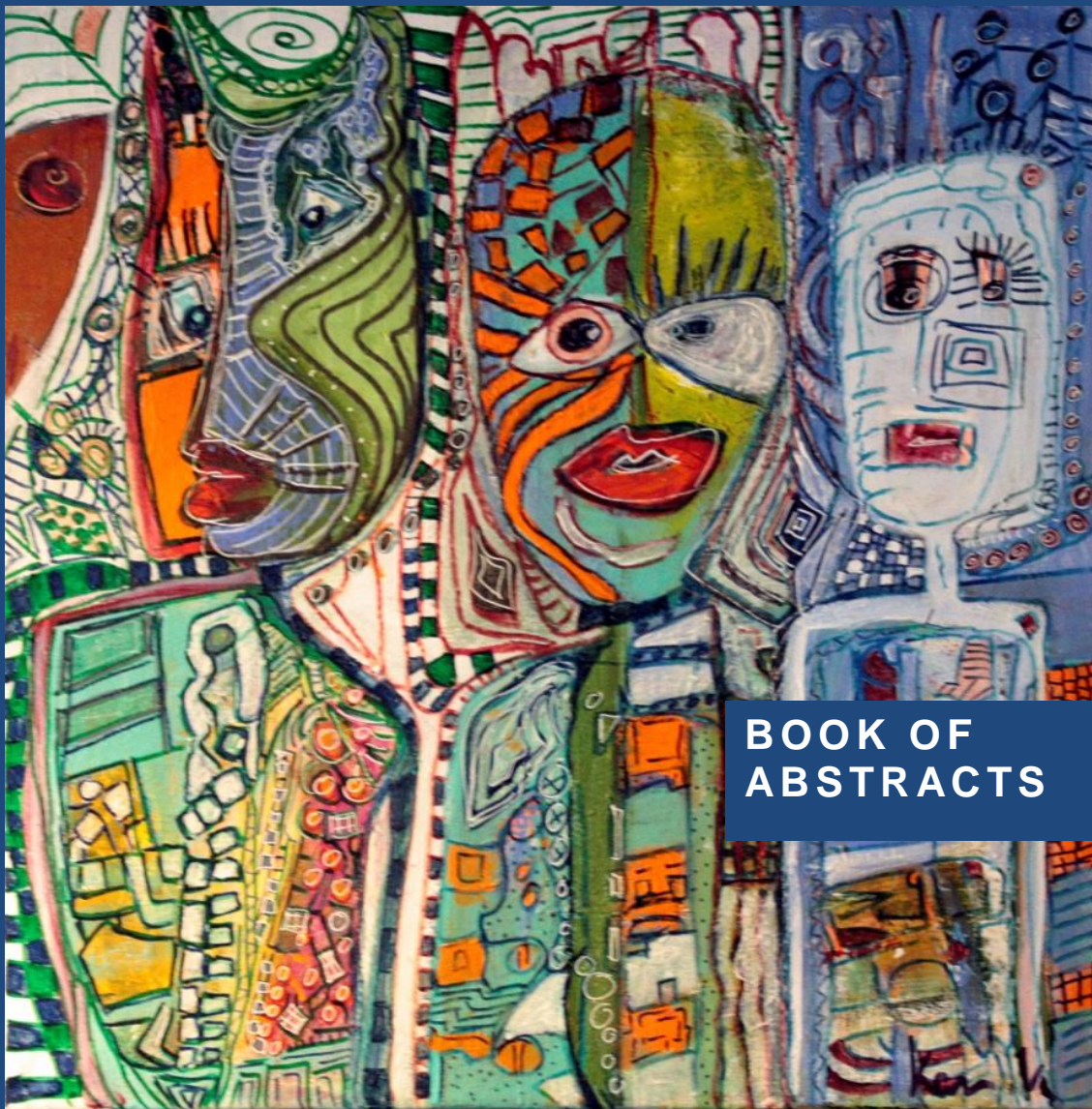


# 7<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN CONFERENCE FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

*Challenges in social work research – conflicts,  
barriers and possibilities in relation to social work*



**BOOK OF  
ABSTRACTS**





## ORGANISATION

- European Social Work Research Association (ESWRA)
- Department of Sociology and Social Work, Aalborg University

## HOST CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

- Professor Inge M. Bryderup (chair)
- Professor Lars Uggerhøj
- Assistant professor Mie Engen
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**ISBN:**

**978-87-90261-22-1**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH  
AALBORG UNIVERSITY**



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# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME


 WEDNESDAY | APRIL 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM
8:00 a.m. 8:00 p.m.	Registration	Kedelhallen
9:00 a.m. 3:30 p.m.	Pre Conference Activities	
4:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.	Opening Session:  <b>Inge M. Bryderup,</b> <i>Chair of the Host Conference Committee</i>  <b>Rasmus Antoft,</b> <i>Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Aalborg University</i>  <b>Silvia Fargion,</b> <i>ESWRA Chair</i>  <b>Annamaria Campanini,</b> <i>President of IASSW</i>  <b>Danish songs</b> <i>Margrete Grarup – singer</i> <i>Michael Sunding - piano</i>	DGI-hallen
5:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	<b>Keynote: Jaber F. Gubrium</b> <i>Interviews and Stories as Descriptive Events</i>	DGI-hallen
6:00 p.m. 6:20 p.m.	Coffee Break	Kedelhallen
6:20 p.m. 7:40 p.m.	ESWRA General Assembly	DGI-hallen
7:45 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Launch Event for Major ESWRA/Policy Press Publishing Partnership: “Research in Social Work”	DGI-hallen
8:00 p.m. 10:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception Aalborg Municipality  <b>Daniel Nyboe Andersen</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Deputy Mayor	Kedelhallen




