categories were introduced to a selection  
50 of employees in order to secure validity and relevance of the research. The entire material was  
51 coded by four researchers working in the research team. The broader empirical material for this  
52 study, including observation notes taken while shadowing employees' work in informal settings  
53 (Bruni, 2005), interview transcriptions, documents, the spatial set up, movements and gestures,  
54 etc. (Dupret, 2010), provides background knowledge regarding the organizational framework  
55 in which the employees in the study work over an extended period of time (Davies, 2000). This  
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4 data has provided rich material for the case description and qualifies the subsequent qualitative  
5 analysis.  
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## 9 10 Analysis

11 The analysis is structured around themes of how doing good is shaped by technologies of power  
12 and technologies of self that affect experiences with work intensification in different ways. The  
13 themes point to how employees negotiate these technologies of power and adapt them into  
14 personal technologies of self. The analysis is structured around illustrative examples of how the  
15 most existential technologies of self are connected to work intensification. Further, it seems  
16 that these strategies can be organized, on the one hand, into dynamics that result in  
17 unsustainable conditions for staff, and on the other, examples of the constructive implications  
18 of these dynamics. The analysis will be structured first showing examples of unstable  
19 conditions and subsequently with a section of positive examples. The table below aims to give  
20 an overview of the highlighted empirical material used in the analysis. It also comprises  
21 additional examples (non-highlighted) that qualify the points of analysis that have been  
22 developed. This is to show that the analytical points have been developed on the basis of a  
23 wider empirical material than the singular extracts. Thus, we have chosen to elaborate on an  
24 exemplary selection of excerpts in order to qualitatively dive into the complexity of the  
25 interrelations between purpose and work intensification, rather than increase the quantitative  
26 argumentation. The theme of this article is the interrelation between work intensification and  
27 working within an organization with a sustainability purpose. It should also be mentioned that  
28 the case study interviews comprise more examples of both work intensification without being  
29 related to sustainability and sustainability without being related to work intensification.  
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35 [Table 1: data structure – to be inserted here]  
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## 39 Constant connectivity is ‘part of the game’

40 Doing ‘good’ somehow justifies long working hours and high working speed. Work-life  
41 balance has been swept away by constant connectivity (Alvesson, 2017) and, not least for  
42 knowledge workers, the autonomy paradox (Mazmanian et al., 2013), involving a high degree  
43 of work devotion in exchange for inspiring and purposeful work. Here, everyone seems to be  
44 very well aware of the structural conditions of work. Working in this purpose-driven  
45 organization has a long tradition of participatory involvement of different stakeholders and  
46 provides employees with a community of collaboration between different sectors. The working  
47 hours that the different sectors such as NGOs, volunteers and the public sector require are  
48 different. The collaborating requirements of work thus impose certain temporal conditions of  
49 availability on employees.  
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53 *Bodil, short-term contract: (...) I'm also sometimes kept in late and have a guilty  
54 conscience about sending people an email. Because sometimes the emails come in  
55 practically 24 hours a day. And when you are out for dinner, it is just stressful and you  
56 cannot just leave ...*

57 *Interviewer: And it's also on Saturday and on weekends and evenings and...*  
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4 *Bodil: Yes. And then adding all the contact with the volunteers. They work on the*  
5 *festival in periods when we are off from the festival. But really, if you can't be bothered,*  
6 *then I also think it is the wrong place to be, actually.*  
7

