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WORKSHOPS AND ABSTRACTS

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Access, interaction and challenges. Migrants with disabilities or special needs in contemporary welfare states.

Coordinators: Annika Lillrank, University of Helsinki & Eveliina Heino, University of Helsinki

Contemporary welfare states provide equal access to health- and social care for all residents, regardless of their language, class or ethnicity. This ethos of a universal welfare state has developed uniform services through the public sector, such as health- and social care that rely on expertise and high professional skills. However, publicly organized service take care of majority populations’ needs but has omitted transnational solidarity and has less understanding for otherness. Immigration and globalization challenge the principles of universalism to transform and include cultural diversity. An increasing migrant population experience a gap between these ideals and experienced realities.

Migration challenges health and social care professionals to develop new ways of working and interacting with culturally diverse ethnic minorities. Among ethnic minorities, especially disabled adults and families with disabled children or children with special needs, face additional challenges to have access to health- and social service. When a child is born with impairment, or suffer from developmental delays, parents face a challenge in how dependent they become on public services. Fragmentation in service system is often an obstacle for attainability of services. Other challenges relate to limited language skills and communication difficulties, lack of interpreter services and lack of knowledge and information that prevents asking questions. Furthermore, written information is often difficult to understand, the needed care may not be connected to available services, or continuity of care is temporary.

Professional service is socially constructed through a mixture of cultural, professional and institutional practices that follow practices of service providers for the majority receivers and thus hard to access for people from minority groups. For example, professionals may not take extra time to provide easily accessible information or emotional support. Interaction reveals power relations and becomes significant. It reflects power differences and its consequences for both parts in interaction. This asks for critical reflection on power relations, whose opinion are being listen to, whose knowledge are considered reliable. Reflecting on power relations opens up in which context shapes differences in power, and how power relations shape care practice.

Presentations in this workshop may concern themes related to migrants with disabilities and/or migrants access and experiences of social and healthcare services. Abstract proposals should be submitted before May 21st, 2018.

ABSTRACTS

Social work, migrants and mental health – professionals’ viewpoints
Maria Tapola-Haapala (University of Helsinki, Finland)

In my presentation, I will discuss the connections between mental health issues and social services targeted at migrants in Finland. My research question is: how do social workers and other professionals working with migrants conceptualize the issues related to mental health they face at their work. The research data has been collected in the research and development project Kauko (Urban Social Work Facilitating Immigrant Integration in Helsinki Metropolitan Area and Lahti) (https://blogs.helsinki.fi/kotoutuminenkaupungissa2017-2018/in-english/). In the
project, both service users as well as professionals have been interviewed. Since mental health is, however, discussed mainly only by the professionals, I am concentrating in my presentation on their viewpoints. This outline emphasizes the need for careful ethical reflection on the limitations of the data. The data consists of 12 focus group interviews and one individual interview with altogether 38 public sector professionals from the special social services for migrants, general social services for adults and employment offices. Due to their professional duties but also the fact that many of the issues taken up by them are related to the earlier traumatic events experienced by the service users, the situations of people with refugee background are emphasized in the research material. In the interviews, mental health is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional issue that is related to the individual well-being, family life, social connections, service system as well as the current immigration policy. This highlights the need for developing holistic social work practices in which there are readiness both for individual psychosocial support, advocacy work, structural and community social work.

**Examples on a scoping review on human agency of older persons living at home**

*Ylva Kroksfors (University of Helsinki, Finland)*

In this workshop presentation I am presenting some findings of a two stage scoping review of articles in international social gerontological journals and doctoral theses. These were peer reviewed articles and doctoral dissertations published between 1.1.2006-31.5.2017 in English or Scandinavian languages and articles published in Europe, USA or Canada. Using scoping studies is an approach to review scientific literature in a more in-depth way.

Six main themes were found to be central in the literature reviewed: 1) meaning of the home 2) environment and agency, 3) social relations and agency 4) Conjoint agency 5) spousal care and agency 6) older person living alone and their agency.

In the presentation I will shortly describe the numerous definitions of human agency found in the articles and doctoral theses reviewed. I will mainly concentrate on themes of meaning of the home for older persons, meaning of accessibility, challenges for independent living for older persons and the agency of older persons living at home.

Finally, I will challenge the workshop participants to discuss what role social work has and what it should have in promoting the agency of older persons living at home.

**The Dilemmas of Immigrant Families in Interaction with Health- and Social Care Professionals in Finland**

*Annika Lillrank (University of Helsinki, Finland)*

A central principle in the Finnish welfare state is to provide equal access to health- and social care for all residents regardless of their ethnicity. Finland has received immigrant families whose children arrive with disabilities or whose children are born in Finland with various developmental delays, and whose experiences of public service we do not know about. In this study I ask, *how do, immigrant families with a disabled child develop dialogues with health- and social care professionals?*

The data I use draw on qualitative interviews with 19 immigrant parents of disabled children.
The preliminary findings highlight that parents have complex communication problems with professionals, because of lack of knowledge of how the health — and social care system function, and because language problems increased the sense of misunderstandings. Secondly, parents experienced that professionals tended to downplay their concerns that slowed down access to investigations. Parent experienced the professional care practices as unfair when they had no access to participate in investigations, for example, when a test carried out in Finnish for a bilingual child. Thirdly, parents experienced that professionals often behaved in an authoritative way, decided in advantage about the care suggestions, and did not take time to discuss immigrant families’ particular needs of care. Some well-educated parents successfully consulted private professionals or transnational service providers. Immigrant parents faced multiple challenges in interactions with professionals.

**Recognition as an Inclusionary and Exclusionary Mechanism in Basic and Disability Services. Experiences of Migrant Families with Disabled Child Living in Finland**

*Eveliina Heino (University of Helsinki, Finland)*

Recognition as a fully competent and autonomy member of society, as a profession and as a parent can become questionable after migration to a foreign country. Recognition is usually attached to social categories, which are evident in certain social order, but changeable when that social order changes for example when person moves to another country. Recognition has been described as a basic human need and as an experienced membership of society, which makes it an important research subject.

There are only a few studies on disabled migrants in Finland and this theme needs further exploring. In this study, I examine what kind of experiences does migrant families with disabled child living in Finland have about interaction in basic and disability services. My data consist of interviews with 20 parents from six different countries. Interviewees were conducted during 2016–2018. Family perspective is present in this study, because disability influences usually all family members. In addition, in Finnish care work family centred approach is highlighted as a basic principle, which means that whole family is taken into account during care planning for disabled family member.

As preliminary results of my analysis, I identified recognition on a four different level. Firstly, according to the experiences of the parents, they were rarely recognised as an equal partner in diagnosis or treatment of a child. In contrary, usually diagnosis and treatment plans were decided by medical and social professionals without further consultation of a parents. Parents also felt that they did not get enough information about diagnosis, treatment, services and benefits that they are entitled to. Secondly recognition of child’s disability took usually a long time. Part of an interviewed parents also experienced that they need to struggle and demand services in order to get their child a proper treatment or felt that their only option was to acquire services from the private market. Thirdly, interviewees had different experiences of a recognition of different family member’s needs. On the one hand, parent had possibilities for example to leave their child to temporary care. On the other hand, services were standardized, and they were no room for flexibility and individual consideration. Fourthly, results show, that parents were mere recognised mainly as caregiver of their child, not active members of society. This was visible in the ways how parents were treated by the professionals, who for example did not seem provide them education or unemployment services.
2 Developing child protection – knowledge, power and participation

Coordinators: Ann Backman, LAPE Österbotten, City of Vaasa; Anu-Riina Svenlin, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä & Saija Westerlund-Cook, Folkhälsan

In 2016 the Finnish government launched several key projects, one of them being The Programme to address reform in child and family services (LAPE). The aim is to promote child and family-oriented services and to create an operating culture that strengthens the children’s rights, promote a knowledge-based approach and introduce the systemic model (Hackney model) to child protection. The Programme ends in 2018. Counties and municipalities throughout Finland are taking part in The Programme to address reform child and family services (LAPE). The development works is a collaborative effort between municipalities, NGOs and universities to explore and develop services and find new ways of working with families.

For the workshop we are welcoming theoretical/conceptual, empirical as well as practice based papers concerning development of child protection, examples of good practice especially concerning how to increase users participation in practice and also as a partner in development work. We also invite papers concerning the knowledge-base of child and family social work and the practice-theory-research relationship. How can knowledge and knowledge-based methods be used as tools for change and as means for power?

Power and participation as concepts are also present in development work, often intertwined and in flux. In order to increase user influence social workers have to consider and reflect on their use power. Participation also means shared use of power. What does this mean in a child protection context? Especially crucial is the issue of strengthening children’s participation in different phases of the child protection process. How can children influence and be an active part in the process and what does it mean for and require from social workers? Research evidence has shown that children’s participation correlates with positive effects on children’s safety and well-being and results in lower levels of out-of-home (foster care) placements, even though the evidence about long-term effects is not unequivocal (Vis et al. 2011; Križ & Skivenes 2015).


ABSTRACTS

Child protection – Protection with or without collective preventive work?
Aina A. Kane & Sissel Neverdal (UiT the Arctic University of Norway)

In connection with the revision of the Norwegian Child Protection Act, the appointed law committee has proposed to limit the Child Protection Services’ responsibility for preventive work.
The proposal is to delineate the preventive responsibility to address children and youth at risk and in need of assistance, and thus strongly reducing the responsibility for universal and collective preventive work for all children within the local community. The amendment is justified by the aim that the child protection services should prioritize their resources for protection against child abuse and abuse for "children who need it".

Children, as a group and as individuals, have a human rights claim for a safe upbringing in general, and for protection against abuse and neglect in particular. In this presentation, we will discuss the consequences of the proposed legislation in view of the child’s fundamental human rights, based on the issue:

What is the significance of child protection services’ precautionary responsibility for ensuring children’s right to safe growing conditions?

The Child Protection Service has special expertise and experience through its work with children at risk, and their families. The service’s participation in the local community’s collective responsibility for children can ensure the necessary exchange of expertise with other bodies working with and for children. Such exchanges of competence can then ensure timely and targeted actions within communities, counteract individualization of childhood problems within communities, and can ensure that children’s own perspectives are given the necessary focus in the universal prevention work.

How digital society challenges child welfare practices – From social workers’ perspective
Siv-Britt Björktomta (Uppsala University, Sweden) & Heidi Aarum Hansen (Ostfold University College, Norway)

The use of the Internet is at present time a daily habit for almost everyone. Children and young people use internet to communicate with friends but also to handle relations with girls- and boyfriends. On the other hand, there is also a group of young people who report a high level of vulnerability.

Children’s navigating on social media is a relatively new field of knowledge in social work. It means that, so far, professionals have only in a limited way developed professionals´ procedures, that include children’s usage of social media in practical social work. Focus-groups with social workers in Norway are exploring how professionals define possibilities/strengths and difficulties/obstacles in the work with families.

Result shows:

2. Different strategies to meet children’s and parents navigating in digital society. The tension between child perspective versus parenthood.
3. Children’s´ navigation challenged both theories and practices. Face to face versus digital communication.
4. Digital society is a challenge; however, it is not necessary better or worse. But, it is different.
   A supplement to traditional methods in social work.
Conclusion: Social workers have started the discussion about children’s and parents’ navigation in digital society. The main questions are: legal and ethical aspects, organizational factors as well as the professional practices.

Assessing the need of emergency removal of the child in ‘immediate danger’

Tuuli Lamponen (University of Tampere, Finland)

The objective of this presentation is to explore the emergency placements in Finnish child protection: situations, where child is in immediate danger and needs protection, and to present the response of front line social workers, simultaneously assessing the situation and deciding, whether the emergency removal of the child is obligate and meets the requirement of the child best interest. The role of the single social worker is to be in charge of the whole process; the assessment, decision-making and executing the decision. The decision of placing the child out of home is used as a last resort and includes the use of power due to the authority position of social worker.

The presentation explores the assessment as a crucial and inseparable part of decision-making process; when assessing the present emergency situations, the social workers tend actively and conspicuously search for the alternative solution (for example in-home measurements) instead of the emergency removal. Assessing the facts or signs in immediate (or threatening) danger in child’s present situation, and verbalizing them to parties involved, seems to be less apparent in social workers conversations. How is the knowledge of the child and parents taken into account in these situations?

The presentation is based on on-going ethnographic PhD study ’Decision-making of emergency placements in child protection’. The data has been collected in five municipal child protection units in 2015-2017, including the observation moments, when the social workers considered the emergency placement (N35), and situations where the child and/or parents were also present (n12), and interview-data of 51 front-line social workers in child protection. The research will continue until the end of the year 2019.

Capacity, decision making and child welfare

Johanna Korpinen (University of Tampere, Finland)

The objective of this presentation is to explore and discuss the question of capacity in the Finnish child welfare context. Capacity means in this presentation a clients’ ability to make decisions based on reasoning and relevant information. Capacity derives from the principle of respect for autonomy, which is also one of the leading ethical principles in social work. Capacity to make choices can be weakened for different reasons e.g. due to sickness, substance abuse problem and learning difficulties. Therefore, it is important to understand and discuss, how capacity can be broached, recognized and taken into consideration during the decision making process.

The data of the research comes from a research project where consent and objection in child welfare decision making is studied. The focus here is on the ways how social workers understand and evaluate the clients’, both parents and children, capacity to make decisions concerning care order, and how this is supported by them. While doing this social workers have power to enforce or pass clients’ capacity. Capacity has been widely discussed in health care and there are also studies where capacity of child welfare clients has been under review. However the topic has not been examined in Finland.
Treated Psychiatric and Neurodevelopmental Disorders and School Performance among Children in Out-of-home Care

Antti Kääriälä (University of Helsinki, Finland) & Elina Pekkarinen (Finnish Youth Research Network, Finland)

Research has shown that mental health problems and poor school performance are common among children placed in out-of-home care. Moreover, mental health problems have a known association with poor educational outcomes in this population. However, only a few studies have studied this association. To add to the literature, we examine the incidence of treated psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders and their association with school performance among children in care.

We utilize a longitudinal birth cohort data drawn from several administrative registers, involving all children born in Finland in 1997 (N = 58,802, of whom 3,340 were in care before age 18). We draw information on psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders from the Hospital Discharge Register that contains diagnosis from visits to public inpatient and outpatient specialized hospital clinics. We measure school performance as grade point average at the end of comprehensive education (typically at age 16). We estimate the association between psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders and school performance with linear regression modelling.

Preliminary findings demonstrate a high incidence of exhibiting any psychiatric or neurodevelopmental disorder in children in care (64% with any such diagnosis) in comparison with peers never in care (17% with any such diagnosis). Those in care experienced the most elevated relative incidence for conduct and oppositional disorders, alcohol and drug related disorders, and psychotic and bipolar disorders, which are according to our hypothesis significantly associated with these children’s school performance.

We expect to observe that psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders have a significant negative impact on children in care’s school performance. These findings will call for attention to treat these disorders to improve the educational outcomes of children in care. Ensuring both better mental health and better education can have a positive impact for these children and youth in many life domains.

From Overprotective to Empowering Social Protection in post-Yugoslav Countries: the Voice of Children in out-of-home Placements

Suzana Bornarova & Natasha Bogoevska (University of “Ss Ciryl and Methodius” Skopje, Macedonia)

Post-Yugoslav countries bear a heavy legacy in social protection from the former socialist period. Social protection used to be based on the principles of over-protection, with the case-work being dominant approach in professional social work, whereby services users had little or no power to influence decision-making processes or have a word in the choice of suitable services tailored to their specific needs.

In the recent couple of decades following the breakdown of Yugoslavia, considerable social protection reforms have taken place in almost all post-Yugoslav countries. The reforms have shifted the focus in basic principles in social protection. Namely, the principle of over-protection has been gradually replaced with the principles of user-involvement, user-control and user-friendly approaches in social work. This trend entailed changes both in legislation and practice and contributed to empowering users for self-reliance and self-help in coping with social difficulties and problems in their lives.
The presentation will intend to grasp the above tendencies in three of the post-Yugoslav countries: Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia. It will look at the most recent developments relative to children under social protection, as most vulnerable service-users. The focus will be on the practices in place that enable voices of children to be heard in out-of-home care, more specifically, in foster care and adoption placements.

Key words: empowerment, user-involvement, children, foster care, adoption.

**Ethics of knowledge production in social work with children and families**  
*Anna Pekkarinen* (University of Tampere, Finland)

In my presentation, I will bring forward the dimensions of ethics in the context of social work with children and families. I will conceptualise ethics especially from the perspective of virtue ethics. I suggest that virtues are relevant to ethical decision-making not only in social work generally, but especially in social work with children and families. Families represent the diversity of competing voices, liquidity and the ever-changing nature of family relations and diverse power-relations (see for example Pösö 2008), and for this multiplicity and complexity, rules, codifications and regulations cannot sufficiently capture the nature of the ethical spheres of social work with children and families.

The presentation is based on my doctoral dissertation, which addresses different dimensions of ethics and knowledge. The studies address virtues of research; the virtue-orientated approach to a child’s right to participate; the virtue of moral courage and the virtues that social workers understand as meaningful when making decisions in the context of child protection. I propose a virtue-based framework for child and family social work, and suggest that a virtue-orientated way of comprehending social work ethics can be applied in both social work research and practice.


**Documentation of children´s voice and participation in child welfare services – from idea to product**  
*Ingunn Barmen Tysnes & Inger Kristin Heggdalsvik* (Western Norway University of applied sciences, Norway)

Objectives/content

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on hearing the child and children’s participation in child welfare. Despite this fact, research shows that children are not always given the chance to raise their voice. Another issue is lacking documentation of children’s voice when child welfare services make assessments and final decisions. Case-workers tell us that they do speak to children and they are trained to do so, but reports tell us that satisfactory documentation is still lacking. The newest Norwegian child welfare act puts effort on children’s participation and points towards the need of systematic documentation.

In this presentation, we will focus on the process of developing a new template in cooperation with child welfare practitioners and students as part of their placement.

Method

The idea of developing a template emerged after a systematic analysis of the documentation of 30 conversations, and 3 focus groups. The template has been developed
together with case-workers. A pilot has been running in to periods in one child welfare services, and further modified before implementation in all eight child welfare services in Bergen municipality. The template will be evaluated through a survey, and followed by research.

Results

The documentation template has been running in all eight child welfare services in Bergen municipality from November 2017. Several other municipalities will join the project from May 2018. Preliminary feedback from case-workers indicates that the template helps them to both structure and keep focus when conducting conversations with children. It also help them to make systematic assessments.

**Low-income families in Child Welfare Services**

*Anita Storhaug, Hilde Marie Thrana, Hanne Elisabeth Sørlie, Bente Heggem Kojan*  
(Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

The aim of this presentation is twofold. First, we would like to present the background, the design and research questions of a relatively new research project, *Families with low Socioeconomic Status and their contact with Child Welfare Services*. This is a joint, 4-year project by NTNU, Centre for Child Welfare Research and Innovation, Department of Social Work, NTNU Social Research and SINTEF. Second, we aim to present some preliminary analyses from the first phase of the study, a survey answered by parents involved in CWS in Norway. The aim of the survey is to explore variations in life situation, needs and parenting style in families with different socioeconomic status.

The main purpose of our study is to find out more about families with long-term economic hardship and how contact with the system effects children of these families over time. A central background is that Child Welfare Services (CWS) rarely focuses on the socioeconomic status of families even though children from low-income backgrounds always have been overrepresented in CWS/child protection systems. However, this is largely a shadowed fact in the everyday practice of Child Welfare Services.

We plan to discuss central issues and some of the preliminary findings from our project that might be of interest to other Nordic social work researchers and attendees at the conference.

**Development and validation of risk assessment interviews for children exposed to intimate partner violence and child abuse**

*Maria Eriksson* (Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University, Sweden) & *Clara Iversen* (Uppsala University, Sweden)

Although research show that structured risk assessment improve consistency and accountability in decision making across child protective services, child protection officers in Sweden usually assess risk in an unstructured manner. To try the feasibility of structured risk assessment in Swedish child protection services, a semi structured interview about child abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV) was constructed and tried out by practitioners in in social services and related institutions. Children from the age of five were interviewed about their perception of security in relation to their abusive and/or non-abuse parent. Scales measuring older children’s involvement in IPV, and the character and magnitude of violence from parents, were developed and tried out. For younger children scales measuring exposure to IPV and abuse as well as posttraumatic reactions were tested for reliability and validity. Pre-
Preliminary results show that practitioners found the interview useful for assessing children’s and parents’ exposure to violence in the family. Children and parents responded positively to the semi-structured interview. Preliminary analysis of audio-recorded interviews with children also shows promising findings on practitioners’ efforts to respond to children’s initiatives in the interviews and increase the opportunities for children’s participation. A scoring system for the interviews was developed and harmonized with the national child protection framework for assessment in Sweden (Barns Behov I Centrum – BBIC).

**Reforming Russia’s Child Protection System**

*Maija Jäppinen* (Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki, Finland), *Meri Kulmala* (Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland) & *Zhanna Chernova* (National Research University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia)

Following a long period of policy inaction, activist campaigning and international criticism, the Russian federation is now radically reforming its child protection system (Kulmala et al. 2017). Recent policy initiatives strive to ‘deinstitutionalise’ Russia’s child protection system by promoting adoptions, increasing the number of foster families, creating family support services as well as restructuring remaining residential institutions into smaller, home-like environments. These moves are all key elements that will bring Russia into line with the deinstitutionalisation trend that has taken place around the globe (e.g. Ainsworth & Thoburn 2014).

In comparison to the previous Soviet-rooted system, the on-going reform represents a fundamental change in the ideal of care and institutional design. This change in the underpinning ideals is so significant that it can be conceptualized as what is known as a paradigmatic policy change (Kulmala et al. 2017). The prevailing ideologies of child welfare systems are traditionally characterized by being oriented either to family support or child protection, and in the 1990s, a third orientation of a child focused model emerged (Gilbert et. al 2011). Based on the analysis of the key policies and concrete practices brought by them at the level of child welfare institutions, we argue that the paradigm change at the level of ideals and national goals in Russia is from child protection into the direction of child focused model with elements of family support model. Yet, at the level of practices many aspects of child protection are still to stay. The implementation of the major child welfare reform in Russia is underway, and many serious pitfalls persist. So far, the change has happened at the level of the ideas, which however has not always yet led to real institutional change, because of the many existing path dependencies.

**The coping of the young adults after out-of-home care and the aftercare services - a Bayesian analysis**

*Mirja Satka* & *Pirkko Salokekkilä* (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Generally speaking Finland occupies a good position in child well-being as one of the Nordic welfare states. Yet the numbers of disadvantaged children and adolescents taken into custody or placed into statutory out-of-home care on other reasons have been the highest in Finland among Nordic countries since 2005. The considerable number of children going through the process of out-of-home care (Finland is placing 12 per 1000 children at 2016), has made this an important and far-reaching social issue. It is crucial for the future of the whole society how these young adults are able to integrate themselves in education, family and work life throughout their later lives, and how this could be successfully supported early enough and over the years of their childhood and youth.
The aim of this retrospective document-based analysis is to discover how the different factors documented at the time of the custody decision, or the placement in the out-of-home care, are associated with the state of coping of the young adults at the end of the aftercare services. The dataset consists of 428 measured variables from 600 young adults who have taken advantage of after care services after a period in custody care. Their service data was collected 2015 from the available health and social service registers – with the ethical approval of the local authorities – on structured electronic questionnaires. The data includes follow-up document data which is mostly quantitative but also to some extent also qualitative information. The retrospective document analysis is made by using the Bayesian software clustering tool (version BayesiaLab 7.0).