 THURSDAY | APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM
8:00 a.m. 8:55 a.m.	Writing Workshop	6.1 Nordkraft
8:40 a.m. 9:00 a.m.	<b>Morning music</b> Olav Gudnason – Double bass Søren Lundbye Christensen - Piano	DGI-hallen
9:00 a.m. 9:55 a.m.	<b>Keynote: Walter Lorenz</b> <i>Social work research and accountable practice – challenging dogma in uncertain times</i>	DGI-hallen
10:00 a.m. 10:20 a.m.	Coffee Break	Kedelhallen
10:20 a.m. 11:50 a.m.	Parallel Sessions 1	
11:50 a.m. 12:00 noon	Short break	Kedelhallen
12:00 noon 1:30 p.m.	Parallel Sessions 2	
1:30 p.m. 2:45 p.m.	Lunch  Poster Session  SIG Conveners meeting	Kedelhallen  DGI-hallen  “Green café”
2:45 p.m. 4:15 p.m.	Parallel Sessions 3	
4:15 p.m. 4:25 p.m.	Short Break	
4:25 p.m. 5:55 p.m.	Parallel Sessions 4	
5:55 p.m. 6:15 p.m.	Coffee Break	Kedelhallen
6:15 p.m. 7:15 p.m.	<b>Keynote: Maria Appel Nissen</b> <i>The productive human being – Or on the construction of alternatives in social work research</i>	6.1,6.2,6.3
8:15 p.m.	Conference Dinner <b>Music</b> – The Overheads	DGI-hallen

FRIDAY | APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2017

TIME	ACTIVITY	ROOM
8:00 a.m. 8:55 a.m.	Special Interest Groups Meetings	
8:40 a.m. 9:00 a.m.	<b>Morning music</b> Olav Gudnason – Double bass Søren Lundbye Christensen - Piano	DGI-hallen
9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	<b>Keynote: Peter Sommerfeld</b> <i>Complexities and dynamics of a transdisciplinary discipline – challenges for research and community building</i>	DGI- hallen
10:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Coffee Break	Kedelhallen
10:30 a.m. 12:00 noon	Parallel Sessions 5	
12:00 noon 12:10 p.m.	Short Break	
12:10 p.m. 1:40 p.m.	Parallel Sessions 6	
1:40 p.m. 2:45 p.m.	Lunch  Poster Session  Meeting of Committee for engaging non-engaged countries	Kedelhallen  DGI-hallen  “Green Café”
2:45 p.m. 4:15 p.m.	Parallel Sessions 7	
4:15 p.m. 4:25 p.m.	Short Break	
4:25 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Closing Session:  <b>Silvia Fargion,</b> <i>ESWRA Chair, closing and ESWRA Awards</i>  <b>Viviene Cree</b> Presentation of the 8 <sup>th</sup> ESWRA conference, Edinburgh, UK  <b>Inge Bryderup</b> Chair of the Host Conference Committee  <b>Community Singing</b> Joint goodbye song	DGI- hallen



## PARALLEL SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

ROOM	BODY AND MIND	6.1	6.2	6.3	10.15
<b>Parallel Sessions 1</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 10:00 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	OP 1.1 <i>Theme 1</i>	OP 1.2 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 1.3 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP1.4 <i>Theme 4</i>	OP 1.5 <i>Theme 4</i>
<b>Parallel Sessions 2</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 12:00 noon 1:30 p.m.	OP 2.1 <i>Theme 1</i>	OP 2.2 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP2.3 <i>Theme 3</i>	OP2.4 <i>Theme 4</i>	OP 2.5 <i>Theme 6</i>
<b>Parallel Sessions 3</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 2:45 p.m. 4:15 p.m.	OP 3.1 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 3.2 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 3.3 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 3.4 <i>Theme 3</i>	OP 3.5 <i>Theme 5</i>
<b>Parallel Sessions 4</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 4:25 p.m. 5:55 p.m.	OP 4.1 <i>Theme 1</i>	OP 4.2 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 4.3 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 4.4 <i>Theme 4</i>	OP 4.5 <i>Theme 6</i>
<b>Parallel Sessions 5</b> Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> 10:30 a.m. 12:00 noon	OP 5.1 <i>Theme 1</i>	OP 5.2 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 5.3 <i>Theme 3</i>	OP 5.4 <i>Theme 3</i>	OP 5.5 <i>Theme 6</i>
<b>Parallel Sessions 6</b> Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> 12:10 p.m. 1:40 p.m.	OP 6.1 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 6.2 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 6.3 <i>Theme 3</i>	OP 6.4 <i>Theme 5</i>	OP 6.5 <i>Theme 6</i>
<b>Parallel Sessions 7</b> Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> 2:45 p.m. 4:15 p.m.	OP 7.1 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 7.2 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP 7.3 <i>Theme 2</i>	OP7.4	SYM 21