8 *Interviewer: Yes. So you have to be prepared to ...*  
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10 *Bodil: Yes, there are sometimes things on weekends too, and there are meetings in the*  
11 *evenings. And I have often spoken on the phone with volunteers and it is beyond normal*  
12 *... But that is the heart of the organization. So it would be a bit silly if you couldn't be*  
13 *bothered. But it is actually also in your contract, I actually think that you have to be*  
14 *available on some weekends and some odd hours and the whole festival, it would be a*  
15 *slightly silly time to counterbalance overtime. Although there are many who joke about*  
16 *it.*  
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19 Work intensification is something employees should be prepared for in this job and, to some  
20 extent, this is also formalized in the contracts. Evening and weekend availability is necessary  
21 to be in contact with other stakeholders and volunteers (that are only available out of regular  
22 office hours). These aspects involve a legitimization of work intensification during the planning  
23 of the biggest event of the organization in summertime. It is also made explicit that it is possible  
24 to counterbalance overtime in periods with fewer deadlines. The counterbalancing requires a  
25 contract that exceeds the period of high work intensity. Employees, however, express that the  
26 development of the organization is creating increasingly fewer possibilities for counteracting  
27 periods of high demand, as the organization, to an increasing extent, takes on board short-term  
28 projects the whole year around. When constant availability becomes a work condition and part  
29 of the norm, employees come to take it as a natural state of affairs, maybe even to the extent  
30 that it is internalized as something 'which is socially worthy, statistically average, scientifically  
31 healthy and personally desirable' (Rose, 1999, p. 76). While we see in the excerpt that there is  
32 a certain element of humour and ironic distancing from this norm of constant availability, as  
33 there are 'many who joke about it', employees and the colleagues referred to do work  
34 accordingly. So the norm becomes an important aspect of normalizing that is achieved by  
35 working on oneself here through both being ironic and distancing oneself from the ones that do  
36 not comply with this norm: 'if you can't be bothered [being constantly available – ed.] ... it is  
37 the wrong place to be, actually,' implying that the others are 'wrong'. Technologies of self are  
38 often enforced through the calculation of shame (Rose, 1999, p. 73). Even though the excerpt  
39 above does not directly impose shame on either the person explaining the situation or the  
40 abstract Other that potentially does not comply with the norm, the employee does create a  
41 distance from those who do not comply. It is a way of justifying to oneself that the conditions  
42 of work are acceptable (and normal). Through emotional distancing from others, we are  
43 governed into conforming with technologies of power which build on norms of being active,  
44 self-sustaining individuals contributing to the paradigm of economic growth (Rose, 1999).  
45 Being constantly available adds to this 'normality' and working in democratic and purpose-  
46 driven ways seemingly just adds to this normality.  
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## 52 Proving oneself to be 'sustainable' increases work intensity in the competitive 53 organization 54

55 Working with a personal purpose is closely linked to devotion to work (Barley & Kunda, 1992).  
56 In an organization where stable traditional hierarchies are to a large extent replaced by a high  
57 degree of collaborative (self-managed) measures implementing post-bureaucratic practices,  
58 these typically involve a convincing rhetoric that increases employees' sense of belonging and  
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responsibility (Bardon et al., 2012). They operate as ‘a control strategy based upon internalization of rules’ (Grey, 1999, p. 575). Willmott (1993) suggests this is to enforce a discourse of empowerment, ‘one which attempts to convince individuals that it is in their best interest to become “enterprising” subjects, working better and faster in order to gain social recognition and self-esteem by taking the best advantage of the opportunities offered...’ (du Gay, 1996, 2000; Salaman & Storey, 2008, cited in Bardon et al., 2012). However, at times opportunities arise at a cost of emotional stress.

*Sif, tenure track position: No. (...) I think that it is very much related to it being my first real job. So this is my first full-time job after I graduated. I felt I had to prove ..., that's not my original field of expertise – sustainability. I could do a lot of things, but I felt like I had to go out and prove a lot. Many crave a job [in this organization – ed.] and there are many who really want to work with this field (...) And I was like... if I'm not good enough, then somebody else will come and take my place, so with such a feeling I felt I had to prove something. It's turned around for me now.*

This employee got her first tenure track job within the organization after several years of volunteering followed by short-term contracts. However, she expresses that the sense of pressure and work intensification can be related to her not feeling secure about her own professional worth and having a highly attractive position. From the subsequent conversation with this person, we know this has changed. But it has taken time, more time than the duration of the first paid contract allowed for. Insecurity in work conditions, whether contract-based or based on the high level of responsibility allocated knowledge workers that are new in the position, is in some aspects incompatible with short-term project organization, and may increase work intensification. Also, what we see in this example is that the commitment to the organizational purpose is a constant balancing between work requirements and the inner reflection of what is necessary to create the actual fulfilment of the sustainability that the organization is aiming for in its purpose. It shows that working in a purpose-driven organization is highly culturally valued. This creates a competitive infra-structure that adds to the incentives of working harder. Employees know that competitors are queuing up to get their jobs.