At the end of the aftercare services 18% of the young adults have no remarkable issues with their daily coping, whereas 74% have some problems of coping, and 7% meet with severe problems, like frequent substance use and/or daily challenges with their mental or physical health. The outcome variable was constructed as a sum variable to describe the state of personal coping following Stein’s (2006) classification for movers, survivors and struggles. The main result is: The child’s own ‘bad’ behavior (e.g. substance abuse) during the early years, and especially at the time of the custody decision, were associated with poorer prognosis at the end of the aftercare services, compared to children whose care in the custody decision was mainly the outcome of missing or poor care, i.e. due to the social problems of her/his parents.

3 Disability, power, empowerment and advocacy on the arena of social work

Coordinators: Liisa Hokkanen, University of Lapland; Mari Kivistö, University of Lapland & Pirjo Oinas, University of Lapland

For the workshop, we are calling for presentations about multifaceted relationships between disability, power and social work or disability services. The theme could be look from the viewpoint of disabled people or from the viewpoint of professionals, laymen or peers; on the individual, community or societal level.

What kind of power, influence or authority people with disability do or do not have on their life course or to the disability services? Which are the possibilities, obstacles or boundaries to participate as a disable person and as a citizen on the disability services, communities in an everyday life or the society? How to empower the powerless groups or people when working as professionals or acting as volunteers or as peers? How to restructure the social work process in the ways, which empower disabled people to be the experts of their life? How does user involvement run in practice? How and with whom to advocate for rights of disabled persons?

The workshop is looking the ways to make the ideas of The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) real in everyday life, on professional practices and in the society.
ABSTRACTS

Empowering lives of people with intellectual disabilities in Denmark: personal development at a day center and a sheltered workplace

Mizuho Tatsuta (Yamaguchi Gakugei University, Japan)

Aim: The current study aimed to examine how staff members at a day center and a sheltered workplace in Denmark empower lives of people with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Method: Participants were three people with ID and three staff members at the day center and four people with ID and five staff members at the sheltered workplace. Participant observations and semi-structured interviews with staff members were conducted to explore their interactions and support for personal development of people with ID. The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis.

Results: Staff members at the day center encouraged people with ID to participate in activities where they could use their own skills, and emphasized that they got a sense of achievement for their personal development based on the idea of equality. Staff members at the sheltered workplace supported personal development of people with ID by providing opportunities to improve their work skills which would help their independent living. In addition, leisure activities such as music at the workplace expanded possibilities for their personal development and social relationships within colleagues and staff members.

Discussion: The roles of staff members at both places were important for personal development of people with ID. Staff members empowered lives of people with ID by not only improving their personal skills but also increasing their rich experiences.

Counselling of People with Dementia in Legal Planning – Social and Health Care Professional’s Role

Henna Nikumaa (University of Helsinki, Finland) & Anna Mäki-Petäjä-Leinonen (University of Eastern Finland, Finland)

Objectives

The aim of the study was to assess the utilisation of later life legal planning and how the legal capacity of people with dementia is supported by social and health care professionals.

Methods

The primary data consists of individual interviews of 16 people with mild dementia. Every person was interviewed twice, six months apart. The secondary data consists of 25 group interviews (different social and health care units, legal aid offices, banks, local register offices and the third sector). The data was analyzed using abductive content analysis.

Results

People with dementia saw the provision of counselling as one of the key elements of their good care and services. Different options of legal planning were unfamiliar and many suggested that they should receive the basic legal counselling from the familiar social or health care professionals close to them.

However, social and health care professionals felt they lack knowledge of the different legal planning options available. They also didn’t regard the provision of such counselling to be part of their duties.
Conclusion
People with dementia need information and guidance of the available measures supporting their autonomy when they still have enough legal capacity to plan for their future. Social and health care professionals need basic knowledge of the different legal planning options available in order to fulfil their responsibility to give counselling. Professionals’ role in supporting the remaining legal capacity and autonomy of a person with dementia is crucial: giving basic guidance but also encouragement to plan for the future.

Power of Everyday. Narrated Disability and Embodied Agency in Everyday Spaces
Merja Tarvainen (University of Eastern Finland)

My paper discusses narrated disability and embodied agency in everyday spaces. The paper is based on my research done under Narratives of Bodily Difference research project, funded by Academy of Finland (decision number 299172) and led by Professor Vilma Hänninen. In this presentation, my focus will be on everyday power relations and power structures, especially everyday spaces. The data consists of life stories (Life of Disabled Persons in Finland 2013–2014) which I have analysed using the model of narrative circulation (MNC).

Spaces are entered and experienced as embodied agents. Assumptions of agency are featured in spaces. Therefore, everyday spaces alongside social and material conditions can be, on the one hand, excluding conditions and sites of disabling power. On the other hand, inclusive spaces can be enabling and even empowering for embodied agents. The spirit of CRDP urges to generate knowledge on everyday life of people with disabilities. Furthermore, everyday arrangements are matters whereby social work of disability services deals with. However, knowledge on everyday and disability may be fragmented or hard to catch. Therefore I suggest that life stories, such as this collection, can be valuable for generating understanding regarding everyday experiences of people with disabilities which are relevant to social work. Yet, the body has been a contested terrain in disability studies. Therefore the side effect of this paper is to motivate discussions around and about the body and disability in social work (education, research and practice) contexts.

User involvement and client-orientation in the processes of social work in disability services
Mari Kivistö (University of Lapland, Finland)

Full participation and inclusion are the fundamental principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Strengthening participation and preventing marginalisation in the processes of social work in disability services, an ESF-funded, nationwide and multi-faceted research and development project, is strongly associated with these themes.

In the presentation, preliminary research results are described for two of the project’s sub-studies, whose conceptual themes are user involvement, client-orientation, the social work process and digitalisation. While client-orientation and user involvement are two separate concepts, client-orientation of the service system is considered realised through the user’s involvement in the process, and his/her ability to make choices related to it. Ultimately, both user involvement and client-orientation are related to issues of power, in particular power relations and the use of power.
The data from the first sub-study are composed of individual interviews with people with disabilities (11) collected during the project, focusing on disabled clients’ user involvement in the social work process, while also considering the possibilities of digitalisation. The research is conducted in collaboration with the project workers. The second sub-study examines the client-orientation of the service system and social workers in light of the case-based social work processes (7) involving client documents. Through the results of the two sub-studies, client-orientation and user involvement in social work in disability services can be improved.

Disability inclusion in the social work teaching curriculum in Kyrgyz universities: experiences from the EU Social Protection System (EU-SPS) Programme

Hisayo Katsui (University of Helsinki, Finland)

This paper focuses on how the perception of disability, which is too often profoundly negative and charity-oriented, is challenged through the trainings of trainers (ToTs) under the framework of the EU-SPS Programme in Kyrgyzstan in 2017-2018. First, the historical background of the Soviet policy and practice is introduced to set the scene. Second, the EU-SPS is introduced that has implemented a few ToTs to university lecturers who are teaching social work discipline in Kyrgyz universities in Bishkek and Osh Cities. The EU-SPS was led by Kyrgyz and Finnish organizations of persons with disabilities where a Kyrgyz woman with a disability played the central role. The third and main part introduces discussions held and changes made towards disability inclusion in the Kyrgyz universities. For instance, after the exposure to different approaches to disabilities, the university lecturers realized that they had been reinforcing the social marginalization of persons with disabilities through their teachings. Today, they teach disabilities from many points of views including socially constructed aspects of disabilities and human rights of persons with disabilities using the newly produced teaching module. Last, the paper discusses on opportunities and risks of university teaching for disability inclusion more in general beyond the Kyrgyz context and link the findings with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

What kind of advocacy would persons with physical disabilities need from social work in order to promote their independent living?

Ylva Krokfors (the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities FDP, Finland)

This presentation is based on a membership poll sent on spring 2017 to the members of the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities (FDP). The FDP´s Associations delegation was concerned about the fact that disabled persons economic and social situation had worsened. Altogether 1577 questionnaires were returned, which was about 17% of the questionnaires sent to the members. It is approximately 6% of the FDP´s approximately 30 000 members.

The results show that most of the members are over 65 years of age. The main part of these people have relatively good pension. At the same time it also shows the “dark side” of the pensioners poverty: those on minimum pension have difficulties in paying social- and health care fees and other expenses caused by disability or illness. Half of the answerers feel that their incomes are not high enough for paying client-fees. The poll results also show that persons with disabilities end up paying expenses that the society doesn´t compensate for although they have been legislated as being free of charge. As for example ancillary tools and personal assistance. Some of the people don´t know where to get service guidance and help with social and/or economic problems.
The short of service or even its total absence leaves persons with low income in serious trouble, trapped in their homes. All of this calls for social work action on both individual and political level. Emphasizing them as means for promoting empowerment and well-being for persons with physical disabilities.

**Helpific platform – sharing economy-based peer to peer support for disabled people with the help of info communication technology (ICT)**

Zsolt Bugarszki (Tallinn University, Estonia)

The Helpific platform ([www.helpific.com](http://www.helpific.com)) was established in 2014 as a co-operation of people with disabilities, social workers, developers, markets and project managers. The platform’s aim is to mobilize community resources to support people with disabilities in the community in order to promote their independent life. People are connected on the platform based on their neighbourhood and willingness to provide help for disabled people in their local community.

The platform has been piloted in Estonia, Hungary, Ukraine and Croatia between 2015 and 2018. A research program has been conducted as a co-operation of Tallinn University (Estonia) and ELTE University (Hungary) in 2018 Spring Semester in order to analyse the pilot results. Based on our findings we will present which way a modern ICT tool can support the social integration of people with disabilities.

**Encouraging real or make-believe citizen-workers? Narratives of self-realization versus disabling support-to-work contexts by individuals with High Functioning Autism**

Faten Nouf-Latif (Umeå University, Sweden)

Sweden, like other Western countries, has a disability legislation that coexists with the Active Labour Market Policies. ALMP address a discourse emphasizing the importance of the able and productive ‘citizen-worker’, who is expected to craft his/her own success through meaningful personal goals and ambitions. This discourse also impacts disability groups who are actualized for support-to-work interventions, such as people with high-functioning autism (HFA).

The objective of the presentation is to present how narratives targeting ambitions and self-realisation in work life are expressed by individuals with HFA in relation to the citizen-worker discourse. The underlying study that constitute the foundation of the presentation, comprises 26 qualitative interview narratives by 11 participants with HFA.

Findings indicate that the participants have developed a strong citizen-worker identity. The will is an essential point of gravity, expressed through notions of individual meaningfulness and ambitions of being perceived as resources in any vocational context. Barriers to these ambitions are experienced as personally counteractive support-to-work practices.

The results suggest that disability legislation and policies are caught in a mantra of stagnating normalisation, resulting in disability-worker interventions that are incompatible with meanings emphasized in the citizen-worker discourse, which is the new ‘normal’ of today.
**Case-management – rehabilitation support after Acquired Brain Injury – with the aim to strengthen empowerment**  
Thomas Strandberg (Örebro University, Sweden)

Approximately 70,000 acquire a brain injury yearly in Sweden, i.e. 80 percent mild, 10 percent moderate and 10 percent severe Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), which often resulting in disabilities. ABI can be caused by trauma, stroke or disease to the brain. The rehabilitation process is divided into **acute** and **subacute phase** and **the late stages**. Studies shows that people with moderate and severe injuries have difficulties in coordinating rehabilitation and societal support especially in **the late stage**. Rehabilitation can be a long-term process and people with ABI are often referred to next of kin for coordinating societal support, e.g. rehabilitation, social services, employers. International, Case-management have since 1980's been a rehabilitation support, but in a Swedish context it's relatively new.

The aim of this presentation is to describe, based on a book chapter (Strandberg 2018), how this form of support has been developed in Sweden in comparison with UK and Australia as well as putting the form of support in relation to empowerment within social work.

The results show that there are different theoretical models for how Case-management can be designed, the support is designed differently in different countries, due to the organization of rehabilitation, due to social and societal differences and due to knowledge. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that the support may be helpful to the client as well as to next of kin in terms of participation and empowerment.

Although, Case-management has been internationally known since 1980s, the scientific studies are limited and there is no evidence for the clinical significance using this support. Research is therefore necessary to demonstrate its clinical significance.

**Service user involvement in the social work with disabilities**  
*Elina Kalaoja & Liisa Hokkanen* (University of Lapland, Finland)

According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, no-one should face any kind of discrimination based on the disability. User participation, service user involvement and client-centered work are located at the focus of ongoing remodeling of social and health services and social work. New practices for enforcing the position and status of client in social work have been generated, but not yet established, even though the evidence for the need of it is wide. To find the information about the services, to be heard and to achieve the discretion and power on your own matter has proved to be poor (e.g. Kivistö 2014). Client experts, expert by experience and peer support based activities are rising to complement the traditional involvement models. (e.g. Pohjola et. all. 2017) After all, user involvement in social work, and especially in disability services, confront multifaceted challenges and obstacles when implementing service user involvement in practice (e.g. Barnes & Cotterell 2012; Hokkanen 2014).

In the presentation, we focus on client's self-perceived opportunities to achieve an empowered stance in the client-centered social work process and in evaluation, developing and modelling the social work with disabilities, and the obstacles to achieve more established stance. The presentation is based on the research data collected by the national ESF project “Strengthening participation and preventing marginalization in the social work processes of disability services – VamO”. The data includes the recorded group meetings comprised of service users in disability services. There are
preliminary results, but the analysis is ongoing and will be validated during the summer and autumn.

4 Global movement and dimensions of power

Coordinators: Marja Katisko, Diak – University of Applied Sciences, Finland & Maija Kalm-Akubardia, University of Helsinki, Finland

In the Nordic countries, the purpose of work in the social field has traditionally been to support individuals and communities to become integrated in society and economy, and social work has been carried out in a framework consisting of institutionalized service systems. The methods, theory formation and working practices of social work are in transition. The old ideal of universalism, where all people are part of one human race, community, society or clientele of a service district can no longer form the basis for the work. What happens in a nation state is part of the life of the global whole.

Work in the social field constantly accumulates crucially important knowledge about people’s everyday life, about its terms and about injustices in the service systems. A special feature of expertise in the social field is its close connection with both the everyday lives of ordinary people and a broader societal mission. As a result of globalization, there is an increase in the accumulation of knowledge regarding the effects of global crises on people’s everyday lives. In the current situation, it is not possible to bypass phenomena that often have unidentified and political roots, but which have consequences that are present locally. Social field professional who work in the public sector have an important role in societal advocacy, because they are the ones who accumulate knowledge about the relationship between the public service system and individuals and families with no rights in welfare state. At this point in time, it is necessary to be able to evaluate and to take a stance regarding policies and official decisions regarding entire groups of people.

Within the realm of social work, knowledge accumulates regarding political guidelines, decision-making practices and complex national and international registrations systems. In our workshop, knowledge and authorization to use it are linked to the power to define and characterize people and events. This is also a matter of deciding what knowledge and whose knowledge is important, and what kind of knowledge people wish to promote.

ABSTRACTS

Who has power over knowledge development within Swedish social services?
Harald Gegner (Malmö University, Sweden)

Swedish social services have a history of being criticized for building social work practice that draws from an undeveloped knowledge base. Through the years, the Swedish authorities have implemented various initiatives to support knowledge-based social work within social services. One of the strategies is governance by knowledge focusing on evidence-based practice, EBP.

A network of regional development leaders was a key actor in establishing EBP in Swedish municipalities on the basis of annual agreements. Development leaders have
been assigned to support the establishment of EBP and play an important role in governance through knowledge driven by the state.

The overall focus of my research is centered on questions of how the development leaders understand EBP and the occupational group to which they belong. My study is based on interviews, observations and documents.

Ernesto Laclau’s theory of the empty signifier serves as an analytical tool regarding the question of how development leaders interpret EBP. In the development leaders’ view, everything carried out within their assignment task becomes part of EBP. This is possible because EBP can be interpreted in different ways depending on the aim and context. In regard to the question – to which occupational group do development leaders belong? I argue they could be described as management bureaucrats, as they generally cooperate with other management bureaucrats who are involved in establishing EBP. Consequently, this group of bureaucrats has a relatively large influence on the knowledge development of social work. Representatives from the profession and social service users who are considered to be central actors in EBP thus seem less important.

Violate indigenous people’s rights and controversies around cultural appropriation

Tordis Kristine Søuve (University of the Arctic Norway)

Background
During the autumn 2017 a public discussion about costumes, what is fun and what is violating the Sami, the indigenous people of Norway and other indigenous people. This was a public debate that found place in Norway after the Norwegian finance minister used a Pocahontas costume at a job party for the Ministry of Finance in Norway. The discussion was raised by the comments of President of the Sami Parliament, calling it a “tasteless act” of the Government representative.

Research questions
The problem is about the identity of depressed people and to what degree cultural appropriation is acceptable. Is it ok that majority cultures adopt important cultural symbols and expressions from peoples they have oppressed and in worst cases tried to wipe out? Is it harmful for the Sami population that leading politicians find it convenient to use national costumes for fun—or might it be called “cultural misappropriation”?

Methods
Analyzing the leader columns and public debates of the current question cultural appropriation in the major Norwegian newspapers and a television entertainment program of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation.

Discussions
The debate did not turn out to be very reflected discussion. The results turned out to be divided in the middle. Most comments turned out to be about harmless fun or tried to explain or defend the ridicule. Most comments said; “It’s okay to dress up like Pocahontas - because "after all, you’re doing it as a child.". The other main point was “She does this because it was fun, all employees dress up and that she as a leader in the ministry attends the party and takes on costumes is just nice”. The third point was “The Sami President must have some glimpses in the eye and stop being so touchy” “One can see it as a tribute to a culture, instead of ceasing to showcase the culture”.

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The results on the other side presented how it increased the feelings of being denigrated and insulted among the indigenous people of Norway or in other countries. “Norway earns a lot of money to destroy uneducal culture in the United States, and then we celebrate our money by dressing up as Indians “The comments tried to explain how this challenges the shame and the frenzy which was created by being experienced as discrimination against as a marginalized group of the society still is being acceptable.

There were found different harassing comments towards the Sami politicians that tried to present how during the last decades the Sami traditional clothing is a way of redefining the selfrespect of the Sami People after 150 years of painful colonization and Norwegiazation from the Nordic and Russian governments., and presenting Sami culture as inferior.

Conclusion
The politicians and a lot of the public did not see their use of power. Reducing this to fun, joke or costume as either accepted or not approved. Existing cultural pain was revealed.

Consequences for social work
Cultural competence is crucial for deciphering and interpreting a complex society. The opportunities to communicate the understanding and respectful contact with the ethnic groups, and regard their preferations and cultural expressions. This is also a prerequisite for being able to do social work in a diverse society and in a global perspective the increasing migration.

The power of essentialist representations
Tiina Määttä (University of Tampere, Finland)

The paper discusses how the profession of social work needs to acknowledge the way abstract representations of an individual’s past, based for instance on refugee status or one’s ethnic background, link to ideologies and issues of power within the discipline. It suggests that abstract representations become an obstacle for social justice when they are loaded with externally attached meanings that migrants themselves have no control over. Yee, Marshall & Vo (2014) highlight that settlement services that draw from essentialism fail to acknowledge significant life experiences that shape clients’ identity orientations, and thereby these experiences remain unacknowledged.

This paper challenges the perceived differences by investigating the relationship between individual’s memories and current self-understanding. The data for this study were collected in 2015/2016 using a collage method, which meant that the participants used “found materials”, such as photos and images from magazines, to reflect on their current relationship to past places. The results of this study illustrate that the self is achieved through a complex maze of political, social and individual aspirations and thereby relying on abstract categories in social work practice poses challenges from a social justice standpoint.

Reference
Glocal social work and compressed modernity
Timo Harrikari (University of Tampere, Finland) & Pirkko-Liisa Rauhala (University of Helsinki, Finland)

The presentation sketches the pillars of compressed modernity and rethinking of the global and local relations in social work. It opens perspectives on the current challenges of social work by combining the Richmondian circumstantial evidence with the recent societal changes.

Five specific topics, outlining them as weak signals at least, will be discussed in the context of social work: 1) the hybridisation of human beings and the reflective agency, 2) the polycentric systemic complicity, 3) the disintegration, reorganization and hybridization of the social constituents, 4) social acceleration and 5) the glocal effect. In the future, social work will be compelled to reflect its image of a human being, its global preconditions when working with clients' polycentric and complex social networks and its relations to the temporal and spatial dimensions, which seem to be hybridising and consequently positioning with the crossing tensions of the global and local elements in the era of deepening compressed modernity.

In general, we suggest that the conceptualisation of social work based on the modern accustomed social theory is inadequate in the current circumstances. During the current era of glocalisation, polycentrism, digitalisation, and hybridisation the previous conceptualisations of social theory have to be taken under reconsideration.


TEKO - Enhanced Refugee Integration through Community Social Work Project in Finland
Terhi Tuominen & Joonas Kiiviranta (Immigrant Social Services, City of Tampere, Finland)

This three-year pilot project takes place in Hervanta, one of the biggest suburbs in Finland. The main purpose of the project is to create a community pop up center in Hervanta. The main target group of the project is immigrants who are in the early stages of integration into the Finnish society. The first objective of the project is to create a multidisciplinary operations model for enhanced integration. The operation principle is based on the strategy and service model of the city of Tampere, the essence of which is joint, equal participation for all citizens. The second objective is to support the target group's ability to manage their own lives. This can be done by developing low threshold counselling services which includes personal assistance and guidance without prior appointment in various languages. The third objective is to enhance multifaceted integration. This is especially important in Hervanta, where around 20% of the residents are immigrants. The fourth, and final objective is to develop cross sectoral co-operation. The project becomes a communal learning process, whereby the participating professionals reassess and update their working methods to better suit today's needs. The project aim to reach these objectives by training people with immigrant background to become experts by experience, by recruiting residents to do volunteer work in Hervanta, by developing the model for community social work and by organizing discussion groups and community training.
Social work among individuals with no rights – dimensions of power
Marja Katisko (Diak – University of Applied Sciences, Finland) & Maija Kalm-Akubardia (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Our paper focuses on power issues that influence the social worker’s working practice. What kinds of invisible or unconscious power, or power unrelated to work in the social field as such, is involved in the work carried out in this field? What kind of power is exercised in social work relation to immigrants with no legal rights?