## PARALLEL SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

ROOM	3.3.17	6.7	6.8	10.14	4.105*
<b>Parallel Sessions 1</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 10:00 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	OP1.6 <i>Theme 6</i>	SYM 1	SYM 2	SYM 3	WORK 1
<b>Parallel Sessions 2</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 12:00 noon 1:30 p.m.	SYM 4	SYM 5	SYM 6	WORK 2	
<b>Parallel Sessions 3</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 2:45 p.m. 4:15 p.m.	SYM 7	SYM 8	SYM 9	WORK 3	WORK 4
<b>Parallel Sessions 4</b> Thursday, 20 <sup>th</sup> 4:25 p.m. 5:55 p.m.	SYM 10	SYM 11	SYM 12	WORK 5	WORK 6
<b>Parallel Sessions 5</b> Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> 10:30 a.m. 12:00 noon	SYM 13	SYM 14	SYM 15	SYM 16	WORK 7
<b>Parallel Sessions 6</b> Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> 12:10 p.m. 1:40 p.m.	SYM 17	SYM 18	SYM 19	SYM 20	WORK 8
<b>Parallel Sessions 7</b> Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> 2:45 p.m. 4:15 p.m.	SYM 22	WORK 9	WORK 10		

\* Rendsburggade

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



### JABER F. GUBRIUM

#### INTERVIEWS AND STORIES AS DESCRIPTIVE EVENTS

Interviews and client narratives are a significant corpus of research data in social work, providing descriptions of the troubles and problems that inform human service policy and intervention. The interpretive insights of ethnographic studies of descriptive practice bear significantly on this. Interview and narrative material taken from a longstanding program of work on the “eventfulness” of descriptions in human service institutions is presented, providing two sets of challenges for social work research.

Jaber F. Gubrium is professor and chair of sociology at the University of Missouri in the US. He has a longstanding program of research on the social organization of description in human service institutions, from residential treatment for emotionally disturbed children and physical rehabilitation to inpatient psychiatric service and nursing home care. Continuing collaboration with social researchers in the Nordic countries has recently produced the edited book *Reimagining the Human Service Relationship*, Columbia University Press.



### WALTER LORENZ

#### SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH AND ACCOUNTABLE PRACTICE – CHALLENGING DOGMA IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

In affirming its place in an evidence-obsessed academic and political context social work research has two options: to bow to prevailing dogmas or to ground the process of knowledge creation by engaging comprehensively with producers of knowledge as well as scrutinising the political context in which knowledge is produced, framed and applied. Far from being a marginal academic discipline social work has the chance to spearhead epistemological innovation that breaks with the stagnation and resignation prevalent in a post-modern era in a spirit of shared accountability.

Walter Lorenz is Professor for Applied Social Science at the Free University of Bozen in Northern Italy since 2001 where he coordinates a professional social work programme. A native of Germany, he qualified as a social worker at the London School of Economics with practice in East London. He was lecturer of social work at University Cork/ Ireland 1978 – 2000, latterly as Jean Monnet Professor. Research interests include intercultural pedagogy, social pedagogy, comparative aspects of social work and social policy in Europe and quality standards in social services. He holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Ghent and Aalborg.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



### MARIA APPEL NISSEN

#### THE PRODUCTIVE HUMAN BEING – OR ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVES IN SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

The governance of contemporary European societies is increasingly based on rationales combining a strong focus on productivity with economic restraint or austerity. In Denmark, this constitutes a focus on how people considered to be 'unproductive' can become 'productive' in a cost-effective way. How do social workers approach this view on human beings? An in depth study shows how Danish social workers embrace, reflect on and contribute to broaden prevailing views on human beings. From this point of view it is asked, if social work research can contribute to alternative perspectives on human life? What kind of approach may this entail?

Maria Appel Nissen is Ph.D. in Sociology and Associate Professor at Aalborg University, Department of Sociology of Social Work. She is the head a Master in Knowledge Based Social Work and the research project Views on Human Beings in Social Work – Welfare Policies, Technologies and Knowledge about human beings (Nissen, Fallov, Ringø, Kjaerulff and Birk, 2014-2017). Her research is rooted in empirical and theoretical explorations of social work with families, focusing on the intricate relations between societal, cultural, political and organisational processes of change, and the forms of knowledge and practices of social work.



### PETER SOMMERFELD

#### COMPLEXITIES AND DYNAMICS OF A TRANS-DISCIPLINARY DISCIPLINE – CHALLENGES FOR RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

'Melting pot', as used in the Call for Papers, is a nice metaphor for the challenges in which Social Work has been developing since its very beginning. Diversity and integration in respect to both knowledge and people is the leading polarity to explore. The proposition is to think about transdisciplinarity, or at least a couple of its implications, so as to point in the direction of something like an 'integrated diversity' instead of a (con-) 'fusion of anything'.

Peter Sommerfeld is professor of Social Work at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work, Institute Social Work and Health. His research interests are grouped around the development of Social Work as a profession and the theory-practice link. Recent research has been completed in the fields of probation services, psychiatry and occupational social work. Master degree in sociology, psychology and pedagogy. PhD in Social Pedagogy from the University of Tübingen, Germany. He was co-president of the Swiss Society for Social Work and still is Board member of the European Social Work Research Association.



## THEME

### **CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH – CONFLICTS, BARRIERS AND POSSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO SOCIAL WORK**

Social Work Research is linked closely to the complex world of social work and to different stakeholders and interests within the field – practitioners, service users, teachers, students, politicians, and administrators.