### Loving working with the right values

In an governmentality approach, ways for employees to be set free can be seen as an invitation to express one’s true self by breaking the traditional work/non-work boundary, particularly by being playful and having fun at work (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p. 570), and engage in deeply affective relationships with one’s work (Donzelot, 1991; McRobbie, 2002). But rather than proposing a new type of neoliberal self-managing techniques that are organized around individually defined needs of flexibility and remuneration, we see in the case-organization that the love for work is ethically argued as related to a common good. In other words ‘Best places to work’ in this case tap into the individualistically defined needs of having a job with the ethically correct (socially sustainable) values of collectivity and solidarity. ‘Employees are encouraged to be themselves rather than normatively conform to an externally engineered, homogeneous and organizationally based identity’ (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p. 570).

*Karen, tenure track position: Right, for me it is that I'm totally emotional about my employment. That's probably also why it was so hard for me staying in banking. I had a clash of values (...) I witnessed so much greed. I have a total love relationship with [the case organization – ed.]. And that is also very unhealthy, right! (laughs). (...) I have such enthusiastic colleagues (...) everything has to be bigger, wilder, better, more fun.*



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4 Interviewer: *Why is that a challenge?*

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6 Karen: *Because we are only the number of people we are, with the hands and heads*  
7 *available.*

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10 To some extent, middle-class status nowadays rests upon the idea that work is something to  
11 which one has a passionate attachment (McRobbie, 2016) Workers declared this kind of  
12 personal investment in work, despite long hours and low returns (McRobbie, 1998). Indeed, the  
13 idea of 'pleasure in work', as Donzelot (1991) puts it, marks out the institutional terrain for new  
14 forms of post-welfare governmentality. The argument posed by Donzelot is that when people  
15 love their job, the role of the trade unions is diminished, reflecting the dismantling of organized  
16 labour. Donzelot sees the enriching 'self-management' strategies developed by employers in  
17 the same light. However, it seems that individual liberal values that are based on  
18 entrepreneurship, individual choice, personal remuneration and glory, for example, is not the  
19 primary focus here. The employee quoted above quit her former job due to conflicting values.  
20 The emotional ties and happiness with the job and normative control are closely connected with  
21 the ethical values of doing good, at the expense of working hard. The choice of a job one can  
22 be 'in love with' is connected to universal social sustainability values that make it more  
23 important than the organization itself. The flipside of this is that it creates work intensification  
24 when love is translated into an extensive work load.  
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### 29 Working hard with the heart may create invisible criticism

30 In spite of new identities with a solidarity focus, when the personal sense of purpose is totally  
31 integrated with that of the organizational purpose it risks nullifying criticism directed towards  
32 both what is healthy in terms of the individual and in terms of how work conditions should be  
33 handled. When organizations have a strong sustainability purpose, this may be glorified in ways  
34 such that employees tend to initially accept poorer work conditions and maybe even prevent  
35 them from raising organizational resistance and objections.  
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38 *K: Why is it not promising the moon to the employees [glorious work conditions –ed.]?*