Within the realm of social work, knowledge accumulates regarding political guidelines, decision-making practices and complex national and international registrations systems. In our study, knowledge and authorization to use it are linked to the power to define and characterize people and events. This is also a matter of deciding what knowledge and whose knowledge is important, and what kind of knowledge people wish to promote?

The research data presented in our study consists of discussions with social work field. To spark discussions, two fictitious sample cases were read to the workers, briefly presenting the situations of individuals residing in Finland without residence permits. A total of twenty social worker employed in the public sector, from different parts of Finland, participated in the discussions.

As additional data, we have utilized short essays written by professionals in the social field, regarding the challenges that clients without residence permits have brought to client-professional encounters. The data used in this study has been collected from late 2016 to early 2017. The material is utilized as a kind of an image of the time period in a societal situation where the number of undocumented clients has grown in the public sector.

By ‘undocumented people’, we mean individuals and families living in Finland with limited right to receive public social and health care services. When referring to undocumented status, we use the concept unofficial immigration or people with no rights.

Our premise is that power takes shape in three different dimensions. Unidimensional power is mainly visible decision-making, where a clear conflict exists between definite alternatives (for example, rules and guidelines regarding the granting or denial of social assistance). From the perspective of two-dimensional power, power is exercised in selecting the questions that are brought up for decision-making.

From the perspective of three-dimensional power, we are looking at power that influences the choices and preferences of the individual, among other things. Three-dimensional power shapes the will of the members of the organisation, and has an effect on the cultural and ethical basis of public social service provision. This is invisible power which, according to Lukes’s radical theory, among others, is the most influential form of power (Lukes 2005, p.64).

Unofficial immigration and Luke’s three dimensions of power
Maija Kalm-Akubardia (University of Helsinki, Finland)

The theoretical and conceptual basis of this research consists of Lukes’s (1974, 2005) theory on the third level of the use of power which underlines the interests of the person in power as well as those being subjected to it. In Luke’s theory the power takes
shape in three different dimensions. *Unidimensional power* is mainly visible decision-making, where a clear conflict exists between definite alternatives (for example, rules and guidelines regarding the granting or denial of social assistance). In *two-dimensional power*, the power is exercised in selecting the questions that are brought up for decision-making, in the first place (for example, whether a client without a residence permit has a right to access public social services at all). From the perspective of *three-dimensional power*, this work concentrates at power that influences the choices and preferences of the individual, among other things. Three-dimensional power shapes the will of the members of the society, and has an effect on the cultural and ethical basis of public social service provision. This means that the power is connected to people’s interests and the process whereby people become aware of their own interests is a crucial factor with regard to the power.

My ethnographic case study focuses on Mingrels, who originally migrated from Abkhazia to escape conflicts in the 1990’s, making them one of the population groups that have experienced life as long-term immigrants (over ten years, at minimum), and that have been studied very little. An unofficial immigrant influences society through the choices they have available to them. I analyze patterns of action among individuals (and families), arising in the context of unofficial migration, and related to survival in everyday life. Through the ethnographic interviews it has been possible to gain more knowledge about the effects of long-term unofficial migration at the levels of individual people, communities and societies. I approach undocumented immigrants as a group of people who have been officially left powerless, but who nevertheless actively pursue better lives for themselves with the conditions given to them, and who, as a result, act unofficially as an invisible network within society, affecting the basic structures of society in parallel with the powers that maintain unofficial migration. With the Luke’s theory of power together with ethnographic interviews this work seeks answers to questions such as: How do the militia, the education system, the health care system, employers, state officials, people with power or close connections to administration and, in some cases, the immigrants themselves, utilize and maintain unofficial migration? How does this affect the functioning of society, equality, and the ways migration may develop in the future?

**Encounters, Networks and Communities in Everyday Life of Immigrants**

*Aija Kettunen & Marianne Nylund* (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland)

In everyday life, there are numerous encounters in social networks and various communities. Networks with the host community have been identified as a crucial factor in integration process of immigrants when moving to a new country. Our objective is to study, how immigrants and professionals in social work see these encounters. If encounters are considered important, how is it possible to increase encounters among residents in a neighborhood.

We analysed data from the Kauko-project (Urban Social Work Facilitating Immigrant Integration in Helsinki Metropolitan Area and Lahti) in 2017 and 2018. The data contains 24 focus groups interviews conducted with 40 people with immigrant background and 38 professionals, and documentation of four workshops discussions with mostly professionals but also immigrants. The focus is on social bridges, social bonds and social links that are forms of social capital, and mentioned e.g. by Ager and Strang (2008) as core domains of integration.

According preliminary results, both immigrants and professionals tell that networks are important for immigrants’ wellbeing and enhances integration. Both challenges and opportunities have been recognized to improve encounters and networking. The
research and development project (Kauko) helps to develop measures to improve encounters and networking that enhance integration. Networking and integration are beneficial to immigrants and communities.

5 Labour market inclusion for people with mental health problems – knowledge exchange between practice, research and education

Coordinators: Inge Storgaard Bonfils, University College Copenhagen & Søren S. Weber, Roskilde University

In many countries, citizens with severe mental health problems are excluded from the labour market: They are overrepresented among those unemployed or on disability pension, resulting in uneven life opportunities. However, an emerging focus on labour market activation and inclusion is currently changing services from being based on segregated service systems towards Supported Employment programs. SE models have thus been implemented in the Nordic countries through the last ten years with good outcomes. SE programs refer to an "individual placement" model. Job consultants work individually with the person to identify strengths, needs, interests, choices and a virtuous job match.

At the same time, the supported employment models rely on a unilateral diffusion of knowledge from research towards practice and education. However, research, practice, and education are different fields of practice with different societal functions and forms of knowledge. Long-term cooperation is necessary to create, diffuse and contextualize knowledge in the continued development of social work. With this in mind, this workshop aims to facilitate a discussion between participants on the exchange of knowledge about labour market inclusion for people with mental health problems. How do we ensure that users’ and professionals’ experiences are appreciated – in research, in practice and in education?

As a vantage point, users will present insights from their research on labour market inclusion for people with severe mental health problems in Denmark. Following this, several contributors will present insights on:

   1. User experiences of supported employment approach and labour market inclusion.

   2. Challenges in the implementation of supported employment models with respect to existing organizational and institutional structures.

   3. The development of new measures of labour market inclusion in the area of mental health.

ABSTRACTS

Supporting young adults with mental health problems in a “career” – A life cycle focus on labor market inclusion
David Rosenberg (Umeå University, Sweden)

Research investigating outcomes related to evidence-based interventions such as Supported Employment have begun to suggest an expanded focus that includes educational supports, as an essential aspect of supporting sustainable employment in a
The labor market that increasingly demands formal education or training. The aim of this project is to develop knowledge regarding the components of Supported Education that are feasible to develop within established SE/IPS services and to study and describe the relevance of these services for young adults experiencing mental health problems.

A lack of educational opportunities is clearly connected to increased vulnerability, to reduced social capital, to exclusion from participating fully in the society and in turn to worsened mental health. A life-course approach, which looks at how risks during formative or transitional stages may affect both mental health, and participation in employment for many years or even a lifetime, is particularly relevant in analyzing the needs of young people attempting to pursue post-secondary education.

The initial results of this study, which included a literature review and interviews with students and study coaches, pointed to the complex challenges of transitioning to adulthood when struggling with mental health problems. Traditional services which offer the individual a particular problem-based intervention, seem to miss the more holistic aspects of the process of establishing oneself as an independent adult, that a focus on “career” might help to develop. The tensions between research focused on establishing evidence and the real needs of vulnerable groups with complex life problems will be discussed.

Facilitators and barriers for sustainable implementation of support to work-models in a sectored community mental health service system

Urban Markström (Umeå university, Sweden & Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki, Finland)

The present research project have studied the implementation of integrated support models (mainly Individual Placement and Support, IPS) in Sweden. Implementation strategies used at several levels have been analyzed, including the national political level, organizational level and team level. This presentation aims to discuss the main findings of barriers and facilitators for sustainable implementation of these interventions in a sectored community mental health service system.

Method: Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze political steering strategies. The Sustainable Implementation Scale (SIS), based on findings from implementation science, was used to assess effectiveness of implementation. The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale was used to assess program fidelity of 14 local programs that were followed during three years. Data of the selected programs’ target groups and sustainability was used in order to assess the programs establishment in the welfare system’s regular services.

Results: Sustainable implementation of the selected models is possible, but several barriers in and between different organizational levels exist. Preparations and collaboration strategies are crucial for teams and organizations. The system level includes several inconsistencies that hamper effective implementation.

Conclusions: Political steering, involved agencies’ organizations and the models supposed to be implemented has to be better aligned. A more holistic approach is needed in order to promote supportive horizontal and vertical inter-organizational relationships.
How to help people with mental health problems getting a job in a Danish welfare context – experiences from users of the Individual Placement and Support model

Julie Rahbæk Møller, Jesper Andersen & Sidse Rubens le Fevre (University College Copenhagen, Denmark)

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach is a supported employment program for people with severe mental health problems. IPS is based on an ideology that interventions should reflect the service user’s goals and preferences and should thus be evaluated from a user perspective. This paper is based on such an evaluation and is conducted by two experienced researchers and two research assistants with personal experience from the IPS-intervention. This form of participatory research has proven to be highly beneficial from the thematic and methodological planning of the project, in the fieldwork, and also in this preliminary stage of analyzing data.

In this presentation, we will address two main analytical points. Firstly, the empirical data points to time, tempo and flexibility as important factors in the IPS candidates’ experience of the IPS model. Most, if not all, of the participants in IPS have been unemployed for years. Increasingly, marginalized people are met with a system – usually jobcenters – that many find to be stressful rather than helpful. The IPS-model, however, offers no time limits and participants are met by the same IPS consultant during their time in the intervention. Secondly, the interviews reveal the importance of contributing to society in various forms. Even though the aim of IPS is to help people into the ordinary jobs, the participants’ clarification of the way they might contribute to society is very important, whether they become part of the ordinary labor market or after several attempts realize that their way of contributing to society could be through various forms of volunteer work.

6 Migrant encounters with the local welfare state

Coordinators: Maija Jäppinen, Hanna Kara, Camilla Nordberg & Anna-Leena Rii-taoja, University of Helsinki

This workshop has a broad focus on encounters between people who have migrated to the global north and the local welfare state. We welcome critical analyses and debates on the interaction between different categories of migrants and the formal and informal street-level welfare state: social work, social and health care, employment services, social security provision, third sector organizations etc. We are particularly concerned with the ways in which the neoliberal restructuring of the Nordic welfare with increasing marketization, cost-effectiveness, managerialism and individualization as well as nationalist populist voices are manifest in street-level institutional practice.

Some key issues that we would like to discuss in the workshop are:

- How can the local welfare state enable (or constrain) possibilities for agency, recognition and redistribution, and ultimately enhancing the living conditions for migrant background individuals in the contemporary Nordic welfare state?
- What methodological challenges are activated in research on migration and welfare institutional encounters?

We invite presentations based on academic research and welfare professional practice. Please state clearly in your abstract which of these categories your presentation
adheres to. We will encourage participants to submit either a full paper or a presenta-
tion summary for circulation to the other participants no later than two weeks before
the start of the conference.

**ABSTRACTS**

**Language Brokering: The use of children as interpreters in social services**

*Kristina Gustafsson (Linnaeus University, Sweden)*

This paper departs from a study conducted in 2017 with the purpose to map how so-
cial services staff handle communication with patients who have difficulty under-
standing and acquiring information in Swedish. The study is based on a survey di-
rected towards social workers in the areas of disability and financial assistance and
on focus group interviews with persons who have experience of language brokering
for parents and friends in public service settings. In this paper the experiences of
these persons is presented and analysed in relation to the results of the survey. We
have used an argumentation analysis in order to find pros and cons for language bro-
kering among the interviewed. The experiences of acting as a language broker in the
family is complex though. From a family perspective, it is often a non-negotiable task
for the child. It functions as a coping strategy for the family with migration experi-
ences who do not speak the language of the new country. From the perspective of the
child it is a responsibility that gives power in the family and society. That creates feel-
ings of proud, but is also a burden that create anxiety. The changed power relations
between parents and children can also be negative. We do also analyse the conse-
quences from a societal perspective. Our main conclusion is that the use of children
as language brokers in public service setting can be considered as structural discrim-
ination of service users and their children who do not speak the language of the ma-
jority population, i. e. Swedish.

**Dynamics of dependency in the lives of young intra-EU migrants in con-
ditions of precarious employment and multilevel conditionality of social protec-
tion**

*Anna Simola (University of Helsinki, Finland)*

Contemporary welfare reforms in Europe have introduced new benefit conditionality
in order to activate citizens and to combat ‘welfare dependency’. However, when
young Europeans fulfil the ideals of active workers citizenship by making use of their
right to free movement within the EU, they may, paradoxically, confront accusations
of ‘welfare tourism’ and increasing conditionality in their access to rights that EU law
endows to mobile ‘EU workers’. This paper analyses the dynamics of dependency
produced by these institutional and regulatory environments in the lives of young
university educated intra-EU migrants from Denmark, Finland, Italy and Spain who
have moved to Brussels to work but who have ended up working under atypical and
precarious contractual arrangements and experienced periods of unemployment. The
argument is that policies that are designed to encourage individuals to economic self-
sufficiency may, in conditions of de-regularised and precarious labour markets, serve
to hinder young people from achieving economic and socio-legal independence and
instead produce private dependencies from their parents and even from their part-
ners. The analysis shows that these dependencies take specific and contradictory
forms in the context of intra-EU migration, where also families may fail to provide
sufficient levels of protection to their members to secure their labour market transi-
tions during mobility. While some of the basic questions of redistributive justice in-
creasingly seem to lack clear answers in the lives of intra-EU migrants in precarious
employment, young insecure workers may find themselves ‘on their own’, directly exposed to the whims of the markets.

**Urban Social Work and Encounters with Welfare Services in Urban Settings**

*Ilse Julkunen, Maria Tapola-Haapala, Anna Nurmi, Päivi Heino & Karolina Asén*  
(University of Helsinki, Finland)

The increased number of migrants and asylum-seekers in Europe bring out the issue of permission to entrance in a country but also the settling itself, that is questions of social citizenship, inclusion and well-being. The process is conditioned by legal frameworks and welfare policies that have both great impact on the everyday lives of migrants. From a social work perspective the issue actualises the questions of integration and the role of welfare service, be it public or non-governmental. The pressure of the increased number of migrants has to a great extent concerned urban settings. Still, the urban dimension of social work is not sufficiently focused on. A recent scoping review under construction has shown that the urban surroundings entail a greater need to cooperate in complex networks, with many organizations and actors providing social services. It is also an issue of vibrant changes of social change and development, which holds the scope of assets and recourses available for practice.

In this paper we want to set out and critically address urban social work and the emergent and developing practices for inclusion of migrants. We ask: What are the critical elements of urban social work with migrants? And how can these be understood in a complex myriad of networks? And what does this mean for future social work?

The research project is carried out in co-operation with University of Helsinki, department of Social Work and Diaconia University of Applied Sciences. The project is conducted in Helsinki Capital Region (Cities of Espoo, Helsinki, Vantaa) and in the city of Lahti and is funded through the Helsinki Metropolitan Region Urban Research Program.

This two-year study draws on a multi-sited research paying attention to migrants’ and social work professionals’ practical knowledge on integration processes. The main data is collected through group interviews with welfare service clients and practitioners in public institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) in Cities of Espoo, Helsinki, Vantaa and Lahti. The study has a collaborative framework with the aim to create local knowledge on the emergent and critical elements that are effective in integration processes. The collaborative framework has enhanced workshops with both professionals as well as clients. These were formed dialogically during the study and have been included in the final analysis.

We believe that dialogues and negotiations between different actors throughout the research process may enhance knowledge building and changes at the individual and organizational level. An outline of an urban social work approach based on the scoping review as well as on the interviews and the collaborative seminars will be presented.

Key words migrants, inclusion, urban social work, complex networks.
The power of co-creation in the design and delivery of services for refugees
Janet Anand (University of Eastern Finland)

Immigration has beneficial effects in promoting the diversity of recipient societies. However, the consequence of mass migration, as recently experienced in Nordic countries, is an opening up of perennial rupture lines relating to social cohesion, social integration, security and equality. Contemporary welfare states face major challenges in promoting social inclusion given unprecedented diversity. Finnish social workers, who play a key role in integration, voice frustration as to the need for intercultural practices and safety, ensuring migrants basic social, cultural and religious rights (Metteri, 2017). The STN funded PROMEQ New Start Finland! study (https://www.promeq.fi/FI) has raised critical questions as to how fit for purpose are current resettlement services in light of recent survey results on the health and well-being of refugees in regional Finland (PROMEQ Baseline Survey, 2016). The power of co-creation in addressing diversity was explored through social marketing pilots, which involved a unique collaboration between granted asylum seekers as service users (N=60) and community based services providers (N=7). Findings from four PROMEQ funded social integration initiatives are outlined using a case study analysis, providing new insights as to the key principles and pitfalls in the application of co-creation and social marketing. In conclusion, co-creation represents a new landscape in the design and delivery of health and social services for migrants.

Social work with unaccompanied minors in times of restrictive migration policy
Ulrika Wernersjö (Linköping University, Sweden)

In the midst of the so-called "refugee crisis" in 2015, and less than three months after the Swedish Prime minister declared that his "Europe has no borders", the government declared a need for a "breathing space" in the reception of asylum-seekers. Since then, a provisional law (2016:752) that restricts asylum-seekers’ possibilities for (permanent) residency and family reunification has been enforced. Today, permanent residency is only eligible for those who can demonstrate financial self-sufficiency through work. The question is how this potentially reshapes social work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors. Further, how is it negotiated with the concept of integration. These questions are motivated by research on the reception of unaccompanied minors in Sweden tends to focus on the transition from care to independence, and notions of "Swedish" norms and values (see Stretmo & Melander 2013, Söderqvist 2017).

This paper is based on a research project on social workers’ assessment of the needs and situation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors, and how notions of gender, ethnicity and age shape how these needs are conceptualised. In the paper, I will discuss how the social workers talk about their work with unaccompanied minors and the challenges they encounter using critical and constructivist perspectives, with particular focus on how they negotiate what the concept integration means in a time of restrictive migration policy. The analysis shows that they negotiate this tension in different ways: while some denounce the possibility of talking about – or working towards – integration today, others stress that it has never been as important.
Newcomer stay-at-home mothers’ acts of citizenship in the local Finnish welfare state
Camilla Nordberg (Swedish School of Social Science at University of Helsinki, Finland)

Migration regimes as well as gender, care, welfare, and citizenship regimes constitute an intersecting socio-political framework through which citizenship is locally experienced and enacted. The paper aims at exploring the tension between newcomer stay-at-home mothers’ every-day acts of citizenship and the normative understanding of welfare state incorporation manifest in different street-level interactions. The analysis is based on a longitudinal ethnographic study, carried out in the capital region of Finland over a period of four years (2013-2016). The field work constituted in-depth interviews and participatory observations related to street-level encounters in social welfare offices, public health clinics, daycare centers and employment services. This paper draws on constructed case stories from the earliest stage of settlement, pointing to the ways in which research participants claim moral space as future citizens through active engagements with the state, through various mothering techniques and techniques of the self and as citizens.

Negotiating access in ethnographic fieldwork on social work with migrants
Maija Jäppinen & Hanna Kara (Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki, Finland)

This paper considers the initial phase of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the project Ordering the ‘Migrant Family’: Power Asymmetry Work and Citizenization in Restructuring Welfare Professional Bureaucracies. After presenting the fieldwork setting, we discuss different challenges in creating and negotiating access to the institutional settings of social services for empirical research on social work done with immigrant background service-users in the capital region in Finland. The possibility and access to do ethnographic research in institutional settings with social workers and service-users becomes an object of negotiation within several levels: municipal institutional, municipal managerial, managerial professional, professional and service-user levels. Through some practical examples, we wish to discuss research ethics in these initial phases of a study, in the arranging, creating and negotiating access and trust. We will also discuss the consequences that different ethical challenges and dilemmas faced in this phase may have for the research as a whole.

Comparative Social Work Practices with Refugee Families and Young People: Experiences from Finland, United Kingdom, Malta, Italy and Serbia
Ayu Pratiwi & Outi Linnossuo (Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland)

The numbers of unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum protection as refugees are staggering. Many studies highlight the importance of providing social support for child refugees and asylum seekers shortly after arrival, as the initial support affecting their psychological, physical, and emotional well-being is essential in facilitating their integration. Despite the increasing interest in improving their wellbeing, studies examining the links between social work practices in the recipient countries, the migration context, and the diverse needs of youth refugees, are still limited. This paper builds a comparative perspective of youth social work policy, practices, and engagement related to young refugees’ psychosocial support in Finland, United Kingdom, Malta, Italy, and Serbia. We draw comparison upon social work policies and professional practices in each country, and analyze its migration context. Next, we solicited 48 good practices in youth social work and identified the
central theme of social work practices. We found that while the majority of youth programs are run by NGOs at national level, in Finland, support from public institutions is equally acknowledged. Social work practices in the first transit-point countries emphasize services on socioeconomic empowerment, focusing on labor market-ready skills. In the second destination countries, the artistic and social initiatives (means to cope with mental health issues) as well as person-centered support services (mentoring and advocacy) are more dominant, indicating the prevalent attempt to improve psychological and social wellbeing of the young refugees to resume normal life and to seek for role models, which would result in better integration.

**Conceptualisations of migrant encounters with the local welfare state in social work degree courses, course literature and in professional literature**

*Anna-Leena Riitaoja (Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki, Finland)*

This presentation discusses how migrant encounters with the local welfare state are conceptualised in social work and social service course contents and literature in Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences. Moreover, I discuss how professional literature and texts that social workers read as part of their work and professional development, conceptualises migrant encounters with the welfare state.

The interest is, what categorisations, positioning and identities are constructed for migrants, professionals and the local welfare state as an actor. What kind of theorisations about clients, professions and professionals, the welfare state and professional work the constructions are based on?

The material include course descriptions (aims, contents and literature) from six universities and five universities of applied sciences in Finland during years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, and professional literature mentioned by social workers in an ethnographic project titled “Ordering the ‘Migrant Family’: Power Asymmetry Work and Citizenization in Restructuring Welfare Professional Bureaucracies” (Academy of Finland 2013-2018).

**Empowerment in the context of emerging adulthood, migration and education**

*Juri Kilian (University of Kassel, Germany)*

Migration and integration of refugees are big challenges of contemporary German society. The social work sector in Germany working with refugees has become a highly important field of the profession especially since 2015, when close to a million people – most of them without identification papers – have come to Germany to seek asylum. Especially for the youth welfare sector the situation has become a big challenge. In the last two years, tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors have been placed in residential care settings of social agencies where they live until they turn 18 years old. After becoming an adult under German law, young care leavers in Germany have the right to apply for social pedagogical support up to the age of 21, according to the German Children and Youth Law. Due to the sharp increase of total numbers of young care leavers and certain professional regulations this field of social work is currently highly relevant for the profession and many social workers and social pedagogues are working in this sector to deliver youth care services for young adults. The presentation will focus on this field and introduce social work concepts and methods which characterize the work with refugees in emerging adulthood while leaving the youth care system.
7 Narrative and discursive approaches in exploring power relations

Coordinators: Laura Tarkiainen, University of Helsinki & Eveliina Heino, University of Helsinki

This workshop will provide the opportunity for discussion and exchange of experiences in approaching the issue of power as a socially constructed phenomenon. The workshop will focus on narrative and discursive approaches, and seeks to bring together researches across the Social Sciences with a keen interest in presenting their empirical and/or methodological work.