This diversity of interests and different stakeholders raises a range of challenges in social work research. Challenges in the form of controversies, barriers and dilemmas but also challenges providing new possibilities in the field of social work. Researchers in social work are expected to know about the different interests and to collaborate with many partners within the research processes. But not only are researchers expected to be aware of these issues. All partners in research processes must be aware of the melting pot they are part of when collaborating – both to make it possible to safeguard their own interests and to be able to participate in the processes in the complex meetings.

The seventh European Conference for Social Work Research (ECSWR2017) will focus on the research challenges originating from these meetings.

## SUBTHEMES:

1. Political, administrative and economic influences and challenges for social work research
2. Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users
3. Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research
4. Social work research as a framework for social work education
5. Complexities and controversies about the effects or outcomes of social work and social work research
6. Research on different forms of partnerships/cooperation – including power and conflicts in social work



THURSDAY | 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF THE CONFERENCE





## WRITING WORKSHOP

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. to 8:55 a.m.  
Room:

The editors of a number of international academic journals invite you to join them to discuss writing for publication. During the session they will:

- Show you how to increase the chances of successful submission to a journal;
- Provide tips on how to match your research paper to the aims and scope of a particular journal;
- Explain the peer review process and the criteria used by peer reviewers;
- Offer consultation on your own ideas for writing

*Please visit the Taylor and Francis/Routledge exhibition stand during the early part of the conference to sign up and secure your place*





## PARALLEL SESSIONS 1

THURSDAY | APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>

TIME | 10:20 A.M. TO 11:50 A.M.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 1.1

### Theme 1: Political, administrative and economic influences and challenges for social work research

*Ethical and political aspects of social work*

(Chair: Aila-Leena Matthies)

Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Room: Body and Mind – Nordkraft

#### 298 | Leadership as ethical agency in the social welfare services

*Monica Kjørstad (Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway)*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Ethical agency, Social welfare services, New public management, Quality vs. efficiency

#### **Aims and objectives**

The aim of the paper is to discuss some aspects of leadership in the social welfare services in Norway. I assume a major reform (NAV) – that implies that a number of earlier independent sectors like social economic support, unemployment economic benefits, pensions for old people, pensions for disabled people and sick leave pensions have merged into one organization for all kinds of social services. In this system, many characteristics of New Public Management can be recognized as an overarching philosophy. Undoubtedly, an economic instrumental paradigm has come to dominate the social welfare services and other public areas, like universities, schools, hospitals, social and medical services, - institutions that are build up to protect the “common good”. This tendency might sometimes be camouflaged in intricate and seductive rhetoric about peoples’ freedom to choose their own way of living their lives, the importance of self-determination and empowerment. Norms and values imbedded in professional social work practices are strongly challenged.

#### **Theoretical and methodological perspectives:**

To discuss this matter I will take the theoretical concept ‘ethical agency’ (Bhaskar 1993) as my point of departure. Doing this, I will emphasize and analyze one of the most common dichotomic ‘pair’ concepts that are relevant for social and caring institutions today. The two concepts quality and efficiency are often used in contrast to each other in a dichotomist way that make them appear as mutually exclusive. Looking closer at these concepts may help you understand some of the practical issues and day-to-day dilemmas that are present in the public social services.

#### **Implications:**

Because the political, bureaucratic and professional logics of “thinking” are based on quite different feed-back processes, my



intention is to give some arguments that indicates that a more realistic approach to leadership should be emphasized. I will also argue that there is a need to find a discourse that allows including the question: what does it mean being human? This is, from my point of view, a real challenge for future social work practice and research.

## 94 | Challenges and Possibilities for Ethical Practice in Social Work

*Merlinda Weinberg (Dalhousie University, Canada)*

**Keywords:** *ethics, paradox, practice, research, Neoliberalism, Discourse, theoretical tools*

### **Background and purpose**

*Social work as a profession is riddled with fundamental paradoxes. One such paradox is that of having conflicting mandates in society to both care and control clients (Weinberg, 2016). The research study that was the focus of this paper was concerned with the question of what constitutes ethical practice for social workers, given these paradoxes. How do practitioners navigate the terrain and what do they perceive as ethical practice? This is an especially pressing a concern in an environment of neoliberalism with its fiscal austerity and market-oriented values (Clarke, 2004) that do not easily align with those of the social work profession, putting tremendous strictures on workers and contributing to the construction of ethical challenges. A supplemental question for the research was how can practitioners function ethically in this challenging context?*

### **Methods**

*This research was an in-depth, qualitative, exploratory study of front-line social workers in Canada who worked primarily with young single mothers. The approach employed a critical theoretical perspective. Using an interview schedule, five to seven open-ended in-depth interviews were conducted with five participants over a two-year period. The participants were self-selecting, and one located through a snowball technique. This population was chosen because lone mothers are at the nexus of a number of marginalized categories, and the study's foci included workers' perceptions of oppression as an aspect of 'ethics.'*

### **Results**

- *The current socio-economic environment of neoliberalism adds a layer of complexity to practice and contributed to the ethical challenges practitioners faced.*
- *Workers adopted very divergent discourses to make sense of their work with their clients, and thus both their*



*responsibilities and the ethical dilemmas that emerged for them.*

- *The utilization of codes of ethics and decision-making models were not generally employed to resolve ethical conundrums.*
- *Six underlying paradoxes were defined that contributed to ethical struggles.*
- *Despite the challenges, at times workers found practice strategies to enact their best ethical selves.*