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40 *Christian: Because I think it's hard. (...) I think many people are driven by a vocation*  
41 *or they maybe started getting involved as a hobby, or interest, or volunteering, or*  
42 *something that drives them to do something. They find that when you work with it full*  
43 *time, it is not necessarily as great as they had hoped it would be. Or even if it is, then*  
44 *it's just bloody hard and it suddenly becomes a bit more mundane. And I think, (...) the*  
45 *wages are not so good. I do not have a complete overview of it, but my feeling is that*  
46 *the salaries are not so good. Which is fair enough because it is an NGO – well, it isn't*  
47 *really, but a no-profit organization and they distribute the money. So you might be a*  
48 *little pressed on the salary and you have worked hard and maybe you are still a*  
49 *volunteer next door and therefore work even harder for more than 37 hours or*  
50 *something. And there my intuition tells me that there may be some people around who*  
51 *feel frustrated about some of those things. Or finally they accomplish [work tasks –*  
52 *ed.] what they want and then they realize that it might not be as great as they had*  
53 *hoped.*  
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55 As we have seen, technologies of power have been used to manage employees, and purpose  
56 and productivity have traditionally been closely interlinked (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009).  
57 However, if general work conditions in terms of long working hours and requests for late night  
58 availability and poorer salary are worse than in similar organizations, employees may start  
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4 thinking about whether investing one's true self is 'worth it', and this in spite the strong purpose  
5 of the organization. Expressing this imbalance we see as a critical reflectivity that is important  
6 in sustaining a feeling of fairness internally in the organization and thus also an important  
7 practice in nurturing a sense of internal sustainable purpose. However, if the criticism is made  
8 invisible either through lack of reflective internal practices or simply because employees are  
9 only working intensively and on fragmented projects (and are therefore not involved in the  
10 strategic development of the organization and the nurturing of solidarity among colleagues),  
11 this potentially takes away the possibility of criticism and democratic dialogue. This endangers  
12 the relationship between the organizational purpose and individual employees' sense of  
13 purpose. And, not least, it makes it impossible to nurture grounds of 'productive resistance' that  
14 is concerned with concrete activities that aim to voice demands and interests that are usually  
15 not taken into account in management decisions (Courpasson et al., 2012). The goal of  
16 productive resistance is to foster the development of alternative managerial practices that are  
17 likely to benefit the organization as a whole (Courpasson & Dany, 2009).

### 22 Working with sustainability boosts your self-esteem, making you work harder 23 (for others)

24 For some people, doing good and doing it a lot seems to boost their self-esteem. Self-esteem is  
25 a practical and productive technology of the self that is linked to the technology of power. It is  
26 a technology in the sense that it is a specialized knowledge of how to esteem ourselves in order  
27 to estimate, calculate, measure, evaluate, discipline, and judge ourselves (Cruikshank, 1996, p.  
28 273).

29 *Interviewer: But I'm still curious about this thing with acceleration and intensification.  
30 Is it about getting a boost, a personal self-esteem boost because people want you, or is  
31 it because you're curious, or because you can't say no or...*

32 *Christian, short-term employee: (...) So there is both self-esteem and some self-  
33 confidence that comes from interacting with other people and succeeding at what one  
34 is doing and getting status in some way. For sure that is part of it. And then there is  
35 something about me liking being busy and I want to make a difference for other people.  
36 I want to change the world so that it becomes more positive and I believe this is only  
37 possible if I constantly struggle to reach a bit higher somehow. I really want to reach  
38 paying the top rate of tax because I then give more to the community. And not only  
39 because I want to make a lot of money. Generally I just want to influence the places  
40 where I am, because then I can do things better.*

41 Personal motivation, understanding of career and a greater purpose through 'changing the world  
42 in order for it to become more positive' and 'paying the top rate of tax' (the level of taxation in  
43 Denmark depends on level of income, the highest rate of income tax being 70%) and 'giving  
44 more to the community' drive this employee to work tremendously hard. In line with research  
45 by Web (2004) and Fleming & Sturdy (2009, p. 570), we find individualism, entrepreneurial  
46 risk-taking and self-reliance. This employee does not simply formulate the personal purpose in  
47 close concordance with the rhetoric of unitary values of the organizational purpose, nor as an  
48 ambition of economic benefit alone, but also aims to reach a point in his career that would allow  
49 him to have greater influence to 'be able to do things in a better way.' Purpose at both a personal  
50 and an organizational level is closely linked with work intensification in this example. The  
51 reasoning is that the more he works, the more he can make a difference to others. The  
52 subjectification is individualistic, but the goal is solidarity. The organizational purpose  
53 complies with his own purpose. And that is why he is there. Not the other way around. However,  
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4 it requires work intensification. One can argue that this type of self-technology is nurtured by  
5 a kind of self-assessment that is dependent on how much good one is doing to others, rather  
6 than simply feeling that one is the kind of person one is satisfied with showing the world. Lemke  
7 (2001, p. 202) points to the fact the tools to enhance self-esteem are to continuously be  
8 measured, judged and disciplined in relation to collective goals. In this example, the collective  
9 goals are both ethically and existentially determined and go beyond the culture of the  
10 organization, whilst also being in alignment with it. They are determined by norms of social  
11 sustainability, i.e. collaboration with volunteers, solidarity, equality (Dupret & Langergaard,  
12 2020), that are part of this particular organization's culture and practices. This self-technology  
13 of self-esteem also allows ourselves to be governable from a distance, because the individual  
14 takes on the responsibility to govern himself nurtured by the quest for boosting self-esteem.  
15 While it is often argued that self-esteem in neoliberal societies is closely tied to ideologies of  
16 neoliberalism through consumption (self-help books, videos to be purchased continuously),  
17 boosting self-esteem through aspirations and actions of doing good in relation to others does  
18 not make the individualistic and measurement dimension of self-disciplining practices go away  
19 but does also create technologies/motivation of solidarity. We see here an extension of how  
20 self-esteem is not only connected to personal, individualistically defined motivation, but also  
21 to a solidarity and sustainability agenda and a wish to contribute to a common good.  
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### 27 The organization has to give something back