Presentations in this workshop may illustrate representations and negotiations of power relationships by using examples of narrative or discursive analysis related to themes like poverty, unemployment, migration and/or mental health. In addition, presentations may involve reflections of concepts such as agency, identity, responsibility, deservingness, group membership and citizenship. Empirical and methodological examples may utilise data from interviews, policy documents, media texts and/or naturally occurring frontline or otherwise institutional practice.

Abstract proposals that outline the research question, methodology and expected finding should be submitted before May 21st, 2018.

ABSTRACTS

Eventually I understood that I had not realized any of my dreams. Intimate partner violence, masculinity
Guðrún Kristinsdóttir & Jón Kjaran (School of Education, University of Iceland)

Violence in intimate relationships is in most cases gender-based in the sense that women are often victims and men perpetrators. It is imperative to incorporate theories on gender/masculinity and pro-feminist perspective when researching IPV. Findings indicate that 42% of women in Iceland, 16 years of age, have during their lifetime experienced violence, usually within their home. The attention has mainly been on violence against women and children but male-focused services are scarce. However, a small psychological service is operating where males can seek assistance as well as to a recent interdisciplinary centre. We believe that focusing on intimate male violence can advise and add new light on this serious health problem. Part of our project is to focus on male perpetrators of domestic/intimate violence and get insight into their experiences. Interviews were conducted with 10 male perpetrators who had all gone through some kind of treatment. In this paper we present our findings from this study and focus on the following questions: How do participants in our study explain intimate partner violence? How do they construct themselves as subjects of violence and give account of their violent behaviour? In our analysis we draw on the works of Hearn who has in his research on violence in intimate relationship taken pro-feminist approach. This entails critical stance to masculinity and the patriarchal systems that sustain violence and subjugation of women. We also refer to his frame of analysis of how men give account of the violent acts, focusing on blame, justifications and taking responsibility. The accounts reveal a therapeutic discourse, a masculinity breadwinner mentality and an interest in nourishing family bonds; all beneficial to understand dilemmas and contradictions in the experiences of interviewees.
Constructions of agency: an analysis of social work documents concerning the need for 24/7 care
Veera Korhonen (University of Helsinki, Finland)

According to previous research, the agency of elderly people is often constructed as a dichotomy. The elderly are described either as independent and active citizens or as frail people depending on the decisions and actions of others. But if agency is understood as a social construct, the understanding of elderly people as agents can be more varied than the general distinctions between activity and passivity.

In my master's thesis, I consider the constructions of agency within social work documents concerning the need for 24/7 care. My theoretical framework consists of social constructionism, critical discursive psychology and positioning theory. Whilst research concerning agency often focuses on how agents make things happen ('agency-over'), my thesis also considers the concept of 'agency-for', i.e. for whom the agents act and whose interests they serve. Whilst I focus on the agency of elderly social work clients, I also observe the other actors, e.g. social workers and other professionals mentioned in the documents.

My research material consists of 30 documents in which social workers and other professionals assess their elderly clients’ need for 24/7 care. According to my research, the agency of the elderly is multifaceted and often ambivalent. Whilst the elderly are constructed as agents within the assessment process, the idea of them being agentic is often defined and valued by other agents. The main agents within the assessment process are the professionals, who write the documents and make the decisions. Thus, it becomes interesting to consider the concept of agency-for: who are the principals for whom the professionals act?

Transitions within mental health services: how the workers of supported housing unit explain and justify clients’ service transitions in team meeting conversations
Kirsi Günther & Johanna Ranta (University of Tampere, Finland)

Scattered structures of mental health services might have an impact on possibilities for getting suitable services and long-term help and support for mental health problems. In our presentation, we explore how the workers of the supported housing unit talk about clients’ transitions within mental health services. We ask what kind of mental health service transitions are located in the workers' team meeting conversations, and how the workers explain and justify clients’ service transitions. The team meetings (N=6) are weekly arranged, informal conversations where the workers together report and evaluate each client's situation, progress of the rehabilitation and plans for the future. Thus, there are different dimensions of the power present in the team meetings. In our presentation, we will discuss these dimensions. The workers explain and justify clients' transitions on the viewpoints of the clients, workers and mental health service system. The workers explain the transitions 1) with the mental health problem of the client, 2) with their own inability to give help and support the client, 3) client’s nonalignment to help and support, 4) with the structures of the mental health services and 5) choices made by the client.
Female prisoners’ narratives on violence: Talking about and talking back to normality
Vera Virolainen (University of Tamper, Finland)

In the case of female prisoners, the meaning of social relations with their children and spouses in desistance from the crime is remarkable. Female inmates consider a successful life after release to include helping their family and other people, living free from criminal justice involvement, persevering and living 'normal life'. On the other hand, female convicts are culturally and socially categorized as deviants, since they have been living in the marginals of society. Women who have ended up in prison have heavy histories of social problems, including having been objects and subjects of violence. When the perpetrator of violence is a woman, she is making cracks to the categorizations of a law-abiding, violent-free citizen and a nurturing, safe woman. Culturally these women are deviating from the 'normality' of non-criminality and femininity. How do women convicted of violent crimes themselves talk about and talk back to the 'normality'? 

In my presentation, I analyse female prisoners’ talk constructing and deconstructing normality in the contexts of prison and release. The data consists of the follow-up interviews I have conducted with the women. While the majority of women participating the study has constructed normality as living violent and crime free life, some of the women have also talked back to this preconditioned goal of normality. In my paper, I look into the variety and changes of normality talk. As the theoretical frame of my study is narrative criminology, I am interested in how the talk constructs the identities and agency of the women and thus their desistance from the crime.

Case conferences as informal backstage meetings - studying priorities used by social workers in assessment conversations
Anna Olaison (Centre for Social Work – CESAR, Uppsala University, Sweden); Annika Tagizadeh Larsson & Johannes H. Österholm (Linköping University, Sweden)

There are few studies in social work with older people today that cast light on how case conferences function as assessments. The focus of this presentation is one case that is considered as difficult as it falls between the cracks amongst two legislations (regarding services in elderly care and disability services). The data consist of recordings of two informal backstage meetings amongst social workers in one Swedish social work agency. The case conferences was analyzed using discourse analysis. Case conferences officially have an informal advisory stated function. However, the study demonstrates that the talk in the case conferences is rich in arguments about priorities and how to dismiss solutions with different dimensions of assessment making depending on which legislation the social workers rely on. The arguments used in case conferences to dismiss different solutions are related to (i) Cultural arguments including relatives' involvement in care, language reasons- and integration (ii) Organizational and legal arguments including organization's resources and economic arguments. (iii) Specific arguments related to the client or a group with the same diagnosis. The results show that case conference regarding elderly care services, relies more on cultural arguments, as these assessments are based on the Social Service Act which are a framework legislation which opens up for more interpretations by the social workers. The case conference regarding disability services are based more on legal and organizational arguments as it relies on the 'Act Concerning Support and Services to Persons with Certain Functional Impairments' which is a civil rights legislations which gives clearer directives for the social workers. By making case conferences visible as everyday assessment practices, the findings suggests that there is a de-clientificating process in practice which is directed by categorization were cultur-
al, organizational as well as legislative arguments are at play. As a result, there is no attempt to treat or change the individual’s social problems.

**How to cope with being recognized as a “Northerner” – a study on subjectification among young people in the North of Norway**  
*Anne-Marith Rasmussen (UiT The Arctic University of Norway)*

In my PhD-project, I am doing research on subjectification among college students in the Northern part of Norway, in the northeasternmost town on the border to Russia and Finland\(^1\). The research is based on participant observation in the school environment and semi-structured interviews with 25 students and five teachers. The discussion focuses on which discourses, subject positions and narratives that are active in the students’ subjectification, and how they maneuver in and between discourses. One of the findings is that discourses relating to place affiliation, and to the relation between the North and South in Norway, are central to the informants in their subjectification. How do they deal with being recognized/positioned as “a Northerner”? The dominating discourses concerning the relationship between the North and South in Norway, are producing the Northern part of Norway as “the Other” in relation to the more urban areas in the South, and as exotic and/or backwards and peripheral.

To be able to understand how people in marginalized positions\(^2\) can maneuver in and between different discourses, and what kind of opportunities and constraints they produce for themselves and others is important for social workers because it makes us able to affect marginalization processes.

\(^1\) Finnmark is the northernmost county in Norway. The county contains about 15% of the Norwegian areal, but only 1.5% of its inhabitants (75 000 people). The school I visited, had about 550 students from the eastern part of Finnmark.

\(^2\) Being in a position as «the Other» can be understood as being marginalized because you are marked as different from the unmarked majority/norm.

**Power within the relation, power over the situation**  
*Kerstin Svensson & Marcus Knutagård (School of Social Work, Lund University, Sweden)*

What has the transportation of prisoners to do with social work? In our research project on *Social logistics and discretion in prisoner transportation* we conducted an observational study on prisoner transportations with a specific focus on the handover of a client from a transportation to a prison or correctional facility. We travelled together with the transporters during ten days. After the observations we also interviewed 15 transporters. The results showed that there is a chain of micro assessments and decisions that the transporters do within a very strict framework. They need to analyse the client’s trustworthiness in a matter of seconds and to continuously assess the situation in order to bring all the clients from one destination to another. This procedure elucidates the discretionary power and the power in the relation between the client and the transporter. It also shows the importance of establishing power over a situation, even if it is encapsulated in an unspoken agreement from both parties. The specific situation when a client is being picked up or dropped off at a prison is the scene where the transporters and the clients interact in a very formalised way at the same time as every situation is unique. The procedures make up a distinct choreography of positions, interactions and decisions that is highly relevant for all kinds of social work. In this paper we argue that doing micro analysis of interaction in specific situations makes it possible for understanding the power in relations also in social work.
Discourses on unemployed individuals’ deservingness in parliamentary discussion in Finland  
Laura Tarkiainen (University of Helsinki, Finland)

This presentation focuses on study of rhetorical discourse analysis on unemployed individuals’ deservingness. The data of analysis consists of talk of members of Finnish parliament debating on activation model for unemployment benefits in December 2017. As a result of an analysis, three varying discursive constructions of unemployed individuals’ deservingness were identified and named: ‘effortful citizen with lack of control’, ‘needy citizen deserving state’s reciprocal acts’ and ‘undeserving freeloader in need of attitude alteration’. The focus of analysis lies on how both deservingness and undeservingness are rhetorically accomplished and treated as factual in politicians’ accounts. The analysis pays particular attention on the question of how speakers build factuality through management of categorisation and extrematisation and minimisation. The results reflect the negotiated nature of deservingness as well as varying constructions of unemployed individuals’ responsibility.

In the crossroads of social work and cultural studies: Survival as a cultural formation  
Miina Kartinen (University of Tampere, Finland)

Everyday media culture is full of stories about survival. From magazines to news broadcasts to celebrity biographies, and from relationship issues to chronic illness, survivors’ stories are inevitably an intrinsic part of contemporary culture. Scholars are speaking about survivor discourse to describe this cultural framework that is connected to the therapeutic technologies, personalization of trauma and in the end the neoliberal regime. But what meanings do mediated survival stories have for social work?

From the point of view of social work, survival is never solely a question of individual’s coping practices. Rather it can be understood through the concept of resilience, as a continuous, inter-subjective process of life that has its social and cultural dimensions. The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to the everyday discursive practices in which resilience is being constructed and negotiated in the media.

The research, that theoretically connects cultural studies and social work, examines portrait interviews of Finnish singer Katri Helena in local magazines and newspapers. Katri Helena started her career already in the 60’s and has stayed in the public eye ever since. As part of her public career she has talked a lot about her personal losses in the media, such as becoming a widow and a single-mum when her children were small.

Through critical discourse analysis, this research studies how are meanings for resilience being constructed when the story of Katri Helena is being narrated in the media texts. By reflecting concepts such as nostalgia and gender, the research sheds light on the meanings of everyday stories and their implications for social work in the context of survival. The importance of multidisciplinary research about social issues is also discussed. The research suggests that the global social work ethical principles call for determined search for diversity, vulnerability and momentariness within the flow of survival stories in contemporary culture.
8 Power and social work education

Coordinators: Marcus Knutagård, Camilla Nordberg, Torkel Richert, Karin Waleur & Monica Kjørstad, Nordic Association of Schools of Social Work (NASSW)

The world is facing huge challenges regarding globalization, climate change, increasing resource scarcity, population growth, neoliberal transformations and growing inequality. These types of global concerns also affect social work in the Nordic countries and put pressure on social work education to respond to the current problems that we are facing. We can also see a movement towards the digitalization of social work. All these matters bring the concept of power at the fore. What role can social work education play?

In the Nordic countries, we can see different trends regarding power over social work education. State regulations and governance affect the curricula and the practice field calls for education and research that can be applied in the day to day work of the practitioners. Concepts like co-production puts attention towards the importance of service-user participation. But, who has the power over social work education and how can power in social work education be understood? The educators have an important role and have, in many ways, a great possibility to influence social work education. This position calls for a reflective practice on power relationships and how different forms of knowledge can be included in social work education and what roles schools of social work can play in tackling the challenges that we are facing now and in the future.

ABSTRACTS

Power Relations in Social Work Education - Teachers’ Strategies and Experiences of Ethnicity in Sweden
Helene Jacobson Pettersson (Linnaeus University, Sweden) & Linda Lill (Malmö University, Sweden)

The shifting demographics that come with migration and the globalization of societies have changed the settings for social work education in Sweden. One essential question is how social work education has responded to the demographic changes. The overall purpose of this presentation is to discuss the implications of the concept of ethnicity in social work and how it is manifested in social work education in Sweden. The presentation refers to data from an investigation of the teaching strategies that are used and the content that teachers address in relation to ethnicity in social work education. According to the interviewees, most steering documents are vague and lack learning objectives about the subject of ethnicity. This brings the concept of power at the fore since the vague steering documents both limit and provide scope for action. The results show that this leads to an individualization of the teaching of ethnicity. Additional this creates a limitation on how structural elements come into play in relation to ethnicity, and in turn, leads to a shortage of a critical analysis of the construction of social problems where ethnicity plays a fundamental role. Another conclusion is that in social work education in Sweden individual circumstances precede theoretical perspectives on social problems related to ethnicity, migration, transnational relations, globalization and racism.

Key words: ethnic relations, social work education, social work curriculum, power in social work education and ethic relations, teaching strategies.
Power balance in parallel supervision with students working closely with families
Mari Nordstand & Nina Skjefstad (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

Supervised field practice is an important component in social work education. This paper describes an innovation project based on some critical views about field practice training and supervision in Norwegian universities and colleges. The students got ordinary supervision from their field supervisors, and in addition we supervised them; what we call parallel supervision. A goal with the field practice was that the students should work closely with one family each. The supervision was focused on how the students reflected upon this work which to a large extent was done outside the office. Analyses of interviews with the students showed that the power balance between the student and us as supervisors in this setting was more equal. The same goes for the power balance between the students and the families when working closely together in a setting outside the office. Our main concern is that better quality will depend on interaction between students, their supervisors and social work education staff during placements.

Challenging traditional power relations through social work education?
Experiences from a cross-sectorial partnership exploring new subject positions in social work
Rikke Egaa Jørgensen & Charlotte Rosenberg (Center for Social Work and Administration, University College Absalon, Denmark)

Transformations of the welfare state are not only changing the governance of public welfare services, it is also changing the expectations towards, and positions available to, welfare professionals, not least social work professionals. Being central agents of the implementation of state policies, the management of welfare professions are of central concern to the welfare state (Larsen 2013). This concern puts strong demands on social work education as well, expressed i.e. through regulations of curricula and recurrent accreditation schemes. While being a target of state governmentality, social work education plays a crucial role not only in shaping future social work practitioners, but also in questioning and trying out different forms of state-citizens relations and different spaces for participation through enabling new subject positions and knowledge formations.

The aim of this paper is to present our preliminary reflections of an empirical material constructed from a cross-sectorial, explorative partnership between the Social Work Program at the University College Absalon and INSP!, a local community organization in the town of Roskilde. Drawing on student experiences from different forms of engagement and interactions with/ in the spaces provided by INSP!, we investigate what happens when students of social work are encouraged to think and interact outside institutionalized spaces and established subject positions of ‘the professional’, ‘user’ or ‘target-group’.

Responding to Intimate Partner Violence in Social Work Education
Sisko Piippo (University of Eastern Finland) & Leo Nyqvist (University of Turku, Finland)

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global phenomenon dealing with the intentional use of abusive force to obtain and/or maintain power over the victim. In 2015, Finland ratified the first EU-wide convention for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), where violence against women is named as a human rights violation and a form of discrimination, thus illustrating the clear responsibility of the state to respond to IPV. As part of the ratification process, municipalities have a duty to organize adequate services for IPV victims and this is also highlighted in the renewed Social Welfare Act of 2015.

When implementing this in social work practice, social workers will have to be able to both recognize and intervene in unequal power relations. The prevalence of IPV-related courses has varied between universities, but generally speaking, IPV has not been a visible topic in the social work curricula. As a part of the Finnish National University Network for Social Work (SOSNET) actions in this regard, the first national web-based course – “Intimate Partner Violence and Agency Response” – was piloted for social work students in six Finnish universities in 2016. The students’ learning experiences from the IPV course were researched through a frame analysis.

From the students’ reflections in their learning diaries (n = 54), learning was identified as taking place through four different frames: professional capabilities, experiential reflection, phenomena-related delimitation and changes in attitudes. With web-based education, it is possible to achieve significant results in terms of clinical skills, although direct contact with the client and the teacher is missing. The high number of violent incidents personally experienced or witnessed by the students demonstrates the sensitivity of the subject and also poses challenges for effective IPV-related e-learning.

Service users as supervisors in social work education – mending the gap of powerrelations
Mette Fløystad Kvammen (School of Social work, University of Agder, Norway) & Tabitha Wright Nielsen (School of Social Work, Lund University, Sweden)

In Social work education, there is a growing recognition that the experiences from the social service users represent knowledge, which is important for the developing and improvement of social work education, research and practice (Heule et. al 2017) The role of service users must change from being an object of research to an agent in the development of knowledge.

Within social work education the meeting between students and social service users often takes place during the student’s practical placements period, or if social service users occasionally are being invited “to tell their stories” for the students in big classes. These kinds of meetings between students and service users are defined by differences in power and status, and could in some sense be seen as meetings, that are marking the gap of powerrelations between service users and social work students instead of mending the gap (Heule et. al 2017)

Based on experiences from social work education at University of Agder; Norway and Lund University, Sweden, we want to argue for a gap-mending involvement of service users in the education of social work by their involvement as supervisors of the social work students. Furthermore we want to argue that this kind of service user involvement in education must be on equal terms with other teachers and supervisors in the
education. This means a recognition of the knowledge the service user holds as being as important as the academic knowledge presented by teachers in the social work education, or by the professional social workers supervising the students.

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Field training in the Global South and unequal power relations: On the challenges of encounters
Jessica H. Jönsson (Mid Sweden University, Sweden) & Aina Lian Flem (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

International field training offers unique opportunity for social work students to deepen their understandings of dominant social forces and power relations behind the reproduction of inequalities. Field training in the Global South is often influenced by many students’ colonial discourses and ignorance of their ‘whiteness of power’ received through their West-centric education in the Global North. This creates a challenge for social work educators to properly prepare students for field training in Global South. In this study, based on a mixed method approach, web survey, focus groups and document review of field reports, we examine how international field training influence Swedish and Norwegian students’ knowledge and personal and professional development. The study is guided by the questions: ‘What exemplify inequality of power encountered by the students conducting field training in the Global South?’, ‘What prevent and enable students in identifying unequal power relations during international field training?’, ‘How can social work educators ensure that social work students disentangle power dynamics at personal and structural levels? The results of the study show that international field training can both contribute to deepening students’ understanding of power and privileges and also reinforce their a priori ‘Us’ and ‘Them’-based knowledge. This means that social work educators bear a major responsibility for developing critical curriculums including pedagogical practices using critical reflection of how own biases, assumptions and dominant worldviews may affect the ways students perceive differences and power relations in international field trainings in the Global South.

Social work education addressing anti-oppressive perspective in a changing welfare state in Norway
Ann Kristin Alseth & Aina Lian Flem (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

Neoliberal policies and reforms have changed not only social work practice but also the context of social work education and research. Social work education must address these new political interpretations in a changing welfare state. Neoliberalism and new public management strategies influence social work education in Norway, and a major challenge is the pressure towards cost-effective learning methods. In a disiplin such as social work, which values problem-solving pedagogy and critical self-refelction, more intimate classes and groups are of great importance to explore complex course content that exposes oppression, questions privileges and challenges students experiences and understandings. A central issue is to identify latent and manifest power structures in a neoliberal society to help students understand the dynamics of oppression and privileges. Based on research on our educational practice among diverse students groups in social work (BA), the aim of the presentation is twofold: (1) Provide examples on how students may learn to recognize oppressive structures on different levels in society by means of including new global and critical
perspectives. (2) Discuss how critical pedagogy where students own experiences and worldviews combined with critical perspectives can facilitate learning processes to enhance critical reflexivity. The authors argue that it is still possible to organize teaching and learning in ways where the students are encouraged to uphold social work values, to recognize oppressive structures in society and acknowledge the potential for anti-oppressive work in their role as social workers.

**Diversity in Finnish Social Work Education: The Power of the Outsider’s Gaze**
**Akiko Kosaka & Janet Anand** (University of Eastern Finland)

Each country has its own social work development path given that the profession is embedded in social, political and cultural values of the nation-state (Kornbeck, 2004). Finnish social work is no exception; strong municipality-directed self-governing system has enabled unique local social services and social work practices (the Finnish National University Network for Social Work). In addition to this drive, there has been a surging interest to emerge in internationalization and diversification of the profession especially in social work education. For example, universities implement international recruitment of social work educators and students to increase the compositional diversity. Multiple challenges and strategies exist for the internationalization and diversity of the social work education in Finland. This presentation outlines the challenges and opportunities involved in addressing local and global tensions in the perception of education and research, from the gaze of non-Finnish faculty and students. Findings from a review of the cultural diversity of Finnish social work faculty, students and practitioners will be presented and analyzed. The gap between the vision, the experience and possibilities for the internationalization of Finnish social work education is illuminated by the power of the outsider’s perspective.