### **Conclusions and implications**

- *Social work was understood as a political activity, so more research needs to be done on the challenging intersection of neoliberal ideology and its impacts on social work ethics.*
- *The embedded paradoxes suggest that there can be no “right” answers regarding ethical dilemmas, because even good outcomes may include unintended harms. Thus, practitioners must bring humility, self-reflection and a recognition of power to their work.*
- *The research elaborated on creative means that practitioners used to ameliorate negative effects, suggesting research as an important tool to expand possibilities for liberatory practice.*
- *New theoretical tools are needed (and were developed) to enlarge what was understood as ethics in social work since the dominant approaches were insufficient. This supports the importance of research for social work education; providing the possibility of broadening thinking through new theoretical constructs for students, practitioners and policy makers.*

### **Citations**

*Clarke, J. (2004). Changing welfare, changing states: New directions in social policy. London, England: SAGE.*

*Weinberg, M. (2016). Paradoxes in Social Work Practice: Mitigating Ethical Trespass. New York: Routledge.*



## 257 | Hannah Arendt and the political dimension of social work

*Jeannette Hartman (NHL-Hogeschool, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** Social work, Political dimension, Hannah Arendt

Social work defines its mandate, mission, vision and strategy in a highly political and social context. In the past fifty years a lot of changes appeared in society which inevitably had an impact on the role and importance of social work. The mission of social work is to ensure that people can develop their nature, needs and views in interaction with their social environment, taking in account others with whom they live together. On the other hand social workers are expected to implement social policy as it has been laid down by government. That raises the question whether a social worker is responsible only for the implementation of social policy or responsible for the development of social policy also.

Political thinker Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) shows in her major work *The Human Condition* (1958) a philosophical analysis of human activities and their significance for political life. Arendt's analysis might be very helpful to find an answer to the question what the political dimension of social work is in a constantly changing society. Active citizenship, civil participation and citizen power are terms that dominate current thinking in the social domain. These terms are connected to the work of Hannah Arendt but her interpretation of these terms might be quite different than the present interpretations. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt gives an analysis of activities that are characteristic for human existence, she labels this as the 'vita activa'. She distinguishes labor, work and action. With 'labor' she means those activities that are necessary to stay alive. With 'work' she means the creation of things that are useful. With 'action' finally, she means the activity by which man through speech can give purpose and meaning to his being-in-the-world. It is connected to the political sphere and the activity in which man shows who he is. Active citizenship, civil participation, citizen power demand action and speech in the public sphere.

This presentation highlights the background, purpose and design of this research on the political dimension of social work and gives a brief outline of Arendt's politico-philosophical ideas in relation to social work.

Central theme in this presentation is the political challenge for social work in the complex social domain which is full of connections, diversities and controversies between social work



research, policy makers, practitioners and service users. Furthermore offer the philosophical ideas of political thinker Hannah Arendt an interesting framework for social work research which leads to new insights for social work education.

### 113 | Managerialism implications on frontline Social Work Practices in Portugal

*Maria Inês Amaro (ISCTE-IUL, Portugal)*

*Francisco Branco (UCP, Portugal)*

**Keywords:** Social Work, Managerialism, New Public Management, De-professionalization

#### **Background and purpose**

Professions are under profound change in contemporary societies and Social Work is no exception to this. The constant contact with increasingly complex situations, the pressure to processes of accountability, time and resources shortage are the base of new professional challenges.

The trend in contemporary societies is for the reinforcement of an instrumental rationality focused on competitiveness, efficiency, efficacy and result-oriented practice; this rationale is not alien for social work, which more and more is influenced by this kind of inspiration. The consequences have been diverse and topics like the de-professionalization thesis, managerialism and evidence-based practice are definitely in social work agenda.

This paper will try to explore and analyse how professionals are affected by these new dimensions of work and how do they respond to it. The analysis will explore the challenges and limitations, but also the positive sides practitioners point out when reflecting about what is new in their professional performance and in the way they spend their professional time.

#### **Methods**

The analysis is based on the gathering of 2 waves of workload diaries from a number of professional social workers, practicing in different contexts, and the conduction of focus groups and individual interviews with professionals to discuss the implications of what their working diaries show to their role as social workers. Social workers considered are all from Portugal and practice at Lisbon.

The first wave, took place during the summer and collected two-week workload diaries from 10 social workers, working at public administration, local government, NGO, private enterprise and public enterprise. A focus group with professionals was





conducted afterwards for an in-depth approach to preliminary findings.

The second wave, will occur during the autumn and rely on the same group of social workers for a new row of workload diaries and exploration of meanings and perspectives by means of either individual interviews or focus group.

Results be discussed in the light of the de-professionalization thesis and of the New Public Management trends.

### **Results**

So far, we found an enormous diversity in professionals' caseloads, depending on the type of institutional setting. In general, 45% of the working time is spent in Client-Related Activities, while 35% is attributed to System Information Management. Almost no time is spent on Professional Development (3%).

### **Conclusions and implications**

More than a third of the SW working time is consumed in "paper work" activities. Specifically, the direct contact with clients' activities constitutes only 26 % of the working time.

Despite this, in some professional discourses, over-bureaucratisation of practices in result of managerialist trends seems to be a worth-paying price for a "more technical" performance, recorded, monitored and easy to assess and also contributing to a more positive hetero professional representation.