28 Even though some employees can be silenced, research within the field of resistance in  
29 organizations suggests that in some situations employees can influence top management  
30 decisions and produce eventual changes (Courpasson et al., 2012). Understanding oneself as  
31 able to criticize and demand changes is, in some respect, in accordance with an understanding  
32 of oneself as being authentic and entrepreneurial. It is one's own personal freedom and  
33 acknowledgement that is at stake.  
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37 *Astrid: [When negotiating my freelance contract – ed.] it was a requirement that I had*  
38 *to be physically present/sit around and participate [without being remunerated for the*  
39 *extra time spent – ed.]. Nope, I couldn't be bothered. Then I preferred to assert myself,*  
40 *then they would get the entire 'me'. But reciprocally, I also want something in return,*  
41 *right [i.e. a tenure track contract – ed.].*  
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45 Even if we see examples of the muting of internal organizational criticism, others do find the  
46 strength to demand better conditions of work. However, this is not necessarily possible in all  
47 organizations on an international level. There may be great cultural differences at stake. In a  
48 Danish organization with flat hierarchical patterns of authority and long traditions of  
49 collaborative work procedures, it may be a real possibility that individual employees raise their  
50 voice in terms of demanding consistency and balancing between organizational ambitions of  
51 sustainability and internal conditions of work.  
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### 54 Discussion

55 The analysis has shown that organizational culture adds to a normativity that makes employees  
56 turn constant connectivity into normality. More specifically, the analysis has focused on  
57 examples where employees express forms of work intensification that result in creating states  
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of constant connectivity to the extent that nearly all social life is affected by the ‘purpose’ of work and how being driven by a purpose may also nullify criticism within the organization. On the other hand, the analysis has also shown how purpose-driven work is a way of boosting self-esteem, where a new dimension of the individualized self-realization project is added to a solidarity dimension and employees at times find the strength to demand better work conditions with positive results. These examples not only show the psychosocial consequences of intermingling the organizational purpose with the personal one, but also accentuate the need to discuss how working hard with the heart may have psychosocial consequences and to challenge organizations’ trustworthiness in their definition of sustainability purpose.

When working with purpose-driven organizations, normative control seems at least in some situations to have different effects. The nature and role of normative control has been discussed in modern liberal societies and organizations. Opinions are divided. Optimists welcome the greater variation in identities and lifestyles in the workplace and suggest that employees are not only task-empowered, but also ‘existentially empowered’ (Bains, 2007, cited in Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p. 571; Peters, 2003; Pink, 2001). To others, such developments reflect organizational control assuming a laissez-faire, instrumental form (Kunda & Ailon-Souday, 2005, cited in Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p. 571). Working with the heart is adding to self-technologies of freedom; there may be a risk of increased normative control, as we have seen in the analysis. The paradox is that governmentality implies societies that force individuals to be free: control and intervention becomes the entire basis of freedom. Freedom must be manufactured by control rather than simply ‘counterweighted’ by it (Foucault, 2008, p. 67).