**Gap-mending niches in institutionalized social work practice and education**
**Cecilia Heule, Marcus Knutagård & Arne Kristiansen** (School of Social Work, Lund University, Sweden)

The gap-mending concept has been developed within the network of PowerUs (www.powerus.eu). It entails a constant reflection upon what causes and mends gaps between social workers and service users in social work practice, education and research. Within the PowerUs network gap-mending practices have been developed where more reciprocal relationships are aimed for, in joint development projects.

The principles of these practices are similar to those found in research about good practice in recovery of mental illness, and in so-called strength based social work, that emphasizes the importance of enabling niches, rather than an emphasis on categorizing and diagnosing personal problems.

In this presentation we want to discuss the result of a study, where 150 former students have been interviewed a few years after having taken an experimental course – the Mobilization course – in the School of Social Work, Lund University. The course has been given since 2005 and gives the opportunity for two student groups, social work students and students recruited in service user organizations to learn from each other and develop projects of good practice together. In the study we wanted to find out how the course had affected them in their future carriers, and what possibilities or obstacles they experienced in developing gap-mending practices.
Coherence between education and social work practice in a transitional context
Øystein Henriksen (Nord University, Norway)

The relationship between education and practice is complicated. This concerns both the relationship between theory and practice within education and between the learning outcomes from the education programs and the competence requirements within the profession. In the field of education research, the term coherence is often used in studies of such issues. The concept emphasizes the importance of establishing meaningful relationships between conditions that contain tensions. (Antonsky1987, Smedby & Heggen 2014)

At present, new management systems and framework plans for social work educations in Norway are being established (RETHOS 2017). We can identify many different tensions in this work. On the one hand, there is an increased ambition to define social work as a discipline with its own autonomous knowledge base (IASSW 2014). On the other hand, there is a strong focus on education being more practice-near where specific competence requirements within different welfare services should govern the content of education (Meld. St. 13, 2011-12). In this paper, I will discuss the impact that this may have for the coherence between theory and practice in social work education, between education and occupation and between the various social work education programs

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Students facing deprivation in adult and youth social work studies
Sanna-Liisa Liikanen & Susanna Tanskanen (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland)

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) is a national higher education institute with campuses across Finland (Helsinki, Oulu, Pori, Pieksämäki and Turku). There are approximately 3 000 students at Diak.

We are lecturers and teach the second term students in the Bachelor level Degree Program in Social Services. We teach courses about Adult and Youth Social Work and Social Work Methods. During this term students work with long lasting teams.

The basic idea is that students provide their understanding about deprivation and poverty in Finland. The aim of the studies during the term is that students gain own experience of facing the most deprived persons of the community. Part of the students’ studies is carried out in social work fields with clients. It is important that students learn to listen to people, understand their needs and resources and learn ways to empower them. Everyone should be treated equally as humans. The studies offer students professional tools and ways to handle difficult situations of people.
During the study modules students work in teams and do voluntary work especially at food aid and shelters for homeless people. The teams complete a written assignment about a chosen phenomenon of poverty and deprivation, for example about poor families living in the suburbs of Helsinki or former prisoners. These long lasting teams also work with inhabitants / customers in real social service fields like Housing First -residential units.

**Social Work Education, co-production and empowerment. The case of Iceland.**

*Guðný Björg Eydal & Steinunn Hrafnsdóttir (School of Social Sciences, University of Iceland)*

In recent years there has been a growing focus on empowerment, user involvement, social innovation and co-production in welfare services due to challenges and pressures on the welfare system such as new social needs (poverty, exclusion, unemployment etc.) lack of financial resources rising from the economical crisis and demographical changes of societies (Social Service Europe, 2012). The European Union and The Nordic council of Ministers (NMR) have put emphasis on social innovation, user involvement and social entrepreneurship in addressing these challenges especially with regard to inclusion of vulnerable groups into society.

In the lecture the challenges of these pressures will be discussed in the light of social work education and the following questions addressed: What is the responsibility of social work educators to respond to these challenges? How can we develop professionally trained social workers who are able to respond to these future needs? How can we involve users more in our social work education. Examples from the social work education in Iceland will be discussed to throw light on this issues.

### 9 Power and user involvement in social work – perspectives and challenges

**Coordinators: Vibeke Bak Nielsen, Anne Mette Carlslund, Jacob Christensen, Tina Harlev, Katrine Sjørslev Nielsen & Durita Johansen, FORSA Denmark, board members**

In both social and health care, there is currently an increasing interest in the citizen and a user perspective. This occurs within social work practice and research concerning children and young people, socially vulnerable groups and the public’s contact with the health system. The question is what this trend stems from and what perspectives this gives for research, education and practice.

Social work and social policy involves the involvement of the citizen at a central pivotal point. We see examples of the children’s area, where the focus is on strengthening the involvement of children and young people in their own case.

Another perspective of practical social work is centered on accountability of the exposed adult citizen in relation to his or her own life. The question is in this context whether the citizen’s perspective and involvement are challenged by different values about what will be the right and the best for the individual’s life in a given situation.

The involvement of citizens' voices in welfare-professional work thus encompasses both tradition and a variety of potentials, but also raises a number of questions, prac-
tical and research ethical issues that address how these citizen voices are discussed and how the involvement of the citizen’s perspective is linked to the framework conditions made available for work in the social and health field.

At FORSA Denmark’s annual meeting, we will follow this trend and shed light on both the overall trends and explanations while we invite presentations and dialogue about specific projects that have worked extraordinarily with the involvement of the citizen perspective. With this workshop, we also want to involve the Nordic perspective in the discussions on the direction in which the user involvement is moving.

We welcome presentations based both on academic research and on professional practice, and we don’t require presentations to be based on full written papers.

ABSTRACTS

In the closet or coming out? When social workers manage their personal user experiences in social work practice
Pernille Wisti (Aalborg University, Denmark)

Based on the current results from my ongoing PhD project, the focus of the presentation is the implications of social workers’ personal user experiences in vulnerable positions. The presentation accentuates the intersection between two differently situated groups in social work: the users and the social workers. Yet, within this intersection, practices in social work unfolds as performed by social workers who also identify as human beings with user experiences. The power dynamics connected to the user experiences draw attention to the social worker’s ability to manage their experiences. Related to present discussions of expert-by-experience knowledge, the research puts emphasis on social work practice in which user experiences among social workers themselves can be involved in their practice, whether subtle or deliberate. The research is carried out as participatory practice research in a collaboration with a participatory board of social workers with personal user experiences. Through narrative interviews and practice portraits with social workers with user experiences, the preliminary results imply embedded power dynamics in rules and standards. Within a Practice Theory framework, the social worker’s doings and sayings and dilemmas of managing “being a social worker and service user in the same body” are important to professional responsibility, however, a particular empathy can trouble practice and requires self-reflexivity. The presentation concludes a need for further discussions of the stability of norms in social work practice and the legitimacy of social workers involvement of their user experiences as a part of their practice.

Participatory approach to adult social work: Lessons from the Finnish Inclusive Social Security experiment
Minna Kiviopelto & Merita Jokela (National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland)

In this paper we present preliminary results of the Inclusive Social Security (ISS) experiment that has been implemented in Finland during the year 2018. The aim of the experiment is to develop a new model for inclusive social work that provides better targeted support especially for long-term unemployed. More specifically, the model aims at 1) reducing the client’s dependence on social assistance, 2) facilitating the move towards employment and 3) strengthening the client’s life management.

The experiment that is carried out in six Finnish municipalities’ social services is designed for individuals who are long-term unemployed and clients of social services in
the municipality. They are either “structurally unemployed” or persons with social or health problems that affect their employment possibilities.

The effectiveness of the experiment is evaluated using the so called KEY-measure, a participatory measure designed for adult social work. In our paper we examine 1) whether social work clients have reached their goals in municipalities where the ISS-model has been carried out and 2) whether the participatory and empowering social work methods have supported clients’ goal attainment.

Changes in experienced well-being during inpatient substance abuse treatment
Eeva Ekqvist & Katja Kuusisto (University of Tampere, Finland)

Aim of this research is to examine how inpatients’ experienced well-being changes during substance abuse treatment. Well-being is seen as a combination of personal, interpersonal, social, and a general sense of well-being (The Outcome Rating Scale, Miller & al. 2003). Focusing on inpatients well-being enhances clients’ role and empowerment during the treatment. Regular monitoring of patients’ well-being helps therapists to adjust the treatment to their clients’ needs.

The study was conducted on naturalistic principles. During the treatment participants (N=173) assessed their wellbeing as a part of the treatment on weekly bases. The main finding was that overall change in well-being was positive and the change was most prevalent during the first and third assessments. These assessments also predicted the experienced well-being at the end of the treatment. The experienced well-being moderates after the third assessment.

In conclusion, substance abuse treatment improves the inpatients’ well-being. More research on experienced well-being during and after the treatment is needed. The goal of the substance abuse treatment is not just to enhance well-being during the treatment but also to maintain the increased and established well-being. We see monitoring of the well-being as an ethical way of evaluating the effectiveness of the treatment.

One’s own involvement – or the family’s? Right to care and presumption of family and friends in the Finnish legislation
Laura Kalliomaa-Puha (University of Tampere, Finland)

According to Finnish legislation the public authorities must guarantee adequate social, health and medical services for those persons who cannot obtain means necessary for a life of dignity themselves. Also everybody’s right to participate is guaranteed by law. Yet in practice these rights often depends on the fact whether the person in need happens to have family or friends to help her or him. As if the legislation supposes there are friends and family to help, even though, according to Finnish law, social rights are individual rights and family members do not have legal responsibility to take care of other persons but children or spouses. This presentation elaborates how the right to care, services and support are guaranteed in Finnish legislation and what the law says about the responsibilities of the family. Even though most of the relatives do help their intimates such as elderlies, disabled, people with mental or cognitive problems or drug addicts, how is the right to care fulfilled for those persons who do not have family? And perhaps the persons who actually do have family and friends, but which for some reason do not help or do not know how to, are in the most vulnerable situation.
Its alright in practice but will it work in theory - learning and wellbeing in Finnish social work practice and research

Anniina Tirronen (City of Tampere, Finland), Jari Stenvall (University of Tampere, Finland) & Tony Kinder (University of Tampere, Finland)

The paper reassesses the power interaction between social workers and clients/customers, investigating how action-learning processes constitute and distribute power. We contrast what this means for the profession with Bartlett’s (1958) earlier perspective and with a critical perspective on unfulfilled declarations promoting positive practice (Salisbury 2008, Helsinki 2014, and New York 2015). We argue that much of the Nordic research in social work fails to connect with the logic of practice that creates and distributes power at the level of practice. The paper focuses on the construction, measurement and response to customer wellbeing, taking care of the elderly as an example. We propose a new action learning framework to aid practice centred on wellbeing as an expression of customer power and as an alternative theoretical approach to research. The paper draws on evidence from longitudinal research around services-as-a-system in Finland (Laitinen et al 2018; Virtanen et al 2018), approaches to unlearning (Kinder and Stenvall 2017) and localised innovation (Tirronen et al 2018). Evidence is cited from (1) a recent survey of customer wellbeing in the City of Tampere, (2) three focus group of social workers, (3) an online survey of 50 practicing social workers and (4) interviews with ten experienced social workers. The paper concludes that action research and action learning are central to the future of social work; enhancing user involvement and redistributing power are the route to greater efficiency and effectiveness – a markedly different course than that charted by new public management.


Power and powerlessness in social work - on conflicts, (dis)trust and forms of corporation

Maria Appel Nissen (Aalborg University, Denmark)

Power is a key concept and aspect in social work and social work research. It is commonly perceived as related to fundamental differences in positions of the social worker (as powerful) and the client (as powerless) respectively, how such positions are embedded in a social and/or discursive context of power structures, and finally, how this is reproduced within the relation between the two (e.g. Järvinen et al. 2002; Järvinen & Mik-Meyer 2004). This paper argues that there is still a need to explore and develop our theoretical and empirical understanding of power and powerlessness in social work if we are to improve social work and bring ideas of ‘user involvement’ closer to real. One way of doing this is to take a slightly different theoretical and empirical approach focusing on how power and powerlessness is shaped, dependent on conflicts of interests, (dis)trust, and possibilities for corporation. The first part of the paper offers a theoretical perspective on power, conflicts of interests, (dis)trust and corporation (Nissen, 2010). The second part, illustrates this perspective through an
analysis of two selected but significant empirical cases of social work with vulnerable families where bringing ideas of ‘user involvement’ into real is troublesome due to conflicts of interests and a context pervaded by coercion. Finally, the paper discusses the potentials for ‘user involvement’, if social workers and social work researchers focus more on conflicts of interests, (dis)trust and forms of corporation instead of the reproduction of power structures, positions and relations.

**Dialogue seminars – capturing the voices from within**  
*Sidsel Natland (Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)*

The paper will present results from a user-involved research project. The case is an example of how users as co-researchers initiated and facilitated a study where the objective was to explore a methodology fitted to capture the users’ experiences on what makes social services good and effective, and further, if this can identify what competences is needed from the professional practitioners in order to meet the users’ expectations and needs? The users wanted to explore if the use of dialogue seminars may be a methodology to produce such knowledge, as well as how this knowledge may be transferred to enhance social work in practice.

The paper answers the call as it is an presentation of a project aimed at capturing the citizen’s voices, exploring a methodology to link both users’ and social workers’ perspectives in how they perceive «good» and «helpful» social work, as well as drivers and barriers in the professional framework conditions to enable this.

**Methods:** Long term users (4-20 years) of health and social services were recruited to participate in dialogue seminars. They were asked to discuss «What have been the most helpful for you in your encounters with social and health services, and why?» Later, there was carried out one dialogue seminar where both users and social workers were attending, discussing how to implement the users’ perspectives in their social work practice.

**Results:** Three aspects of what the users percived as «helpful help» were identified: the social worker-user working relation; the importance of concrete knowledge of the labour market, and inter-professional collaboration. The competences that social worker must possess in order to carry out this «helpful help», were identified as: relation-based competences, knowledge about local labour market and economy, inter-professionality. The management in the local municipality then asked for enhanced collaboration in order to develop a local «implementation guide» for how to involve users’ voices in their development of services.

**Conclusions and implications:** Dialogue seminars is a promising methodology when the aim is to give voice to users’ experiences and acknowledgement that this knowledge may contribute to enhance social work practice. The methodology has an empowering function as it recognizes users’ experiences, and it is suitable for involving users in research and development processes.

**Good Enough or higher support –quality**  
*Maarit Aalto (Aspa Foundation & M.A. Education Survey, Finland)*

In Europe and the Nordic countries is several changes in attitudes and culture in the field of disability is needed. The ongoing challenges of deinstitutionalization, that Person Centered Approach intensifies, the implementation of the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities own demands stronger of appreciation and acceptance and as well as new roles in the society is increasing for persons with disabilities. This means, for
staff in services, in social work and in the systems of service provision, changes and challenges in question of power in relation to the person with disabilities.

The presentation will identify the dimensions and challenges in way towards higher support quality and – criteria, in the transfer of power and control to the persons with disabilities themselves. Development of the support-role is needed so it is in line of present demands. The need of increased participation, self-determination and inclusion is mechanisms to change the power, feeling of powerlessness and power relationships. The presentation is based on persons with disabilities own stories, on experience experts’ own telling’s, and background survey of development projects, research and surveys.

**Using PBL as a tool to enhance children’s participation in rural China: Practice and Challenges**
*Binbin Wang* (Dongguan Dazhong Social Work Service Center, China)

Service user’s participation has become a trend for social work practice and research in many European countries, yet it was much less discussed among practitioners and scholars in mainland China. Moreover, some scholars claimed that due to cultural differences, service users in China tend to depending on social workers’ decisions.

What if an approach with higher level of participation is introduced to current social work service? How the service users and social workers will experience and respond to such approach? Starting with these two questions, the author, together with frontline social workers, initiated a trail project in a rural community of Southeastern China.

The project will take place in July, aiming to improve children’s participation in community issues. Drawing on her experience of studying in Aalborg University, Denmark, the author adopted Problem – and Project Based Learning (PBL) as the main approach in the project, which requires the social workers to allow more space for children to lead, plan and take action.

Meanwhile, an investigation about impact of such an approach, as well as the experience of children and practitioners who participate in this project will be conducted from the preparation phase of the project. Participatory observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group will be used to further explore the impact of the project. Major expected findings include children’s and practitioners’ experience of PBL approach, social workers’ understanding of service user participation before and after the project, as well as reflections of the application of PBL approach in Chinese social work service.

**Peer Support in Mental health— experiential knowledge and expert power**
*David Rosenberg* (Umeå University, Sweden)

The Recovery movement in mental health has contributed to a focus on the participation and empowerment of users as essential to mental health services. By recognizing lived experience as a legitimate knowledge-base for creating partnerships at both the individual and organisational levels, expert knowledge and responsibility is challenged in relation to the provision of services. One of the innovative services arising from this paradigm shift is the role of Peer Support worker (PSW), which has received a great deal of international attention.
Due to the continuing dominant medical paradigm in Sweden, in which expert knowledge is prioritized over the experiential, PSW have not yet been recognized. However, due to an initiative from user organisations, PSW are currently being introduced as a new work force in mental health services. In partnership with the national association of service user organizations, Nationell Samverkan för Psykisk Hälsa (NSPH), we have begun to study the implementation, experiences and outcomes of Peer support in Sweden.

In addition to confirming positive effects at the individual level, our research findings point to the fact that PSW can impact the traditional power dynamics inherent in psychiatry and contribute to new contextual relationships between clients and the professions. These results will be discussed in relation to various aspects of how we understand the user experience of accessing and utilizing mental health services. The PSW offer their clients a unique knowledge and experience that might be seen as essential in relation to social work theory and practice.

Technology as a Means of Existential Care for the Oldest Old
Suvi-Maria Saarelainen (University of Helsinki, Finland) & Anna Mäki-Petäjä-Leinonen (University of Eastern Finland)

Among elderly individuals, the experience of meaning in life buffers holistic wellbeing. On the other hand, the ill-being and isolation of elderly people is likely to lead to depression. Therefore, the holistic and existential well-being of the oldest old is a matter of social work and social policy. According to care theory care relations requires paying more attention to interactions among unequals. Ideally, these relations are good care relations, but they can also be abusive and exploitative. Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes that social relations and participation prevent loneliness among elderly people. The WHO has suggested utilizing technology to counter loneliness in elderly people. From these premises, our paper analyses how the oldest old experiences care technology as a means of providing existential care.

The data was gathered by utilizing Service TV (STV, similar to Skype) among the elderly living in their private homes. The data was formed by hosting discussion groups and individual interviews via STV. The result of the thematic analysis shows, technology provides a platform for varieties of types of emotional and existential discussions. Our paper presents the key findings from our study and show how relationality is linked to existential wellbeing. In conclusion, we will critically discuss in what circumstances STV and similar technologies can promote relationships and provide existential care.

Constructing agency of homeless youth in social work
Laura Rapo (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Finland has successfully managed to decrease homelessness in the recent decade. Nevertheless, youth homelessness has been slowly growing. Homelessness is concentrated in the Helsinki metropolitan area. There are about 4700 homeless persons in the metropolitan area, about 1000 of them are under 25 years old. We know that homelessness of young people in Helsinki is often temporary and only sometimes leads to long-term homelessness or reoccurring periods of homelessness.

Social workers who work with young adults meet homeless youth and are the key players in providing services and guidance for those who have become homeless. How and what kind of agency social workers are constructing when working with homeless youth. I am using social work documentation (n=104) as a primary re-
search material. The documentation consists of descriptions of the situation as well as assessments of the services needed. The method for studying is documentation content analysis.

Improving and supporting agency, one’s ability to affect one’s life within the societal framework, is one of the main goals of social work. However, agency building is not the only role of social workers, they also act as gatekeepers of services and civil servants. As homelessness is a phenomenon that has very concrete roots closely connected with housing markets, support system and planning, critical realism provides a sound epistemological background for the study. Preliminary results will be discussed.

**Policy Alienation Among Front Line Social Workers**
*Mia Tammelin (University of Tampere & CoE AgeCare, Finland) & Maija Mänttäri-van der Kuip (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

In Finland the work performed in the public sector is undergoing a fiercely debated transformation which seems to have some international characteristics and global roots. Particularly social and health care services are changing in terms of how services are organized and produced. Policy and ideology governing these services is changing, among others’ the public sector seems to have witnessed a shift towards a market and managerial ideology that might have an effect the role of user involvement too. Overall, these changes affect organizations and the context of work.

It is widely accepted that frontline workers are the actual executors of policies and therefore have discretion, yet workers might feel alienated or uneasy about implementing and executing certain policies, particularly if they see the worsening of customer participation. Workers’ experience of losing participation on the rules governing their work might be detrimental for organization’s performance and quality of work, as participation is a core feature to employee wellbeing.

In this study, we explore the usefulness of policy alienation framework (Tummers 2012) in analyzing changing context of work environment of social workers. The framework captures employees’ experiences in executing policies and identifies workers’ coping strategies. Using interview data on 17 social workers, collected in 2017 in various parts of Finland, we test empirically policy alienation framework in the context of restructuring of social and health services. The initial findings suggest, that policy alienation is widespread among frontline workers. Particularly strategic powerlessness is usual, while societal meaninglessness is not identified.

**Talking about them or with them? – Involving processes in social work with young people**
*Lars Uggerhøj (Aalborg University, Denmark)*

‘We would like to qualify our collaboration with young people and make it possible to involve them more’. With this agenda a Danish municipality approached social work researchers asking if and how we could help fulfilling the goal. Based on experiences and research findings the management found it difficult for practitioners to address the power-relations between authorities and citizens – and to launch an involving collaboration between young people and social work practitioners.

Through a practice research based approached the municipality and the researchers worked out an agreement incorporating research in a learning process making it possible to integrate findings in everyday practice, but also underlining the necessity of having an involving learning approach when investigating involvement.
The research involved interviews with managers, practitioners, young people and a number of observations of meetings between young people and social workers. Social workers and managers were involved in the process through ongoing meetings and discussions of the findings and by selecting specific areas to focus on in their aim to qualify the involvement and engagement of young people. Findings from interviews with managers, social workers and young people were used as a base of knowledge to decide which areas to focus on while the observations were used to see what happened when decisions were set into action. Inspired by Arnsteins’ ladder of participation and findings from the research it has been possible for practice and research to discuss challenges and possibilities when trying to strengthen the involvement of young people in social work.

10 Power, sexuality and social work

Coordinators: Heli Inkinen, Åbo Akademi University, School of Business and Economics & Minna Strömberg-Jakka, University of Turku

Human well-being is one of the central issues of social work and sexuality is a part of this well-being. Social work is also targeted for people in various vulnerable situations such as persons living in asylum seekers’ centers, disabled housing service units, hospitals, youth in child protection institutions or for prisoners.

It is social work to defend the rights of people who might still be looking for their own gender identity or whose sexual orientation differs from the communities they live in. These may be different religious communities or, for example, patriarchal communities in which women’s chastity is strongly monitored. In these situations, a social worker may, for instance, face a question about female circumcision. The role of the social worker may then be empowering these people.