The ambivalences implied by the 'managerialist turn' in professional experiences will be further explored in the second series of data collection.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 1.2

### Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users

*Research on women in vulnerable positions*

(Chair: Mette Rømer)

Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Room: 6.1 - Nordkraft

#### 101 | A world that is flipped over: The case of female survivors who suffered both from intimate partner violence and mental health problems in Taiwan

*Chu-Li Liu (Dept. of Social Work Tunghai University, Taiwan)*

**Keywords:** mental health problems, intimate partner violence, female survivors

Mental health problems are still stigmatized as madness in Taiwan. Often times, the stories told by females with mental health problems are not believed due to this cultural belief. Therefore, females who were survivors of intimate partner violence repeatedly experienced being doubted by their relatives and police officers about the violence they revealed. The stories female intimate partner survivors revealed often were reframed by the male batterers as their imaginations due to their illness. And the male batterers are more believed because the male batterers are “normal”. This presentation will demonstrate how the stories/realities of female survivors who suffered both from intimate partner violence and mental health problems in Taiwan were flipped over due to mental health problems.

A grounded theory research method was adopted. Individual in-depth interview was adopted to collect data. 8 Taiwanese females who had suffered both from intimate partner violence and Major Depression, aged 40 to 70, voluntarily participated in this study. Open coding, axial coding and selective coding were adopted to analyze data. Peer debriefing and comparing to literature served the purpose of research validation.

The findings indicated that the roles and images female intimate partner survivors with mental health problems and male batterers held inside their relationships are often the reverse



from the outside. Female survivors suffered from their male partners' long-term abuse and resulted in having mental health problems. Therefore the reality is that the male batterers are the problem makers and the female survivors are the sufferers. However, due to female intimate partner violence survivors' emotional disturbance, the "normal" male batterers used this emotional issues as excuses to reframe the realities that female survivors created many chaos in the families, "the abnormal" female survivors thus became the problem makers and the "normal" male batterers are the sufferers. In addition, people with mental health problems, no matter what causes the illness, are entitled to receive cash benefits from Taiwan government. Male batterers often control the banking accounts that cash benefits go into each month given that Taiwan is still a patriarchal context. Thus, male batterers shared the cash benefits and enjoyed the results of their own abusive behaviors while female survivors still struggled with their illness.

This study demonstrated that the reality inside abusive intimate partner relationships are often the reverse from the outside. The flipped-over reality often makes female intimate partner violence survivors even more emotionally disturbed and reinforced the "madness". Implications for social work practice in particular the assessments of the abusive situations and gender sensitive social policies are discussed.

## 121 | Experiences of inequality from the standpoint of women substance users in the context of social and health care services in Finland

*Elina Virokannas (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

*Suvi Liuski (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

**Keywords:** drug abuse, health and social services, inequality, institutional ethnography, service users

There is a huge organisational change project going on in Finland concerning the health- and social service system but the situation of the most vulnerable groups of customers has been left aside. People who are using illegal drugs encounter strong prejudices and resistance among social and health service providers regarding their involvement or receiving services. Drug users who have severe health, financial and housing problems might become turned away from service front desks or defined as unsuitable customers without explanations.



Our presentation discusses experiences of inequality from women substance users' standpoint in the context of social and health care services. The data consists of 10 group discussions with 13 different women and was gathered between summer 2015 and autumn 2016. The group work was part of a wider project that aimed to reach the most marginalized women substance users and to help them receive the social and health services they need. The projects' supporting group was open to any women who are able to stay awake and conscious during the sessions and do not behave aggressively. Also the group discussions concerning the purpose of research were open to everyone. The transcribed data consist of 350 single-spaced A4 sheets.

As a methodological perspective we lean on the institutional ethnography (by Dorothy Smith) which takes for its entry point the experiences of specific individuals whose everyday activities are in some way hooked into, shaped by, and constituent of the institutional relations under exploration. The purpose is not to generalize about the group of people, but to find and describe social processes, so-called ruling relations that have generalizing effects. Our research questions consider women's personal but socially shaped experiences: what kind of meanings the experiences of inequality have in women's group discussions and how the ruling relations effect women's everyday life according to their stories?

According to our preliminary findings, the most commonly shared inequality experiences were feelings of being stigmatized as a drug user who is not worth of care and treatment. The service system might work "legally right" and at the same time categorize some individuals or groups as unsuitable for services. The conclusion should be that there is something wrong in the system. Still, in women's everyday life, these ruling relations lead to outsiders' positions, disappointment and losing the faith for getting any better.

Our paper addresses to the conference theme Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users. The paper is a part of the research project "Transforming welfare service system from the standpoint of women in vulnerable life situations" (Academy of Finland, project no 294407, 2016-20).



### 310 | Participant observation in Dhaka: The challenges of conducting social work research with women in low income employment and sex work

*Bethany Jennings (Edinburgh University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** Ethnography, Work, Gender, Bangladesh

Over the past thirty years, an increasing number of women have been working outside their homes in Bangladesh, particularly in the country's largest city Dhaka. A key factor has been the growing garments industry and rapid urbanisation. Research exploring these demographic changes reveals a complex picture of women's situations. While conditions are often extremely poor and pay is low, new forms of work provide women with opportunities that were otherwise rarely available to them. Sex work demonstrates a form of employment that brings similar dilemmas; while sex work is potentially dangerous and morally questionable, it nevertheless brings much-needed employment to some women. This complex reality became one of the central research questions in my PhD study; I wanted to find out how women in such seemingly different (but in reality overlapping) contexts understood their experiences, managed their identities, and interacted with the communities around them. Leading on from this, what are the implications for the services that support them?