However, it may be neither one nor the other. As described initially, a sustainability purpose is becoming more and more central to motivating employees. An example is organization scholar Laloux (2014) describing how the balancing of individual motivation and doing greater good through his theory of human consciousness development related to organizing should be the balancing ambition of future organizations. In Laloux’s (2014) recipe of the future of work, employees are driven by genuine attachment to the purpose they serve. Also, inspired by social movement theory (e.g. Maeckelbergh, 2009) and research in alternative organizations (Parker et al., 2014), Reedy et al. (2016) investigate new forms of identities in organizations that are re-siting the norms of an individualized society. Through their study they find that identity work extends beyond the dualistic struggle between control and resistance via identification/dis-identification processes that are the common focus in organization studies (Mumby, 2005, p. 1567). They suggest that the individuated self has the capacity to pursue its own projects in collaboration with others. The individuated self appears to be behaving agentially while actually conforming to external social influences (Reedy et al., 2016, p. 1556). In this light, practices of self-management suggest that ‘normative control’ put forward by governmentality scholars acquires a whole new meaning. It is not less productive in producing disciplined work-intensified selves, but when committed to a sustainability purpose it is no longer just an individualistic self-realization project. It has a collective, solidarity dimension.

## Conclusion

This paper has discussed how purpose-driven organizations with a sustainability focus in their daily practices are related to work intensification among knowledge workers.



We identify technologies of self in the analysis summed up in the following.

- Working in such an organization is 'life' itself. With no time for hobbies, work becomes one's existential goal, and you bring to work your 'true self'. It is 'part of the game', and it normalizes constant availability
- Working in a purpose-driven organization becomes highly attractive, but also makes invisible the emotion work (fear of losing one's job to another competent worker) and work intensification.
- Purpose increases the justification of work intensification, which is a better narrative to oneself (and others) and may explain the disappearance of internal criticism of the organization and potentially also increase normative control.
- Work intensity is justified by making a 'difference' to others and boosts one's self-esteem.
- Some employees obtain better work conditions using work intensification and own competences as arguments to rest their case.

The analysis shows that the quest for (sustainable) purpose of organizations is closely tied to acknowledging workers as resourceful and inherently valuable human beings. Employees work boundlessly. It may produce a type of work intensification resulting in stress and poorer well-being. This adds to the point that purpose-driven organizations should also take a closer look at their internal sustainability.

How can we theorize about purpose in this light? To make a difference in the world is a political question. Or is it purely subjective? We argue that it is both, as we see that sense of purpose can be closely linked with the organization, but also to a more universal definition of doing good in society. The individualized project of realization is connected to other normative ideals of doing good that are collective.

It seems that maintaining a high work intensification is also nurtured by the technologies of power embedded in the organization. The organization is founded on non-profit, democratizing and inclusive values and, from its origin, it is shaped by dedicated and passionate people who volunteer. The culture of collaborating with volunteers shapes a normative ideal in the organization in which paid staff also have to be willing to invest much of their time and energy, as well as personal and social investment.

The sustainability purpose is collective and, on an ideological level, obliges organizations to be consistent in terms of internal sustainability as well. Perhaps naively, one can say that organizations that have a purely commercial purpose can more easily get away with technologies of power in the organization that nurture hyper-individualism and individual freedom. Sustainability requires technologies of the self that are solidary and not purely individualistic, as sustainability, in its premise, is collective and necessitates collaboration with others, and as already mentioned, the individuated self appears to be behaving agentically while actually conforming to external social influences (Reedy et al., 2016, p. 1556). Practices of democracy, multiple stakeholders, and solidarity are strong elements of the materialization of the organizational purpose. But how does employee work intensification mirror this? As we have seen, work intensification tends to be individualized and justified on an individual basis, very much in contrast to the intentions of solidarity and inclusion put forward by the organizational culture and concrete interventions with local initiatives of social entrepreneurship. Additionally, employees reach out to each other, and help and cover for each