On the other hand, there exists social work also at different institutions, where clients’ or patients’ sexuality has to be limited. This means restrictions to their self-determination. For example, in prisons, it might be a question of fire safety whether it is allowed to have sexual equipment in one’s prison cell. Social workers may face frustration concerning this matter or find themselves in solving threats of sexual assault in the prison environment.

However, there might also exist different power use towards the staff in different institutions, including social workers. In the child protection institutions, a male teenager might use aggressive and sexually explicit speech towards the female staff member or a female teenager might try to undress in front of a male staff member. So, who finally holds the power in their hands?

To this workshop we welcome all the abstracts of experiences in these kind of environments and ideas concerning the research of these matters. Who holds the power in institutions when it comes to the right of people’s sexual self-determination? How does a social worker encounter a person who wants to do a sex replacement surgery? Are the questions of sexuality adequately considered in social work education?
ABSTRACTS

Social work and the production of sexual knowledge - an argumentation for addressing privileges and power asymmetries
Merethe Giertsen (UiT The Arctic University of Norway)

Models of culturally competent practice and anti-discriminatory practice (Van Den Bergh & Crisp, 2014) rest on ideas of awareness and respect for the values, beliefs, and customs of marginalized or at-risk groups. Powerful critiques have been made of these models for focusing only on problems, giving easy answers to complex questions, and assuming a minority culture with a set of needs (Morton, Jeyasingham & Hicks, 2013). Based on queer theory, I argue that the primary focus on the marginalized reifies the marginalized position, not least when hegemonic positions are silenced, leaving the subject of sexuality to those specifically interested in minority issues (Giertsen, in press).

In the paper presentation I will address the knowledge regime in social work. This I will do by first discussing theories of anti-oppressive education, and then present pedagogical strategies in a six-credit obligatory bachelor social work course given at the UiT The Arctic University of Norway, ‘Diversity and Marginalization: Gender, Sexuality, and Social Work’.

References


Power used by parents and authorities on dealing honor related violence and sexuality
Johanna Aapakallio (Loisto Setlementti/Sopu-work and TurvaSatama, Finland)

The human perception of sexuality and pleasure is tied to our cultural and societal backgrounds. These perceptions begin to form during our childhood, as the early attachment relationship is formed during these years. We learn our culture, behavioral rights and wrongs, norms, and potential role models from our family and the surrounding environment. This environment forms the fundamentals of our adulthood relationships and identities.

In later stages of ones life, cultural and traditional background uses power to restrict persons sexuality. Parents use their power by referring to family honor or reputation, authorities use power by forcing young person to abandon traditional and cultural way of thinking and do as one wants. From the point of view of power, sexuality and social work, everybody above mentioned use their power on young person.

My presentation will tangle on the challenge of power used by parents to their children, on forcing them to behave according to collectivistic honor code, which means absolute sexual purity and heterosexuality. At the same time, I will discuss power used by social workers or other authorities on the parents, when they neglect the feelings of parents.
During my presentation, I will be pointing out the honor related expectations on young people from immigrant background. Presentation is based on over ten years of experience on working with honor related violence issues with the clients and families. I will also refer to my article about the subject of honor, sexuality and collectivistic culture. The article was published in the book *Seksuaalisuuden tabut suljetussa yhteisöissä*, 2017.

**Victim-shame and perpetrator-guilt: discourse on alcohol and clothes in rape trials**  
*Maritha Jacobsson & Stefan Sjöström* (Centre for Social Work – CESAR, Uppsala University, Sweden)

This paper addresses a common critique concerning rape trials. Previous research has highlighted how court discourse can put blame on women who have been subjected to rape. However, some authors have argued that such practices are commonplace in law and not at all particular to rape trials. Rape trials often involve evidentiary problems that place the bulk of the legal conflict around issues of credibility. This is especially the case with so-called “date rape”, where courts to a large extent are faced with a “word against word” conflict. These debates have often revolved around how victims’ way of dressing and their alcohol consumption have been addressed in court.

The paper presents data from a Swedish study where rape trials with female victims have been matched against assault trials with male victims. The aim is to cast light on possible inappropriate or problematic features in rape trials by contrasting them systematically against discourse in assault trials. Quantitative analysis indicate that courts indeed are more preoccupied with both crime victims’ clothing and alcohol use and in rape trials. In a qualitative analysis, the overrepresentation of these issues in rape trials are further discussed. The findings contributes to understanding the strains of crime victims, which is also why it is relevant to social work practice.

**Taking care of business in a male dominated drug economy – Women drug users’ narratives on sexism, struggle and resistance**  
*Torkel Richert* (Malmö University, Sweden)

Illegal drug economies are often described as contexts where masculine norms and values govern and where men control the majority of the supply of drugs. Women’s often limited possibilities and subordinate roles within illegal economies have previously been explained in terms of an institutionalized sexism where men see women as less capable and prefer to do business with other men.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how women drug users take care of business in a male dominated drug economy, what obstacles and risks they encounter, and what strategies they employ to gain respect and access to drugs. The study builds on 30 in-depth interviews with female injection drug users visiting the needle exchange program in Malmö, Sweden.

The women’s narratives illustrate how they confront a double stigma. Not only are they considered untrustworthy and incapable of managing business within the drug economy, they are also considered as deviant and as failed women by representatives of the wider society. Many of the women have also experienced sexual harassment and have been subjected to sexual abuse and violence. Being addicted to drugs means an additional vulnerability. By hard work and a range of strategies many of the women still manage to gain respect and positions within the drug economy.
Social workers and treatment staff who meet women with extensive drug problems may need to address issues related to stigma and sexual abuse. Some women may require trauma-therapy, others may need sex counseling to regain a positive sexuality and sexual health.

**Victims without an acknowledged role – experiencing male rape**

*Jens Lindberg* (Umeå University, Sweden) & *Stefan Sjöström* (Centre for Social Work, CESAR, Uppsala University, Sweden)

Supporting crime victims is a task that falls within the domain of social work. Victimology research has established how cultural perceptions of crime victims are gendered. There is a tendency to construct female victims as vulnerable, helpless and undeserving, whereas male crime victims may be regarded as more responsible for their suffering and therefore attract less sympathy. Rape is probably the single type of crime where gender dimensions have been discussed the most. It has been argued that female rape victims have suffered from secondary strains aside from the crime incident itself, such as being subjected to critical questions in police investigations and being subjected to victim-blaming by their social surroundings. Against this background, the current paper aims to cast light on how male rape victims make sense of their experience.

The analysis will draw on interviews with ten men who have filed a complaint of rape to Swedish police authorities. It will also be informed by data drawn from interviews with ten police investigators who have investigated male rape cases. The findings from these interviews will be contrasted against research into the far more common occurrence of rape with a female victim.

Three analytical themes are pursued. First, the rape experience will be analyzed in terms of the power relation between victim and perpetrator. A second theme is how the rape experiences is linked to perceptions of masculinity and sexuality. The third and final theme revolves the interactions with the police as the crimes are investigated.

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**11 Research as resistance: Exploring critical, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, decolonial and participatory approaches in research with disempowered clients**

Coordinators: *Anna-Leena Riitaoja* & *Tobias Pötzsch*, Centre for Research on Ethnicity and Nationalism (CEREN) at the Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki

Josselyn Baltra-Ulloa (2012:90) has argued that “social workers need to theorize how to give up power”. Indeed, those who are socially marginalized also remain so within the research context where they are often treated as research objects; rarely as authors, co-owners or as “legitimate” voices of academically validated “truth” (Ife 2008).

In this workshop, we aim to analyze how power relations in social science research with disempowered client groups could be reimagined by exploring critical, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, PAR or decolonial methodologies. Such approaches are distinctive as they focus specifically on ways in which power is shared with insiders by operationalizing principles of social justice and social change. They also embody a
collaborative, participant-centred research practice in which responsibility and accountability of process and outcome are collectively shared. (Yellow Bird et al. 2013, Denzin & Giradina 2010). As a result, they force us to reconceptualize research as partial and emancipatory as well as a tool for fostering resistance to the systemic oppression of those “Othered” in society.

Such considerations are especially important in practice-based professions. Client dissatisfaction with working methods that don’t represent their worldviews and experiences, as well as neo-liberal, managerialist agendas have pushed these professions to become more “accountable”. While client dissatisfaction invites critical analyses of power relations within social work, neo-liberal accountability entrenches positivist notions of how knowledge should be created and assessed. Here, what constitutes evidence is “understood securely within a positivist/Enlightenment, (White, heterosexual, patriarchal) framework” (Brown & Strega 2005:12). Therefore, if the ethical foundations of social work still rest upon a client-centered focus then it can derive tangible benefits from critical research approaches.

Questions which we hope to highlight with our workshop contributors are: Are research objectives manipulative or helpful to the community of participants? Is the research epistemology and methodology respectful to diverse worldviews and experiences? What are the ethical considerations in collaborative research? Am I as a researcher-practitioner creating space or taking space? Who can be a knower and what knowledge is recognized as knowledge?

ABSTRACTS

User involvement in research – whose voice, whose knowledge?
Sidsel Natland (Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)

The paper will discuss the involvement of users in the context of knowledge production, drawing from experiences from an ongoing research project where the involvement of users was a requirement in the original call. To answer the call for this workshop, the objective is to use experiences from this project to discuss epistemological issues significant for the recognition of user involvement in research as robust knowledge production. How can the active involvement of users contribute with research of relevance for social work practice, but also for the development of research methods assessed for involving users as co-researchers?

I will identify users’ involvement in research as a particular form for practice research, contextualised within the theoretical base of Flyvbjerg’s (2001) science of the concrete and Nowotny et al.s (2001) modus 2 knowledge production. What challenges of epistemic cultures are at play when users (and practitioners) and researchers are collaborating in research? This discussion represents a contribution to epistemological discussions by underpinning the importance of understanding how knowledge from users is produced, and how it may be valued.

However, this requires ethnographic/micro-level analysis, exploring particular projects and experiences from research where users have been actively involved. Therefore, in this paper, I will present experiences from the ongoing project. In particular, the paper will focus how the users/co-researchers initiated a user-led project where they wanted to use dialogue seminars in order to produce knowledge on how long term users of social services perceived what had been helpful for them in their encounters with the services. Also, dialogue seminar with social workers were arranged with the aim of meeting the users and discuss their experiences. At last, this resulted
in the local municipality asked for a “implementation guide” on how to secure user involvement in their services.

The users facilitating and being responsible for the dialogue seminars, was a significant factor in giving voice to the users, and was experienced as both empowering as well as producing knowledge of relevance for the local municipality.

**Can «service users» speak? – a postcolonial approach to service user participation in research and practice**

_Håvard Aaslund_ (Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)

Background and purpose:
This paper draws on postcolonial theory to explore the positions of “service user participation” in research and practice. Service user participation has become a credo in social policy and research policy for the last decades, but also been criticized for being a neoliberal value and linking a specific subjectivity with participation.

Methods:
The study is a participatory action research project, aiming to start a resident managed temporary housing project for people with a problematic relation to substances. At the same time, the ambition was to study challenges and possibilities in the process with a collaborative research design. Data is gathered by participatory observation, interviews and document assessment over a period of three years.

Results:
The main barriers where identified as the “social work language” and “the institutionalized mindset”. This galvanized a process of identity work among the participants challenging the sanctioned ways of participation. At the same time, several discourses existed side by side in the process. This led to constant discussions and negotiations in the process, but also to what Spivak calls “strategical essentialism”.

Conclusions and implications:
The study shows both possibilities and challenges in work to raise consciousness and identity work in projects aiming at participatory democracy and innovation. It also highlights the importance of power in social work, and how social work discourse can be counterproductive in facilitating participation and democracy, and research can cement undemocratic power structures and patterns of participation if not critical about language and categories used.

**In Search of Alternatives in Social Work: Opportunities and Constrains for Collective Action Addressing Post-Graduation Challenges**

_Gorana Panić_ (Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

The International Association of Schools of Social Work’s 2010 census recorded dramatic growth of institutions offering social work education worldwide. In Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), where the study took place, the expansion of a new university social work (SW) programs had started in 2000, following post-war and post-socialist transitions. However, there is hardly any scientific research, especially transformative approaches to challenges after the graduation experienced by graduate social workers (GSWs) in BiH.

This paper is based on my doctoral dissertation in progress - a critical action research (AR) conducted between 2013 and 2016. Its dynamic and nonlinear study design started with exploration of a present-day situation of GSWs and their direct experi-
ences about post-graduation challenges. The aim of the study was to generate critical understandings in collaboration with GSWs of the challenges they encountered after the graduation, their responses to challenges, as well as to promote change through identification of alternative perspectives and possibilities for collective action in response to the given circumstances. In total, fifteen research participants were recruited from a single SW school. First semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2014. Interviews were analysed using data-driven thematic analysis. After the assessment phase, series of informed action took place in 2015-2016 period, in response to present-situation found.

This paper highlights some preliminary findings. It also demonstrates commitment of AR in challenging post-graduation transitions, as well its change orientation by seeking alternatives from bellow to dismal situation after graduation. Besides, it shows challenges posed to AR in the context studied - “perpetual transitions” and perennial crisis in Bosnia, and development of social work at Europe’s semi-periphery.

Research in social work grounded in emancipatory values
Sabine Gruber & Anna Lundberg (Linköping University, Sweden)

Contemporary social work is increasingly permeated by control and repressive measures. New complex relationship(s) between border policing and social service provision emerge all over Europe and elsewhere. The current situation makes social workers as well as researchers in social work face new challenges and dilemmas: How can the safety of research participants be assured? What are the risks of reproducing those repressive policies that we aim to counteract? How can collective stories in society’s margins be taken into account without exploiting people’s experiences?

These issues are highly topical in relation to research about regularized cross border human mobility, and also relevant considering the increased demands that social science research should be useful.

In this paper we reflect on the constraints that traditional research methods are associated with. We want to shed light on alternative understandings of, and responses to, needs and claims of people in vulnerably situations with insecure legal statuses. We draw on our previous experiences as researchers and asylum rights activists, as well as on critical action research. We reflect on the needs and possibilities for methodological changes in the research field of social work and human mobility, grounded in emancipatory values such as solidarity, social justice and social rights.

Our point of departure is that social workers and researchers in social work currently are faced with new political and ethical challenges, and therefore new methodological approaches are needed. Can actions of solidarity and political activism contribute to new, much needed methodological approaches and considerations, in social work research? Are such approaches even a precondition for this research in the contemporary world which is characterized by the nexus of border policing and welfare provisions? How might dilemmas that arise in this type of research, be handled?
12 Rural areas in change

Coordinators: Kati Turtiainen & Niina Rantamäki, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä

In recent years, the Nordic welfare states have gone through large changes. This development results from the challenging characteristics of the welfare state itself as well as from challenges provoked by external forces. The former is to a great part based on the alleged incapability of public welfare services to meet the increasingly individualized needs of people. The latter includes factors as the rapid ageing of the population, globalization processes, the decline of public finances and the more ideological shift from common responsibility to individual rights and obligations. Solutions to face the existing problems include among others administrative and service structure reforms as well as the marketization of welfare services.

Both the challenges and the measures taken to address them have particular effects on rural areas where 27 % of the total population of Nordic countries lives. While each of the countries defines the 'rural' in its' own way, the key features are common: low population density, small settlements located at a far distance from each other and urban settlements and an economic structure based on primary production. Due to the challenging combination of prevailing societal development and geographical conditions, the people living in rural areas are at risk to end up in a situation that both weakens their agency and adds the sense of powerlessness.

At the same time, many rural communities have created innovative models for the organisation of services and the improvement of the quality of life as a response to the current mainstream policy. Likewise, immigrants are seen as a significant potential for rural areas to promote population growth and to maintain services although together with the positive impacts negative consequences have also emerged, for example concerning the discriminatory reactions against refugees or recognized asylum seekers.

We are inviting papers that focus on the societal development in Nordic countries from a rural perspective. In addition to the presentations that analyse the changes taking place in the context of the welfare state and their consequences, we are also interested in more conceptual and theoretical papers that discuss how 'rural' is approached in social work research in general.

Topics discussed may include:

- Local models for the provision of welfare services
- The role of civil society and civic participation
- The impact of immigration (forced and voluntary)
- Conceptual or theoretical approaches to rural in social work research

ABSTRACTS

Rural social work is changing. What happened to the ecological approach in Inter-Municipal Child Protection Services in Norway?
Randi Haugland (University of Tromsø, the Arctic University of Norway)

Norway is a scarcely populated country with large rural areas. More than 400 municipalities of 500 to 700 000 inhabitants have equal responsibility for organizing the
different welfare services, also the separate Child Protection service with dual and sometimes contradictory objectives: prevention/assistance and control/protection.

Researchers are discussing whether social workers in small rural municipalities have difficulties handling conflicts of interest and ethical dilemmas due to their multiplex private and professional roles. In order to make small services more effective and professionally robust, the government has initiated and supported Inter-Municipal Child Protection Services separated from other parts of the municipal welfare system. During 15 years I have followed the transformation of rural Child Services, in this presentation I will discuss findings from two research projects.

I 1998 I interviewed social workers in general social welfare services, also dealing with child protection. Based on their affiliation with the local community they informed about ecological approaches, but also about professional loneliness, burn-out, bias, conflicts of interest and difficulties taking children’s perspective. In 2013 I interviewed social workers in specialized inter-municipal services for child protection. They told about the relief of not being the case manager of neighbor families, but also about new obstacles in cross-sectorial cooperation. Geographical and cultural distance reduced conflicts of interest, but it also made it difficult to understand what was going on in reported families, in spite of evidence-based risk-assessment tools.


The Practice and future of Social Services in small and rural municipalities

Kerstin Johansson (Linköping University, Sweden)

Swedish municipalities face many challenges. This is especially obvious in the welfare sector, not least since the 290 municipalities in Sweden have very diverse conditions. Small, rural municipalities often face specific challenges due to their size and location and this presentation and paper concerns the social services of such municipalities. There is also an ongoing debate about the Swedish social services, concerning for instance it’s knowledgebase, how to organize and govern it, and how to implement professional and user involvement.

Through a 10-year, national research program for applied welfare research, administered by Swedish Research Council for Health, Working life and Welfare (FORTE), the Swedish government, makes strong efforts to govern the further development of social work. This research program is aimed at strengthening long-term knowledge expansion and development within the field of applied social services.

The purpose of this paper, assumed from an application to FORTE, is to increase the knowledge about how selected municipalities organize and provide social services given their specific conditions as well as how they plan and develop their services to cover future needs.

The study in its hole is planned as a case study of selected Swedish municipalities. The study has a strong bottom-up perspective where the methods and research question focus the local circumstances and everyday situations in social services. The project will be conducted in interactive collaboration between academia and the social service organizations through a Practice Research approach. This approach strives to bridge the gap between academia and practice.
**Intersectional approach in(to) to the refugee resettlement in the rural community**  
*Kati Turtiainen* (Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

Many rural municipalities have joined to refugee resettlement programs by the Government in co-operation with UNHCR. Reasons why rural municipalities join to refugee resettlement program can be, in one hand the willingness to respond to the needs of the refugees and recognized asylum seekers, and on the other hand refugees are seen as a significant potential for rural areas in order to maintain population growth and the services. If negative responses, such as racism or lack of integration measures, to the needs of resettled refugees emerge, they may not stay in the area. However, the response to the needs of the refugees have to be coordinated with the services so that they find rural communities supportive to their agency.

In this empirical paper, I approach the integration measures from the intersectional point of view. Intersectionality means, for example, that the different forms of what it sees as social stratification, such as class, race, age, disability and gender, do not exist separately from each other but are complexly interwoven (e.g. Floya, Anthias 2008). Therefore, when integration measures are planned, the various dimensions of individual identities have to be taken into consideration in order to improve wellbeing and belonging. My data consists of interviews of one (extended) family with nine family members after their resettlement in the small rural municipality. For now, I have interviewed the family members twice but my intension is to conduct more interviews later.

**Social sustainability from the perspective of rural communities at the turning point of the Finnish welfare state**  
*Niina Rantamäki* (University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, Finland)

In 2010, the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published its' new strategy in which social sustainability is simultaneously seen as the main goal of national social policy and a tool to reach the goal. The strategy describes a socially sustainable society as a place where people are treated equally, where they are given the support they need, and which strengthens their participation and the sense of community. Since then many changes have taken place in the Finnish society of which the ongoing health and social services reform is not the least. The further it has proceeded the clearer it became that although all people are considered as equal, living environments of different kind are not.

In my presentation, I will review the effects of the reshaping process of the Finnish welfare state from the perspective of social sustainability in rural communities. Furthermore, I try to identify what the directions and scenes of new kind for social sustainability are opening alongside the overhaul. Based on the idea of crystallizing social sustainability into two overarching concepts – social equity and the sustainability of community –, I will approach it as a clue that binds together the ecological and economic dimensions of sustainable development in everyday life.

**Power in Active Ageing of Northern Finnish Older Women**  
*Heli Valokivi* (University of Tampere, Finland)

Most northern part of Finland, Lapland, is the largest rural area in Finland. Many areas in Lapland are ageing and facing depopulation. All kinds of services are diminishing in villages and towns. Power over services and supportive structures are not
only in the hands of remaining local residents. In my paper, I focus on power issues of active ageing and well-being of northern Finnish women. Active ageing and ageing in place are current elder care policy slogans. Home is the main site for getting old and receiving services when needs arise. I am interested in how older women construct, develop and maintain activity in and power over their everyday lives in Finnish Lapland.

I have data from two different locations in Lapland, Rovaniemi and Inari. Our research team visited natural activity and recreational groups of older women. We took part in their activities, discussed these with them and included in our session with them, a drawing exercise. As preliminary results, the themes that maintained an active life, promoted their well-being and sense of power are nature, culture, social networks and group activities, physical exercise, families and grandchildren and listening to themselves.

13 Social work and the natural environment

Coordinators: Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö, University of Jyväskylä & Aila-Leena Matthies, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä

The goal of the workshop is to deepen the understanding on the relationship between the natural environment and social work. The starting point of the workshop is that the world is in the midst of an epochal transition, also defined as systemic crisis, which the ongoing ecological, economic and socio-cultural transformations, such as the human induced climate change, manifest. Being complex, interconnected, and cumulative, systemic problems are difficult to control and predict. While, for example, climate change is already increasing social inequality and vulnerability as a component of natural catastrophes and violent conflicts, its worst cumulative effects may risk everything social work has ever stood up for, and ultimately the continuity of the human kind. Yet, despite much talk about sustainability, for the time being the prevailing practice in contemporary consumer societies is politics of unsustainability. The workshop is grounded on the understanding that social work is not aside from these processes, starting from its financial dependence on economic growth. Rather, the ongoing transitions challenge conventional approaches to social work and force social work to reassess its potential roles as well as major limitations in the much-needed ecosocial, or socio-ecological, sustainability transition of societies.