In my fieldwork, I conducted ethnographic research through living in an area with a low income population in Dhaka and talking with women about their experiences of work. I met with women who identified themselves as sex workers in two other areas. I compared these women's experiences and views, highlighting how they made choices and negotiated their identities. The first set of data was gathered over a longer period of time and focused on the everyday lives of women. In the second fieldwork setting, I met with women who sold sex, initially making contact through NGOs, visiting homes and places of work for short periods of time. Bringing together two groups of participants and a varied method of collecting data, and relating the experiences and narratives in a cohesive way is a challenge. However, the reason for taking this approach was to understand women's experiences of work in their wider context.

In this paper, I will focus on methodology used and argue that the result is a greater depth of understanding of both groups of women and their complex situations. While the first group discussed maintaining their moral position and negotiating their



situations with in it, the second group were outside the socially accepted moral norms but justified and negotiated their place. Both groups simultaneously confirmed and challenged their positions in society. Comparing these two groups highlights their similar experiences, provides context to their differences, and gives a nuanced picture of the effect of urbanisation and the rise in low income employment for women in Bangladesh. A deeper understanding of how women's lives are changing and how these changes are negotiated in communities is essential for services and policies related to these groups who are often under-represented and in vulnerable positions.





## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 1.3

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### **Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users**

(Chair: Campbell Killick)

Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Room: 6.2 - Nordkraft

#### **47 | Conflicts in Research about Staff Violence in Residential Youth Care**

*Fabian Kessl (University of Duisburg-Essenand, Germany)*

*Friederike Lorenz (University of Duisburg-Essenand, Germany)*

**Keywords:** Conflicts in Research, Violence in Residential Youth Care, Researcher in the Field

In this paper we will discuss research practices in a specific field of research: empirical studies on violence in social work organizations. This is on the background of an empirical study (University of Duisburg-Essen, 2013-2016) about violent assaults in a German residential youth care organization. The staff of three residential groups for children with disabilities have been acting violently for a number of years. The attacks have kept secret and legitimized in reference to a cognitive behavioral concept. Our interest is on the conditions and the organizational consequences of the violent constellation.

Research projects on (staff) violence against children are placed in a multidimensional field of conflict. The range of motivations of the social work organization, the professionals, the researchers, and politics can be highly controversial. Organizations tend to avoid any public discussion after the disclosure, professionals want to be get back to everyday work as soon as possible, scientists are interested in elucidating structural logics and personal constellations having made the violence possible, and politics is often primarily interested in short-term reaction on a symbolic level. Thereby the field access for research is already be characterized by a number of tensions. But not only that. Those tensions continue in the research process, because it relates to the violent assaults on different levels and with different effects. This will be in the focus of the paper in the following way.



1. Unintended effects gathering (interview) data: Research, especially in a qualitative manner (like narrative interviews), can become an unintended part of rehabilitation. Especially if a systematic reflection of violence is so far missing, the researchers might be the first persons asking staff members in an interview about her or his experience on the history of violence. By that, research can become an unintended function: It can open a relatively protected space for people to speak about their memories. But: How to deal with that 'secondary effect' in the interview situation as well as in the further analysis, and not at least in the process of documenting and presenting the research results?

2. Specific relation(s) to the research field: Research on violence in social work organizations can (re)produce constellations allowing violence against children. This can be the case e.g. by silencing the voices of the victims and their ancestors, while emphasizing the voices of professionals and management. Research tends to reproduce organizational and institutional power structures, not at least because the field access usually works via the management. But how can silent voices like those of the victims, if they can't be interviewed, be considered in the analysis of the data?

3. Position of the research in relation to the public, esp. media and justice: Research about staff violence in social work points out different understandings of truth and justice. The public, the management, the media, and criminal juristic investigation have a different function and perspective in the field of conflict around research on staff violence. This will generate different or probably contradictory stories on the case. How can these different narratives be acknowledged without disqualifying the 'truth'?

A discussion of these questions and the related tensions are of high relevance for any further development in the field of residential care to avoid staff violence. Possible answers are illustrated on basis of the own research.

## 67 | First things first, measuring childhood disability in Belgium: the overlap and mismatch between different recognition levels

*Julie Vinck (Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, Belgium)*

*Wim Van Lancker (Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, Belgium)*

*Griet Roets (Department of Social Welfare Studies, Belgium)*



**Keywords:** Childhood disability, Parental employment, Recognition levels, Mismatch

According to the currently dominant social investment paradigm, the eradication of child poverty has been considered a key target of poverty reduction. Child and family social work has consequently been assigned a pivotal role, focussing on the education of children and the activation of parents living in poverty. In this paper, we address the paradoxical effects of these strategies for (families with) disabled children. Compared with non-disabled children, disabled children are significantly more likely to grow up in poverty. For their parents, a work strategy might however be problematic, as they often face both time and money constraints. Currently, there is a lack of empirical knowledge about the relationship between childhood disability and this work-care nexus.