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4 other when needed. We argue that the employee community serves a crucial role in developing  
5 the close interconnection between the technologies of power and technologies of the self. The  
6 structural formulated purpose of sustainability becomes intimately interwoven with the sense  
7 of self. In the self-management literature, there tends to be a mainly individualistic focus on  
8 how self-technologies are objects of control or intrinsically motivation strategies of the  
9 individual. Organization and management studies may become inspired by practices, especially  
10 within strongly purpose-driven organizations, in order to develop new understandings of self  
11 that are committed to a collective and solidary external purpose, closely connected to social  
12 dynamics in society and outside the organization itself. At least we found that the investigation  
13 of how the purpose (of social sustainability) that inherently contains commitments to the  
14 collective is translated into intimate technologies of self.  
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18 Where does this leaves knowledge workers with a high degree of self-management and  
19 autonomy? Slightly optimistically, we argue that the kinds of purposes where sustainability is  
20 the aim are normative in the sense that the collective good becomes an important dimension of  
21 its definition. It is no longer only existentially individually defined, and no longer a solely  
22 individual responsibility. However, certain dimensions, such as responsibility for work  
23 intensification, are only to some extent part of the organizational consciousness, as it is written  
24 in work contracts that, in theory, people can take time off after peak periods. On the individual  
25 level, the internalization of sustainability purposes provides a fruitful sense of meaning and  
26 work devotion but potentially also brings about stress and structural disadvantages in  
27 employees' private lives, such as lack of holiday, decrease in social relations outside work, no  
28 leisure activities outside work, etc. One may argue that it potentially creates a totalitarian sense  
29 of solidarity.  
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33 Hardt and Negri (2000, 2004) argue that the emerging predominance of immaterial labour will  
34 provide a further impetus to a shift away from traditional work organizations and towards self-  
35 organizing networks. The possibility of renegotiation of one's identity is to be seen in contrast  
36 to prevalent studies within management and organization studies, where the definition of  
37 identity tends to be linked to an approach to individualization. The individualization thesis has  
38 influenced how organization studies understands identity: i.e., as a precarious biographical  
39 project vulnerable to capture by ready-made identities and therefore subject to managerial  
40 control (Collinson, 2003; Whittle, Mueller, & Mangan, 2009). Work organizations are seen as  
41 arenas where individuals embrace, modify or resist such identities (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002;  
42 Beech, 2008) and are often seen as sites of determination rather than autonomy (Barratt, 2003;  
43 du Gay, 1996; Hodgson, 2000; Rose, 2000). This may sound totalitarian, and this paper suggest  
44 nuancing the above-mentioned conclusions slightly, as certain technologies of self related to  
45 sustainability purpose seem to be a move away from hyper-individualism. With inspiration  
46 from Reedy et al. (2016), this extends organization theory beyond this limited view. In our  
47 study, one can argue that employees apply a form of politics in ways where normativity does  
48 not praise the individual freedom alone, but extends beyond the local sense of self and reaches  
49 out to collectively based senses of selves in the ambition to create new communities based on  
50 solidarity. On the other hand, the work intensity that is also found among employees in strongly  
51 purpose-driven organizations may cancel out or mute criticism towards the organization, with  
52 the result of poor health and difficulties in letting employee voices be included to allow for a  
53 stronger participation and co-determination of workers in defining sustainable organizing.  
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<sup>i</sup> An individual's performance is 'efficient' if it could not be improved without raising either skill or work intensity or both. Performance is inefficient if it could be raised without working harder or using greater skill – for example, through a different ordering of work tasks (Green, 2006, pp. 47–48). However, it does not imply that simply raising the work intensity will also raise the efficiency. In other words, productivity gains are not to be taken to be efficiency gains. Worker intensification as a source of greater productivity is contested (Green, 2006, p. 48).

<sup>ii</sup> Since work effort is sometimes conflated with the related concept of 'performance', or with 'efficiency', or even 'skill', it is also useful to make their relationships and conceptual differences explicit, as follows. 'Performance' is constituted by the extent to which an individual performs contractual tasks (and is synonymous with the individual's 'productivity'). An individual's performance is raised both by greater skill and by increased work intensity (Green, 2006, p. 47).