We welcome presentations, which discuss the interconnections between social work, economy ecology and power from various angles, as well as papers focusing specifically on the relationship between social work and the natural environment. The presentations can be conceptual, empirical or practical, and/or have micro, meso, or macro focus. The papers can thus discuss social work in relation to environmental crises, de-growth, inter-generational, environmental or ecological justice issues, nature-assisted interventions and services in social work, and so forth. Moreover, we are particularly interested in papers that analyze what kind of things hinder social work from engaging with fundamental ecological and environmental issues and what to do about them, and how can social work contribute building a more hopeful, if likely also more complicated future.
ABSTRACTS

Social workers’ views on ecosocial transition in society
Kati Närhi, Tuuli Hirvilammi, Aila-Leena Matthies & Ingo Stamm (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

The globe is in transition due to the changes in ecosystems: climate change and the loss of biodiversity for example. A challenge is to guide this transition towards a more sustainable future in local and global level. The discussion around green, ecological and ecosocial social work underlines the interdependency between social and ecological sustainability and calls for defining the role of social work in an ecosocial transition.

This study explores how the Finnish social workers view human-nature relationships in social work, what are their responses to the environmental challenges and how they understand the role of social work in ecosocial transition. The qualitative thematic analysis is based on a group interview data collected during autumn 2017 among 14 social workers from three different locations in Finland.

The preliminary findings show that there are both challenges and possibilities for social work to be able to support the ecosocial transition. The obstacles range from social work being a part of a capitalistic and consumeristic system to not being able to get the knowledge of practitioners heard in public about how social and environmental situations of their service users are linked together. The possibilities of social work are seen at the local level where practical solutions have been created and connections to various actors established.

The presentation is based on a Finnish Academy funded research project in which the overall research task is to deepen the knowledge on the contribution of social work and systems of income security to ecosocial transition of societies.

Inclusion into what? Ecosocial innovations as a radical sustainability perspective on social inclusion
Aila-Leena Matthies (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

The presentation will discuss the potential power of a radical perspective of sustainable development to be applied in social work in field of inclusion and activation. As argued by numerous researchers, in particular by Kate Raworth, a sustainable and inclusive society can only develop by taking the ecological ceiling of the Earth seriously, and by seeing the economy as a means and not as a purpose of human communities. These criteria for a sustainable future should also define the direction for inclusive social work. However, inclusion of people facing precariousness and unemployment has become a challenging task for social work, since its traditional individual methods face constraints in the context of a globalized economy and its multiple impacts on local labour markets and the environment. Realistic job offers with sufficient income are getting rare for many of the service users of social work. The presentation is based on empirical research on so called ecosocial innovations, in five European countries. We understand ecosocial innovations as practical local projects and activities which are contributing to ecological sustainability, new (social, solidarity, circular) economic models, and social participation. The paper will in particular analyse, what kind of new power for ecosocial transition is embedded in the ecosocial innovations, and what kind of perspectives they could offer for social work regarding the challenges of inclusion.
Ecosocial innovations – forerunners for eco-social security systems?
Ingo Stamm (Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

This paper is centered on ecosocial innovations embedded in social and solidarity economies. These small-scale cooperatives, projects or organizations successfully put sustainability into practice on a local level. They are innovative in solving ecological challenges, but also in finding and developing new inclusive forms of training, work and employment for marginalized groups. They meet individual needs and at the same time strengthen social relationships in their communities. Social work can play a powerful role within these initiatives.

Based on a Finnish research project we selected innovations in several European countries for our study. We asked in what way unemployment and income security policies are helping or hampering the activities of ecosocial innovations. Further we examined, what ideas for social policy change arise from ecosocial innovations? We conducted a systematic literature review as well as interviews with coordinators and participants of the selected organizations. The findings of this cross-national, multi-case study revealed a rather strong relationship between social administration and many innovations. They all rely on employment promotion programs or subsidized voluntary work, but they are vice versa also often important partners for regional social agencies. Based on this interdependency, it also became apparent what great expertise coordinators in ecosocial innovations have and how valuable their ideas for eco-social security systems in the future are. Most missing are long-term perspectives as well as a better acknowledgement of the ecosocial practices. The findings could also inform social workers working at the interface between activation policies and support programs for unemployed people.

Challenges of social work in extractive peripheries
Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

In the midst of the current and evolving systemic risks, one of the crucial issues at stake is the resources question; in essence can the humanity find ways to solve its material dependency on energy and raw materials in anywhere near sustainable and just ways. Large-scale mineral extraction, for example, is a sine qua non of modern life, despite its typically uneven distribution of positive and negative consequences and the ecological, spatial and temporal debts thus generated. Whether and how should social work deal with issues like mineral extraction in theory and practice? In the presentation, I illustrate how issues related to mineral extraction, such as its intended and unintended consequences percolate into the field of social work.

Empirically, the presentation is grounded on two distinct contexts, a mining region in eastern India and another in Northern Finland. Relying on interviews and participant observation conducted in both locations as part of my postdoctoral research in 2015-2017 (Academy of Finland 2014-2017), I discuss metal mining and its social work ramifications paying special attention to current realities of social and environmental reproduction, prospected socio-ecological futures, and the challenges these pose to social work.
Women, vulnerability and welfare services

We wish to invite to our workshop papers studying women in most vulnerable and powerlessness positions in the society (e.g. women in poverty, homeless women, women with substance use problems, women experienced violence or committed crimes, refugee and asylum seeker women etc.). Especially, we wish to have papers concerning their relationship to and encounters with social work and social workers, and the whole welfare service system.

Vulnerability is a contested concept in social scientific research and in social work practice, which is often used in a stigmatising way to refer to individuals or groups associated with victimhood, deprivation, dependency, pathology, and powerlessness. Instead, we want to turn the attention towards the society, social conditions and institutions, including social work and the welfare service system that are expected to reduce but that might also generate vulnerability and powerlessness.

The workshop focuses on women and feminist approach because gender specific issues are often ignored when social problems, social work, welfare services and vulnerable groups are studied. Because of strong cultural and moral expectations regarding adequate womanhood, women in vulnerable life situations are often seen as “the margin of the margins” or “double or even triple deviants”, easily forgotten in the service system and often ignored even in social work practice and research.

Welfare service systems all over the world, including the Nordic welfare states, are undergoing a major transformation with new models of service delivery and management, austerity measures, stronger requirements for cost-effectiveness, marketization, and prioritizing of services. Service users are increasingly seen as consumers that are expected to choose and purchase the services and who are aware of their legal rights. This requires knowledge and skills, and social and economic resources that people in vulnerable life situations do not often have. Thus, the ongoing transformations might make access to and availability of services even more difficult for them. They easily “fall in-between” complex systems, do not have their individual needs met or their specific life situations recognised. Furthermore, they might not even search, use or have access to the services, or they are turned away from them. These important topics for social work research and practice we wish to discuss in our workshop.

We warmly invite both empirical, theoretical and methodological papers concerning these themes and topics.

ABSTRACTS

Non-abusing Mothers’ Voices and Agency after the Disclosure of Their Child’s Extrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse
Hanife Serin (University of Jyväskylä, Finland & European University of Lefke, Cyprus)

The topic of women’s agency is commonly debated in relation to domestic violence including sexual violence towards women. However, women’s agency associated with non-abusing mothers whose children have been sexually abused out of family environment has not been sufficiently investigated. This article presents findings of a qualitative study of the lived experiences of eight non-abusing mothers in Turkish
Cypriot Community whose child has been sexually abused by someone outside the family. The narratives of the women were gathered via in-depth interviews and data was analysed utilising Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Research underline that social structures deeply affect the non-abusing mothers’ agency when it comes to reflecting their voice in relation to child sexual abuse disclosure. This article demonstrates how non-abusing mothers of sexually abused children reflect on their own agency in relation to social structures such as patriarchal power structures. In relation to the conference theme based on “Power and Social Work”, I would like to reflect on my experience that I paid special attention to my relationship with my participants throughout the data gathering process. As I was the one in the position of holding the power as a doctoral researcher and interviewer, I made sure that I interacted with the mothers at equal level and acted as if I am just as one of them. Therefore, I was cautious with the way I sought information and interview atmosphere. The qualitative analysis is currently in process and it is estimated that preliminary findings will be presented by August 2018.

The everyday word of lone mother
Suvi Krok (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

The aim of the paper is to introduce the preliminary results of the research studying the lone mothers in vulnerable life situations in Finland. Research questions are: How is vulnerability experienced in the everyday world of lone mothers? How does the Finnish welfare service system recognize the needs of lone mothers in the situation, where the system is undergoing a major transformation?

Theoretical approach of the study is based on institutional ethnography. The standpoint of lone mothers means very concretely, a local and particular place where people are physically and socially situated, thus shifting the ground of knowing. That is why a qualitative methodology was followed and the data is gathered by face-to-face interviews with lone mothers of low income and social work practitioners. Fourteen mothers who do all parenting alone participate in this study.

The Preliminary results show that Finnish welfare service system is inflexible and fail to meet the specific needs of lone mothers. Because a lone mother has a double role of breadwinner and main carer in a family, experience of vulnerability comes up, when the lone mother or her children gets ill, because the municipal social system cannot guaranteed enough help at home and if the mother’s decease is chronically it causes difficulties to make the ends meet.

Aspects of vulnerability for kinship caregivers in Latvia
Aiga Romāne-Meiere (University of Latvia)

The aim of paper is to describe identified aspects of vulnerability for women as kinship caregivers in context of Latvia. Kinship care is defined as the full-time care, nurturing and protection of a child by relatives, godparents, stepparents, or other adults who have family relationship to a child. Children are taken out from biological families because of unsolved problems - addictions, sexual or physical abuse, neglection, imprisonment of parents and other situations. Statistics approve that 90% of kinship caregivers are women. If we discuss about kinship care, in 90% of cases it is story about women who take responsibility of a child from extended family system without access to social services.

Most of available researches and theories characterise advantages of kinship care - improved safety for child, stability, increased sense of belonging and connection, greater social and emotional well-being. Despite advantages there is risks and ine-
quality. Kinship caregivers tend to be older, less educated, of poorer physical health, at the same time having fewer resources and support than non-relative foster families.

The study found complex vulnerable life situations for kinship families. This paper explains identified aspects of vulnerability of women as kinship caregivers in context of welfare service system in Latvia.

**Social work or bureaucracy? Experiences of the handling of maintenance support after the 2016 amendments in the Swedish Social Insurance Code**

*Stina Fernqvist* (Centre for Social Work – CESAR, Uppsala University, Sweden)

This study explores the effects of the amendments regarding maintenance support in Sweden, which became effective in 2016. These amendments imply that maintenance support should to a larger extent be transformed into maintenance allowance, whereby the handling of support is transferred from the Social Insurance Agency (SIA) to the parents who are expected to initiate a dialogue to secure the best interest of the children in financial terms. However, this may be problematic. Possible occurrence of violence and financial oppression, when the financial acting space of one partner is restricted by the other, may severely complicate the implementation. It has been argued that a normative family perspective, that presupposes the possibility of an unproblematic co-operation between ex-partners with children tends to obscure such power imbalances. Although desirable, mutual responsibility for support can thus create potential for fathers to exert financial oppression over mothers, who most often have the main financial responsibility as custodial parents.

By interviewing ten custodial parents and administrators about their experiences of maintenance processes after the amendments, this study focuses on if, or how, experiences of violence and financial oppression has affected these processes and what implications this may have on the financial situation for parents and children. Preliminary results suggest that the legislative changes and how they have been executed by the SIA to a large extent neglect previous experience of violence and threats which is partly due to administrative routines and the administrators’ attitude towards discussing these issues.

**Poor lone mothers’ agency in poverty**

*Anna-Maria Isola; Heikki Hiilamo & Irene Roivainen* (National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland)

We analyse poor lone mothers’ agency in poverty through their experiences in the setting of a comprehensive Finnish welfare state. Our aim is to study what mechanisms constrain and strengthen agency in situations where financial scarcity exists. We examine the subjective experience of poverty through the lens of the capability approach, where the essence of poverty transcends money and labour market positions. Our results show that frustrating experiences of dealing with the authorities lead to under-use of services and a waiving of some of the fundamental rights of a municipal resident and a citizen. In long-lasting poverty, hope is often a scarce commodity. Lone mothers would benefit if the service system was simplified.

In the midst of daily difficulties, mothers often manage to find meaningful activities to participate in. When it comes to the term ‘meaningful’, the key is the sense of self-determination, the predictability of life and regularity of income. Sense of self-determination simultaneously brings slack into everyday life by making life more manageable. Through this mechanism, it also creates the possibility of transcending
from an immediate, emotion-based world or one of interaction into a world of reflection.

Resiliency is the ability to adapt to life's challenges and risks. Our data implies that both hope and distracting oneself from difficulties build resiliency. Mothers healed the wounds of injustice and inequality, distanced themselves from immediate difficulties and buffered against stressful situations in restorative environments.

The Role of Social Work in the Field of Undocumented Sex Worker Migrants – The case of Denmark
Mette Rømer (Aalborg University, Denmark)

Human trafficking is a contemporary global problem that is acknowledged by the international community. Reportedly, 45.8 millions of children's, women's and men worldwide are being trafficked across borders and within countries for exploitation. Based on a qualitative study of the role of social work in relation to undocumented sex workers this paper analyzes how social work organizations are involved in combatting human trafficking. By drawing on the Danish National Action Plan in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings it maps and identifies how the Danish Welfare State has outsourced the identification of potential sexual traffickers to Non-governmental organizations by given them an authority mandate. Hence, the paper discusses the authoritative role NGOs has been given. This in terms of the transformation the Danish Welfare State has undergone as well as the dilemmas social workers given the authority mandate in NGO’s are facing in their outreach practice. Based on observations of social workers outreach work among undocumented sex workers in street prostitution and at brothels around the country the paper identifies and discusses how the welfare state transformation in outsourcing an authoritative mandate leaves the social workers in a dual role between social work and migration control. Hence, the paper sheds light on how the Danish Welfare State is undergoing a transformation in the field of undocumented sex worker. A field that embraces a vulnerable group of women but also powerful women who is resistance against the only service the Danish Welfare State offers them – namely the possibility to be return to their homeland through the Assisted Voluntary Return Reintegration (AVRR) Program.

At the Margins of Society: Listening to Homeless Women
Riitta Granfelt (University of Turku, Finland)

Understanding of homeless women’s lives and experiences is limited, both in Finland and internationally. Gender has been ignored both within research on homelessness and housing services for homeless people. Female homelessness is typically hidden homelessness: women are less likely to be in situations in which homeless people are easy to find, such as emergency or supported housing for homeless people. Instead, they use informal arrangements which, especially in the case of most marginalized women, may be disastrous and violent. Women’s hidden homelessness is not necessarily recognized as homelessness and housing services are not always organized according to women’s needs. Small, but emerging literature that considers the role of gender in homelessness addressing f.e.g. women’s recurrent and prolonged homelessness, the relationship between women’s homelessness and domestic violence, homeless mothers who have lost their children’s custody, and homeless women’s psycho-social welfare (Mayock and Bretherton 2016).

The main focus of my presentation will be on women whose sustained or recurrent homelessness is associated with mental health problems and problematic alcohol and drug abuse or criminality. Their homeless is not only houselessness, but also vulner-
ability and marginalization. I will compare my research on the life experiences of homeless women and their experiences of women-specific services from late 1980s to early 2010s with current international research on female homelessness. In addition, I will reflect the narratives of homeless women, collected using a phenomenologically-orientated research approach, in relation to the efforts to develop social work and psycho-social services for marginalized women.

_Literature:_ Paula Mayock & Joanne Bretherton (eds.) *Women’s Homelessness In Europe.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

**NOVAT- groups as a method for supporting women with addictions – examination of evaluation results**  
_Minna Kivipelto* (National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland) & *Helena Palojarvi* (Naistenkartano, Finland)

Article examines the self-help group method for women (NOVAT) group as an early stage prevention method for supporting women who are struggling with or are at risk of getting addicted. The study focuses on which methods and procedures are viable for specific clients and what kind of supporting or hampering factors are found in the NOVAT groups. Previous empirical studies of NOVAT groups were used as research material for the article. It was applied realist evaluation as the theoretical framework for the evaluation. NOVAT groups helped women to express, discuss and reflect on their experiences, feelings and life ambitions. NOVAT groups have offered a platform and structure for women who had a need to discuss their feelings and problems with other women. The structured NOVAT method enables participants to attain the goals they have set for themselves. In conclusion, it is important to analyze gender-specific studies and the effects of gender-responsive approaches. Additional research and effectiveness evaluations that take into consideration women’s position in society, culture, family, and contextual issues such as abuse history, grief and loss, and economic factors are required.

**Key words:** Guided self-help, NOVAT-groups, addiction, empowerment, women-only programs, women’s substance abuse

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**16 Open stream**

_**Coordinators:** Stina Sjöblom, Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki & Christian Kroll, Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki_

**ABSTRACTS**

**Neither risk discourse nor reflexivity: So what?**  
_Anne Juberg* (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

The presentation will revolve around perspectives and concepts that may alleviate social work with youth (16-18) who to a larger extent than same age youth have violated criminal law and general norms for use of substances. The presentation bases itself on a book chapter in progress.

The empirical basis is a focus group material with shapes 19 young people in this situation who were striving to find a direction in life but nevertheless had the same future images as any other youth.
A characteristic of their mode of handling their transition towards adulthood could be «tentativeness». «Tentativeness» implies the testing out of several life style alternatives, while delaying the final decision about direction in life until later. One is seemingly unaware that deteriorated future wellbeing and social exclusion could be the less attractive consequence of such a delay. Tentativeness thus appears as particularly risky in a society in which self – conduct and selfshaping are cherished principles.

Yet the conventional risk discourse appears as an obsolete frame for social work in this area because it relies on misleading assumptions about future ontology. The future is no longer predictable. Therefore, knowledge about future consequences has no firm grip on how we lead our lives here and now. Yet, the reflexivity discourse, based on the assumption that the world is *unpredictable*, may neither be easy to grasp nor immediately sound for young people in a normative vacuum. Fruitful reflections on how to enhance agency in ways that are empowering are therefore in demand.

**Killing two birds with one stone. A user perspective in activation of unemployed**
*Katarina Hollertz* (University of Gothenburg, Sweden) & *Sara Hultqvist* (Lund University, Sweden)

Unemployment affects people’s economy and reduces the chances of living an independent life and a life in line with peoples’ own expectations. State and municipalities in Sweden have a long tradition of organising interventions to those who do not manage to find a stable employment on their own. Job search activities, internships, but also training have been frequently used methods. Participation in the interventions have been a prerequisite for financial support, such as unemployment insurance and social welfare benefits, but participation in these interventions have not given access to the social insurance system. The quality and success in terms of improved labour market participation as a consequence of the intervention, have also been put into question. At the same time as unemployment has been an immanent problem in Sweden, lack of manpower is a pressing problem in several parts of the labour market. As a response to the matching problem, new methods have evolved at local as well as national level. Interventions are created that link unemployed to a specific employer through a program of formal training and work. The intervention provides training to low qualification jobs, and the employer provides a regular employment.¹ These projects differ from the more traditional interventions; a real employment with a monthly salary that gives access to social insurances. In the presentation we will give a user perspective on one of these innovative projects, called “The stepwise job-knowledge ladder”. We will discuss some of the practical implications when trying to kill two birds one stone.

¹ The work conditions, salary included, is negotiated by the trade union and employer.

**Transforming citizenship as a foundation of social work**
*Tuomo Kokkonen* (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

This paper analyses social work from the point of contemporary citizenship theory. As a profession social work has played vital role in advancing social citizenship and strengthening social rights. However, the economic and social changes of our time have radically changed the society, creating a need to reconceptualise the relation between social work and social citizenship.

The need for critical thinking is foremost presented in the now increasingly uncomfortable relationship between social work and welfare state gradually assimilating
with neoliberal policies. In addition to this critical citizenship theory is also deeply concerned with the fundamental flaws in the political ideology of welfare states, such as their dependency on nation state, attachment to traditional concepts of family and sexuality, and also their tendency to overlook the minorities and seeing the ‘other’ as a potential enemy.

This paper emphasizes that the critical themes of contemporary citizenship theory can contribute to the development of theory and praxis of social of social work, as well as the citizenship status of social work service users. Citizenship theory is an important companion to social work as they both aspire to an equal society. Political struggle for equality must pay special attention to the problems of economically underprivileged social groups such as precariat, long term unemployed people. Secondly, it must emphasise tolerance towards the ‘other’ and recognition cultural minorities. This as aspect is also important in social work, and already to some extent recognised in discussions which see social work as human rights profession.

What is the role of social work after the Finnish social assistance reform?
Paula Saikkonen (National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland) & Minna Ylikännö (Social Insurance Institution of Finland)

In the spirit of welfare state universalism, the relation between social assistance (cash) and social services (care) has been tight in Finland. However, already since the enactment of the social care act in 1982, the role of social assistance as a tool of social work had been questioned. The beginning of welfare state retrenchment and the increase in the number of social assistance recipients heated the debate in the 1990s. Finally, in 2017, the majority of social assistance, so called basic social assistance, was transferred from the municipalities to the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela). The transfer finally disconnected the social assistance and municipal social work.

This paper asks how social work with adults can support active inclusion and prevent social exclusion after the reform. As a research data, we utilize two surveys, one targeted at municipal social workers and the other to the management of municipal social services. The managers (n=111, representing 207 municipalities) were asked about an organizing of social work after the reform and social workers (n=369) about their everyday work after the transfer.

According to the preliminary results, it has been more difficult for social workers to implement active inclusion after the reform. This is because reaching people with cumulated social problems and special need for social services has become more difficult due to the disconnection of cash and care. Furthermore, counseling the clients to apply basic social assistance has taken more time than expected.

Local Solutions to a National Dilemma
Daniel Nilsson Ranta (Centre for Social Work – CESAR, Uppsala University, Sweden)

In 1912, Swedes were repatriated from Brazil and Argentina to their previous hometown of Kiruna in northern Sweden. Small groups of emigrants had left the city of Kiruna for Brazil in the years 1909-1911 due to, among others, strikes. Their efforts ended in death and misery, which initiated the repatriation project. This was an act of humanism, state representatives argued. However, the young city of Kiruna was itself cramped with new settlers and a place with harsh working- and living conditions. Therefore, the homecoming of several hundreds of poor and destitute former emigrants was not necessarily beneficial for the town: In other words, the national and
the local agendas were not particularly coordinated, which is significant considering that the government relied on local solutions. Against this background, the aim of this paper is to study how a local community such as Kiruna, with its poorly developed social service, handled the integration of the returnees.

Social workers’ reactions towards manifestations of power in management

Jolita Buzaitytė-Kašalynienė (Vilnius University, Lithuania)

The aim of the presentation is to discuss power relations between social workers and their managers. Power is unfolding in relationships this is why relationships between social workers and their managers have been chosen as an object for the study. The study was accomplished in two stages: in the first stage social workers and their managers were interviewed and the data analysed using Grounded Theory methodology (Strauss, Corbin version). The data analyses allowed to reconstruct and conceptualize different styles (strategies) of leadership in management and as well as the consequences of these leadership styles for the posture and the activity of the social workers. In the second stage the national survey of Lithuanian social workers was conducted and statistical analyses of empirical data revealed how strategies of social workers’ action are connected with subjectively perceived or experienced manifestations of managers’ power. The study showed three styles of leadership in management of social work: leadership that raises professionalism, stagnating, and repressive leaderships. On the scale-continuum the extremes are occupied by the leadership that raises professionalism (exercise the power to support and share responsibility) and the repressive (exercise the power to blame and persecute) leadership and other styles occupy the space in between. It has been determined two groups of social workers’ reactions towards leadership or exercise of power accordingly: 1) Collaborative based on trust, respect, managers were used as models for behaviour; expressed solidarity with managers and colleagues, open reflection of practices and assistance to the manager, taking on responsibility and sharing it with the manager; 2) Resistive based on passiveness, fear, avoidance, either suppression or open confrontation with managers, quiet obedience, blaming others and irresponsibility.

Towards biographical agency in social work

Johanna Björkenheim (Mathilda Wrede-institutet, Finland)

In aiming to help service users cope with a major life change, social workers often, although not always explicitly, take a biographical perspective. Biography, shaped over time through the interplay between human agency and social structure, seems a relevant concept for social work, which focuses on the relationship between the individual and society. The aim of my research is to make the biographical perspective more explicit and to suggest ways in which social workers can take into account their clients’ past without sliding into the field of psychotherapy. The study positions itself within the field of research on theoretical frameworks and knowledge production for health social work practice.

The research questions ask what applying the biographical perspective in health social work could imply, and whether this perspective is compatible with social work practice theory. A mixed-method approach using quantitative, qualitative and theoretical-conceptual methods is applied. The results suggest that the biographical perspective in health social work can be expressed not only by the use of biographical methods but also by the general notion of supporting clients’ biographical agency. Thus defined, the biographical perspective promotes the empowerment of clients.
The biographical perspective was found to be compatible with several social work practice theories. Particularly when using biographical methods ethical considerations are important. The conclusion of my study is that the biographical perspective can provide a useful framework for health social work in a multidisciplinary environment, probably for social work in other environments as well.

“Mind the gap” – a journey with elderly in the virtual dimension
Camilla Granholm (Folkhälsan, Finland)

The statistics describing the internet use among the Finns show that even though the fastest increase in internet use is among the population 75–89 years of age, this is still the population that are least involved in the virtual dimension and are least familiar with digital tools (Statistics Finland 2017). The views on the virtual dimension and digital tools vary among the elderly population. Some elderly have no interest in learning about or participating in the virtual dimension, while others are active users of digital tools. In between are elderly with very basic skills in the use of digital tools, these people are curious and interested in learning more. (Nordlund, Stenberg & Lempola 2014.) Engaging elderly in the virtual dimension is important as most of both public organizations and private companies share information about and give service online. In my presentation, I share preliminary insights from a publicly funded project “Resan till Digitalien” (The Journey to Digitaly) aiming at engaging elderly in the virtual dimension. Instead of focusing the effort on teaching the elderly how to use technology, the project invites the elderly to explore the virtual dimension by linking to hobbies and interests of the elderly. The project has started in April 2018 and is in the phase where discussion and feedback on the aims and means are of most importance.

References:


Empowering family caregivers of people with dementia
Eva Dragomirecka (Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic)

The paper presents some results of the project. No. 16-07931S „Needs Assessment of Family Caregivers of Elderly“, supported by the Czech Science Foundation.

The number of people who care for family members with dementia increases. According to estimates about 100,000 people with dementia live in home environment with the help of relatives in the Czech Republic. It is documented that caregiving without appropriate support from social services can have negative financial, social, physical and psychological consequences for carers.

We investigate needs of family caregivers of people with dementia to find to what extent the existing social services meet the caregivers’ needs and what their needs remain unmet.

Four focus groups with 22 participants and 32 interviews were conducted to collect data from the sample of informal caregivers of people with dementia using various supporting services such as counselling, self-support group, and day centres. Most of
respondents completed the Questionnaire for caregivers including socio-demographic data and the need assessment (N = 50).

The results show priority of information needs in the early stage of caregiving; carers lacked information on both illness and relevant services and resources. Some of them experienced underestimation of dementia symptoms by the practitioner. In the late stage of caregiving carers reported communication with a person with dementia, stress managing and the lack of emotional support as most difficult aspects. At all stages of care, carers lacked assistance in selecting appropriate services.

Findings will be used to expand and modify existing psychosocial interventions for informal caregivers.

**Foster children’s perspectives on visiting and contact during out-of-home placements**

*Ann-Sofie Bergman (Uppsala University, Sweden)*

A primary goal of the foster care system is to reunite foster children with their birth family. Keeping children connected to their parents, siblings and other important relatives through visiting and contact is in that perspective essential. Previous research shows that good quality contact can promote positive outcomes for children. How the contact is organized can be of great importance for the children’s health, development, and satisfaction with life. However, poorly planned, poor quality and unsupported contact may be harmful for children, for example when there is a history of maltreatment or violence.

Children who are separated from their parents have the right to maintain personal contact with their parents on a regular basis (Convention on the Rights of the Child, at. 9). The social services are responsible for the organization of the foster care so that it promotes relationships with the child’s family and other close relatives. When deciding on contact, children have the right to be heard and have their views considered (Social services act 6:1, 11:10).

This study is based on interviews with children in foster care about their experiences of contact and how they perceive that their views and wishes are handled in the meeting with the social services staff. Oral and written narratives of visiting and contact will be analyzed. Children's perceptions of how they are heard can highlight the power relations that exists between social workers–children, parents–children and foster parents–children.

**Power in social work**

*Louise Christensen (Aarhus University, Denmark)*

"Surely, life is more than just relations of power […]. Human relations are also composed, for instance, on bonds of affection and attraction and repulsion”

(Singh 2015, 136)

Contemporary analyses of social work practices, and welfare state practices in general, seem to revolve disproportionately around the theme of power and particularly the theme of governmentality (Dean 2009, Miller and Rose 2013). However, analyses based on a ca. one year of fieldwork with social workers working with adult homeless and socially marginalized people in two Danish municipal services, reveal an aspect of the social work practice, which, despite its frequent eruption or presence during fieldwork, tend to be under-described in qualitative social science. I argue, that this under-description might be connected to a tendency to perceive and analyse social
work through the lens of governmentality with its inherent focus on power. I develop the concept of ‘mere being’ in order to capture the empirical existence of certain types of situations in the social work practice which had a somewhat different quality than power and thus ought not to be reduced to it. Finally, I argue that the tendency to perceive power as an ever (or often) present theme in social work practice might be related to power as a ‘family resemblance’ concept (Wittgenstein in Haugaard 1990) that is; as a concept which might have multiple meanings and might serve as an end point to conclude all discussions. Though power is an obvious theme in any state practice, and therefore also in social work practices, I want to highlight how this theme perhaps ought not to be viewed as so over-arching or all-encompassing when it comes to the social work practice. All in all, in this talk, I basically wish to illustrate certain situations that showed a different character than power in order for us to discuss whether we are over-interpreting social work practices as an arena of power (in all kinds of shapes).

17 PhD workshop on Power and Social Work

(Sponsored and organized by NASSW/NOUSA)

Coordinators: NASSW board members; Karin Waleur, Monica Kjørstad, Marcus Knutagård, Camilla Nordberg & Torkel Richert

The Nordic Association of Schools of Social Work (NASSW) sponsors the participation of a limited number of six PhD students in the Nordic Social Work conference in Helsinki, 21-23 November 2018.

ABSTRACTS

Non-abusing Mothers’ Voices and Agency after the Disclosure of Their Child’s Extrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse
Hanife Serin (University of Jyväskylä, Finland & European University of Lefke, Cyprus)

The topic of women’s agency is commonly debated in relation to domestic violence including sexual violence towards women. However, women’s agency associated with non-abusing mothers whose children have been sexually abused out of family environment has not been sufficiently investigated. This article presents findings of a qualitative study of the lived experiences of eight non-abusing mothers in Turkish Cypriot Community whose child has been sexually abused by someone outside the family. The narratives of the women were gathered via in-depth interviews and data was analysed utilising Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Research underline that social structures deeply affect the non-abusing mothers’ agency when it comes to reflecting their voice in relation to child sexual abuse disclosure. This article demonstrates how non-abusing mothers of sexually abused children reflect on their own agency in relation to social structures such as patriarchal power structures. In relation to the conference theme based on “Power and Social Work”, I would like to reflect on my experience that I paid special attention to my relationship with my participants throughout the data gathering process. As I was the one in the position of holding the power as a doctoral researcher and interviewer, I made sure that I interacted with the mothers at equal level and acted as if I am just as one of them. Therefore, I was cautious with the way I sought information and interview atmosphere. The qualitative analysis is currently in process and it is estimated that preliminary findings will be presented by August 2018.
Social Work and the Right to the City
Henrik Örnlind (Linnaeus University, Sweden)

Urban transformation processes are closely linked to new forms of marginalization, securitization and displacement in the neoliberal city (Harvey, 2012). When inner-city areas and public spaces become transformed into spaces for consumption and leisure, marginalized groups such as homeless and drug addicts are excluded from participation in urban city life (Mitchell, 2003). In 1968, Henri Lefebvre coined the term 'Right to the City'. Informed by the revolutionary time period in France, Lefebvre articulated his claim as a “demand for a transformed and renewed right to urban life” (Lefebvre 1996:158). In recent decades, activists and scholars have picked up the term to critically engage in new forms of spatial injustices. The claim for ‘Right to the City’ has evolved into a broad range of theoretical discussions about social justice, urban citizenship and radical social change (Mitchell, 2003; Dikec, 2008; Marcuse, 2009). However, in the field of social work research less attention has been paid to this notion. In this presentation, I will outline some of the central ideas in the contemporary research field on the ‘Right to the City’ and discuss in what ways social work research and practice could be enriched by adopting the notion into their repertoire. In my presentation, I will relate my discussion about the ‘Right to the City’ in social work with examples from ongoing research about the (re)production of urban spaces in general and in particular spaces produced in police discourses about disadvantaged neighborhoods and criminal youth gangs.

References:


Power and Disempowerment in Social Work across Language Gaps
Hilde Fiva Buzungu (Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)

In this paper, I explore power and disempowerment in meetings in social welfare offices in Norway between social workers and clients who do not have a shared language.

My PhD research project is based on ethnographic fieldwork with participant observation in social welfare offices in Norway. I have participated and observed in meetings between social workers and their clients in a poverty alleviation program. The majority of the clients are relatively recent immigrants to Norway, and many are far from proficient in Norwegian language. My particular focus is on language gaps and how communication is managed, and I observe meetings with interpreters as well as without interpreters. The impact of interpreting services on social workers’ work with clients is a topic that there is not much research on in the Nordic countries, and a topic which is given little attention in schools of social work.
In light of postcolonial theory and critical whiteness studies, I examine how power is manifested and expressed in these meetings. I compare and contrast meetings in Norwegian with multilingual interpreter-mediated meetings. My aim is to understand how power and communicative choices are intertwined. I focus on how decisions about language choices are made, such as the choice of language for the meeting, the decision of whether to have an interpreter or not, and if there is an interpreter, who that should be. Furthermore, I critically examine participants’ talking and listening in the meetings, and how disagreement and confusion is expressed or not, and by whom. Through this, I seek to unravel some of myths and misconceptions about interpreter-mediated conversations and how language gaps are managed in social welfare offices.

Inclusion and Democracy in Arts-Based Service User Participation Processes

**Petra Malin** (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Service user participation processes in social work are closely intertwined with questions of power and powerlessness. Presented here is an ongoing ethnographic study conducted through participating in practical trials of arts-based interventions in a social work service user participation context. How can arts-based methods in social work be used to advance inclusion and democracy?

The two studied social work groups are aimed at service users who are interested in developing the services together with social work professionals. One of the groups uses playback theatre as a part of their working process and as a method in arranging dialogues with local politicians, social work professionals and social work students. The other group is specifically aimed at immigrant women and has used social circus, dance and drama-based exercises as a part of their working process. The participants have found the activities useful in creating common understanding among people coming from very different backgrounds and life situations.

Preliminary analysis suggests that arts-based methods can be used to advance dialogue between different actors and to create common ground between professionals and different service users. However, there are internal exclusions in these processes, and structural limitations to service users being able to influence the services or the society in general. Themes discussed include poverty, gender, health, unemployment, culture, religion and the relationship between professionals and service users. The research discusses also the service users’ possibilities for agency.

The legitimacy of user knowledge in decision-making processes in psychiatric care – a conceptual analysis

**Katarina Grim** (Dalarna University, Sweden)

Whilst inequalities of knowledge and power can be barriers to user involvement in social support and health care in general, current research highlight how greater levels of disempowerment and stigma prevalent in mental health settings may exaggerate barriers to partnership.

The need to develop practice in order to access and actively use service expertise has been stressed. However, this increased interest in user participation still exist within a context where service users often feel unconsulted.

The objective of this conceptual analysis is to explore how social theory can assist in shedding light on this discrepancy between policy and practice.
The data for the present paper are drawn from qualitative phases of a larger study of aiming at supporting shared decision-making in psychiatric care and support services.

Focus group interviews were conducted with service users and providers, separately, exploring their attitudes and understandings regarding knowledge contribution in decision-making processes. All interviews were rich in talk on value and credibility ascribed to various types and sources of knowledge. The analysis will have an abductive approach with moving back and forth between empiric data and selected theory.

Conceivably, a critical analysis on the epistemic practice in mental health care and support might render a deeper understanding of prerequisites and barriers for full partnership and for greater epistemological justice. By juxtaposing utterances of service users and service providers in the analysis, specific issues relating to the service user as a “knower” might be highlighted which might require attention in future education and practice development.

**Power and the ontological choreography of emotions in social work**
Nina Helen Aas Røkkum (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

In this paper I will investigate the relationship between power, emotions and ontology in social work. Michel Foucault (1998) distanced himself from the traditional sense of power and put forward an alternative way of understanding it. To him, power is to be found everywhere in society, influencing and being produced in everyday life through the things we say and do.

Emotions are at the heart of everyday life and we express and manage emotions to let people know how we feel, but also what we want people to think that we feel. In this paper I will look into the emotional life of organizations within social work. Some scholars emphasize the role of emotions in organizations, for example Arlie R. Hochschild (1979, 1983) and Sharon C. Bolton (2005). Bolton (2005) offers a new way of understanding emotions and the regulations of emotions in organizations. She argues that organizations have feelings and that within organizations, emotions can be subject to acts of management. Emotional management often takes place between different organizational actors, but I also argue that there are rules and demands, norms and expectations of ‘how to feel’ embedded in the organizational structure. I call this the ontological choreography of emotions, which can be related to what Bolton (2005) refers to as organizational ‘feeling rules’. I will explore what the ontological choreography of emotions can tell us about the relationship between power and emotions in organizations.

References


18 PhD Workshop on Power and Social Work (Organized by the Nordic Social Work Conference 2018)

Coordinators: Urban Markström, Umeå University & Christian Kroll, Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki

ABSTRACTS

Implications and response patterns of perpetrator and victim: A study of violence, gender and power in intimate partner relations
Caroline Hansén (Linnaeus University, Sweden)

From research and practical work, we know that intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global problem which implies serious consequences, both physically and psychologically for the victims. Research has primarily focused on men’s violence against women, and how it relates to inequality between sexes and how violence and power can become mechanisms of domination, whilst the act of violence indicates (re)creation of hierarchical order. The experience of having been subjected to violence and power can initiate usage of violence and be perceived as an act of defense or necessity in absence of other options. IPV is viewed as an act influenced by society’s norms and values, also depending on context.

The reason behind my research project is that studies have found that IPV is not just perpetrated by men, and that distinguishes this project from previous field research. The project focuses on the experiences of men who perceive to have been exposed to IPV by a female partner, and how women relate to themselves as perpetrators of IPV. Female perpetrators and male victims of IPV are substantially smaller groups than the opposite, nevertheless they exist. The intentions are to investigate experiences of IPV, and how violence and power are justified and excused by the victims and perpetrators. This research contributes to in-depth knowledge of what dimensions of violence are being exerted, and how violence, gender and power are related to each other when society’s norms and values deviate from prevalent patterns of gender construction, equality and order.

Constructing power relations in boundary crossing collaboration
Marina Bergman-Pyykkönen (Swedish school of Social Science at University of Helsinki, Finland)

In the field of professions, there are old, and even strong, hierarchies and tensions owing to power struggles and competition (Abbott 1988). These are bound to emerge in multi-professional collaboration. Social workers work frequently in organizations, such as schools or hospitals, whose core task is another than social work. Recently, Laitinen & al. (2018) construe the inter-professional expertise of social work in schools as open and engaging other participants in collaboration. The multi-professional collaboration often results in making one’s own knowledge and tasks clear to one another and aligning the work of everyone to function most effectively regarding the aim of the collaboration.

In my presentation, I concentrate on power issues in a context where practitioners from diverse professions and organizations collaborate outside the shelters of their workplaces. This way of collaborating is increasingly needed in responding to more complex problem spaces and new areas of practice (Edwards & Kinti 2010). Inter-professional collaboration calls for a discursive space where diversity in knowledge is used for a joint knowledge creation across professional and disciplinary boundaries.
(Akkerman & Bakker 2011). What kind of power issues does this boundary-crossing context bring to the fore?

I discuss power relations in boundary crossing collaboration in Project Fasper that established multi-professional and multi-organizational learning networks with the aim to create new family mediation practices in Finland. My discursive approach to analyse interview data from the project is a combination of cultural-historical activity theory (Vygotsky 1978), expansive learning theory (Y. Engeström 1987) and dialogical theory (Linell 2009).

**Fatherhood, alcohol and the hierarchy of masculinities**
*Arttu Salo (University of Tampere, Finland)*

My research focuses on the cultural and gendered meanings of fatherhood and male alcohol consumption and I try to open up the shared cultural understandings of fathers’ alcohol consumption. The alcohol consumption of fathers is considered to be one of the main problems of fatherhood. Although there is a certain tension between fatherhood and alcohol consumption, the masculinity of a father is not necessarily endangered by alcohol problems.

The theoretical framework of my research is based on critical studies of men and masculinities. The key idea is that the habits and patterns of male alcohol use and fatherhood create, build and reproduce different types of masculinities. These different masculinities form a hierarchy, and the most culturally acceptable masculinity becomes an ideal that others should aspire to. The hierarchy of masculinities affects how we see and treat different men and fathers.

One way to study the hierarchy of masculinities is to examine cultural presentations. In my research, I examine cultural presentations of male alcohol use and fatherhood. My data consists of cultural texts such as literature, magazine articles and web discussions. They all can be read as a social diagnosis of our time. I will use the approaches of cultural text analysis and feminist cultural studies as the methodology, and representation and narrative analysis as my method of analysis.

Preliminary findings deepens the opinion that the cultural ideals of male alcohol use have been changed and diversified, but alcohol still is a crucial part of Finnish masculinity. Traditionally in Finnish culture, male alcohol use has been a crucial marker of masculinity and a heavy-drinking man has been the symbol of Finnish alcohol culture. Currently, heavy drinking has become marker of working class, under educated and socially excluded men.

**Can «service users» speak? – a postcolonial approach to service user participation in research and practice**
*Håvard Aaslund (Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)*

Background and purpose:
This paper draws on postcolonial theory to explore the positions of “service user participation” in research and practice. Service user participation has become a credo in social policy and research policy for the last decades, but also been criticized for being a neoliberal value and linking a specific subjectivity with participation.

Methods:
The study is a participatory action research project, aiming to start a resident managed temporary housing project for people with a problematic relation to substances. At the same time, the ambition was to study challenges and possibilities in the pro-
cess with a collaborative research design. Data is gathered by participatory observation, interviews and document assessment over a period of three years.

Results:
The main barriers where identified as the “social work language” and “the institutionalized mindset”. This galvanized a process of identity work among the participants challenging the sanctioned ways of participation. At the same time, several discourses existed side by side in the process. This led to constant discussions and negotiations in the process, but also to what Spivak calls “strategical essentialism”.

Conclusions and implications:
The study shows both possibilities and challenges in work to raise consciousness and identity work in projects aiming at participatory democracy and innovation. It also highlights the importance of power in social work, and how social work discourse can be counterproductive in facilitating participation and democracy, and research can cement undemocratic power structures and patterns of participation if not critical about language and categories used.

Do the parents of poor families with children have trust and power to participation and wellbeing?

Sanna-Liisa Liikanen (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences & University of Eastern Finland)

In my social work PhD study, I will study how parents of poor families with children experience trust and distrust, how trust and distrust occurs in everyday life. Trust is important and necessary to everyone’s wellbeing, more and more important in surviving in everyday life. Trust and power are phenomena near each other and also related. The aim of my thesis will be what kind of trust the parents of poor families with children experience and how the trust they experience will be associated with wellbeing and participation.

My earlier study’s (2017) data consists of the essays of 42 parents who participated in an essay competition (Arkipäivän kokemuksia köyhydestä). Study shows that the parents of poor families with children experience trust and distrust in many different ways. Public officials and the service system are met often with distrust. On the other hand parents experience trust in their networks of close human relationships and also regarding their own coping and performance. A family with prolonged client hood in the basic social assistance lives in the poverty line. The prolonged client hood in basic social assistance means the risk for exclusion. People living depending on the last-resort financial assistance define wellbeing above all as a material phenomena. Wellbeing and deprivation are both heritable. Poverty is substantiative experience and it is not easy to define yourself as a poor. The economical insecurity provides stress and has a negative influence to mental wellbeing.

In my study I will interview parents of families with children who have had client hood in the basic social assistance for a long time (12 months and more). The interview will be a theme interview with drawing “the map of trust”, a picture of the everyday life and the things (people, institution and so on) where the parent will experience trust.
The implications of the Finnish social assistance reform for food aid recipients’ social citizenship
Suvi Linnanvirta (University of Helsinki, Finland)

In Finland, basic social assistance – the strictly means-tested benefit of last-resort – was transferred from local municipalities to the nationwide Social Insurance Institute (Kela), on January 1 2017. The reform was thought to enhance equality, lessen the stigma associated with social assistance and reduce non-take-up. These anticipated consequences can, if fulfilled, be thought to strengthen social assistance claimants’ social citizenship. At the same time, especially many social workers have been worried about the consequences of the reform for people in a vulnerable position.

In this paper we will examine food aid recipients’ views on and experiences of the social assistance reform from the perspective of social citizenship. The main focus is on how and in which situations the reform has strengthened or reduced the social citizenship of those food aid recipients that have applied for social assistance.

We utilise both quantitative survey data (N=829) collected prior to the reform and qualitative interview data that was collected both prior (autumn 2016, N=78) and after the reform (autumn 2017, N=61) in Finland’s two largest breadlines in Helsinki. The quantitative data are analysed statistically with the SPSS software, and the qualitative data are analysed with both quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

The tentative results show that fairly positive expectations of the reform were quite common among food aid recipients prior to the reform. After the reform, the views were often more clearly negative, but among them were also very positive ones. Food aid recipients’ varying views on the social assistance reform and its consequences can be understood through three central themes: information, participation and trust.