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iii The research project is financed partly by Innovation Fund Denmark. The project investigates the future of knowledge work and its potentials and pitfalls. It comprises three case studies. Further information can be read here: [www.futureknowledgework.com](http://www.futureknowledgework.com)

iv The Social Change and Economic Life Initiative (SCELI) is an independent data source with respect to the work intensification debate for the early 1980s. Respondents were asked to consider the job they had held five years previously (if they had had one), and to say whether there had been a 'significant increase', a 'significant decrease', or 'little or no change' between then and their current job with regard to, among other things: 'how fast you work' and 'the effort you have to put into your job' (Green, 2006, p. 51).

v This paper deals with the interrelation of work intensification in purpose-driven organizations, therefore we do not elaborate further on the interrelation between work intensification and stress. However, it should be noted that the widespread amount of stress does not in itself prove or can it be said to be a reliable indicator of work intensification. The perception of stress, and its portrayal as an individual neurosis, is partly a reflection of the individualization of work relations.



## Hard/heart worker – Work intensification in purpose-driven organizations

Table 1: data structure

Dimensions	Themes	Quote extract
Negative impact of work intensification when working in a purpose-driven organization	Constant connectivity is normalized as required when working for social sustainability (cross-sectoral collaborations)	<p><b>Bodil: I'm also sometimes kept in late...</b></p> <p>Asger: I know that this Spring will be one of the hardest in my life. I'm totally aware of that. (...)</p> <p>Camilla: (...) Employees work at all times of the day. There is a sort of collapse between private life and working life. It requires an extremely tough discipline to maintain a healthy balance between the two.</p> <p>Peter: I feel that it's high speed, but I also feel checked out, sort of in a cool way, then I sort of know there is this carrot [of a possible contract extension – ed.]</p>
	Proving oneself to be 'sustainable' increases work intensity in the competitive organization	<p><b>Sif: (...) If I'm not good enough, then somebody else will come and take my place, so with such a feeling I felt I had to prove something.</b></p> <p>Peter: I'm just really dedicated to it. Just because I don't have much experience, I'm not stupid, right. I just haven't had the time to show that I have lots of visions. I really think I have fought. Maybe just as much as an internal battle. But I have felt that I sort of had to prove myself (...).</p>
	Love working with the right values	<p><b>Karen: (...) I have a total love relationship with [the case organization – ed.]. And that is also very unhealthy, right!</b></p> <p>Asger: One thing is the politically correct, but also to some extent true about our common good purpose. What we help change for young people. My tradition is that every year, on one of the last days of the big event, I stand in front of the big stage and weep for the sake of everything we have created and built together. Some of the things I deal with and we make together are totally cool... It's so wild.</p>
	Working hard with the heart may create invisible criticism	<p><b>Christian: ... So you might be a little pressed on the salary and you have worked hard (...) And there my intuition tells me that there may be some people around who feel frustrated. ...</b></p> <p>Camilla: ... If you work on a short contract, then you have different terms and in my experience also a different mindset. Then there may be issues that are really difficult to discuss. Also, the more value-based issues [in comparison with volunteers that do not necessarily put conditions in terms of counting hours or are willing to 'give their right arm' – ed.] ... It appears/feels wrong to highlight short-term employees, but short-term project workers have to live off their salary.</p>
Positive impact of work intensification when working in a purpose-driven organization	Working with sustainability boosts your self-esteem, making you work harder (for others)	<p><b>Christian ... And then there is something about me liking being busy and I want to make a difference for other people. I want to change the world so that it becomes more positive and I believe this is only possible if I constantly struggle to reach a bit higher somehow.</b></p> <p>Camilla: It's a place where the community pulls together. So if I suddenly went out and took a whole lot of credit for things, I would feel inappropriate.</p>
	The organization has to give something back	<p><b>Astrid: [on the condition of having to be present in the organization, she negotiated her contract to be a tenure track position rather than freelance – ed.] There was a requirement that I had to be physically present/sit around and participate [without being remunerated for the extra time spent – ed.]. Nope, I couldn't be bothered. Then I preferred to assert myself, then they would get the entire 'me'. But reciprocally, I also want something in return, right.</b></p> <p>Sif: I'm so damned good at my work, and I have to be acknowledged for it. Surely, something has changed since I came down with stress. If [my work] is worth investing in, then I also have to get something in exchange. It should not only be me giving.</p> <p><a href="http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/qrom">http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/qrom</a></p>