The aim of this paper is therefore to examine how and in what way childhood disability impacts on parental work-care arrangements, and whether, and if so, how, existing cash allowances and public services influence on this relationship. Yet, before social work practitioners can start to develop appropriate interventions for these families, it has to be determined who is eligible for interventions, and how childhood disabilities are defined. In this paper, we combine quantitative analyses on a large-scale and hitherto unexplored administrative dataset on childhood disabilities in Belgium with semi-structured interviews to assess which children are recognised by the federal and regional administration as being eligible. The dataset includes an 'objective' measure (a 36-points scale) that is being used at the federal level in Belgium to recognise entitlement to additional child benefits. The measure consists of three complementary pillars which gauge the impact of the child's disability in terms of the (1) physical and mental consequences, (2) consequences to the child's participation in daily life, and (3) consequences for the family. The more points a child achieves on this scale, the higher the care burden and the higher the additional child benefit received. However, if a child wants to make use of public services, a recognition at the regional level is needed. To acquire this recognition, a multidisciplinary team assesses the disability of the child. According to the child's needs and the availability of places, the child can make use of different types of care services once the recognition at the regional level is obtained. We discuss the research results in which an overlap and mismatch between children recognised at the federal and the regional level in Flanders is identified by using a mixed method analysis. First, we present a profile of the children



recognised at either one or both levels by descriptive analysis building on our unique administrative dataset. Second, we conduct semi-structured interviews with key players, both at the federal and regional level. Our analysis shows that 42% of disabled children are recognised only at the federal level, 21% only at the Flemish level and 37% at both. The mismatch mainly considers specific groups of children: less severe and mentally disabled children. The consequences of this mismatch for the provision of public and social resources, including social work practices, will be discussed.

## 88 | Professionalism and discretion in institutional care – professionals' perspectives

*Lina Ponnert (Lund University, School of social work, Sweden)*  
*Kerstin Svensson (Lund University, School of social work, Sweden)*

**Keywords:** Institutional care, Acute divisions, Treatment divisions, Professionals, Discretion, Professionalism, contextual environment, Controversies, Outcomes of work

In this presentation we present some of the results from a research study focused on acute divisions within institutions for youth in coercive care in Sweden. We focus on discussing controversies about the outcomes of work, based on the experiences and ideas of professionalism and discretion by professionals.

In Sweden there are 24 “special approved homes” that are run by the state. These institutions are characterized by their special authorities to provide locked coercive care for young persons (usually teenagers), and are used by the social services as a last resort for teenagers displaying severe behavioral problems, drug abuse or crime. The special approved homes provide different types of divisions; acute divisions, assessment divisions and divisions for treatment. Acute divisions are characterized by the fact that the young persons have been put in the division in an acute phase by the social services; the care is locked and restricted in time to eight weeks. Acute divisions that only provide acute care do neither provide assessments nor traditional treatment. During the stay there should be a decision taken by the social service on what the next step will be. There is not always a prepared plan for the future care by the social services, and the young person initially often has strict restrictions and is not allowed



to be outside the division at any time. Within this frame the professionals are supposed to provide a meaningful care.

A key question for our study is how the professionals deal with these special circumstances, and their ideas about what their work is actually about and how this differ from treatment divisions. What do they think about their professional discretion, what is regarded as professionalism and what are the desired outcome of work within this context? How does working in acute divisions differ from working within treatment divisions in special approved homes? Is there actually a difference?

The study is based on four group interviews with professionals providing care in acute divisions, and two group interviews with professionals in treatment divisions. Each interview had 2-3 participants (totally 16 professionals). The preliminary results indicate that professionalism in acute divisions is associated with a special approach and attitude towards the young persons and the social services, where personal suitability is regarded as more important than formal education. This is different from the treatment divisions where professionalism is related to the models used in treatment. Yet, the professionals in acute divisions seem to be more satisfied with their professional discretion compared to professionals within treatment divisions. Treatment divisions have restricted possibilities to actually use their methodological knowledge. This might be related to rapidly changing client groups as asylum seeking children, unrealistic assignments from the social services and a situation where the limited number of locked care places reduces the possibility to select clients that fit the treatment profile of the division. The vague expectations of the care in acute divisions seem to facilitate a sense of professionalism and discretion, even if they have less standardised tasks.

## 148 | Social work reports of residential conditions of children in dispute divorce

*Hannele Forsberg (University of Tampere, Finland)*

*Aino Kääriäinen (University of Helsinki, Finland)*

*Aino Ritala-Koskinen (University of Tampere, Finland)*

**Keywords:** divorce, reports of residential conditions of children, housing, cultural knowledge in social work, assesment practices of social work





Social work in divorce, including reports of the social conditions of children to the courts in dispute divorce cases, is amazingly “un-noticed” and un-researched field of practice. The focus of this paper is to consider these ‘social reports’ as assessment practices of social work, especially concentrating on the ways what, how and with what kind of implications children’s residency is put into the words in these reports. The ways of reporting are worth of analysing, because the reports form a central part of the knowledge used in the final decisions of the courts.

The data consists of 58 reports of a child’s social conditions written in 2011 (from 5 district courts and originally from 33 municipalities). As a result, descriptions of physical features of the dwelling and its surroundings are used to provide clues of the suitable everyday life environment for the child. Human relations at home are assessed as potential resources for the child’s daily life: geography of the people at home, stability or instability of the family relations and the atmosphere of the home are used as signs of the quality of everyday life of children. These descriptions pass on to the conclusions of the social reports and decision making of the courts in varying ways.

The results challenge us to reflect especially the role and implications of the cultural knowledge on home in the professional assessment and decision making of children’s place of residence and custody. The paper argues that there is a need for problematizing the nature of the cultural knowledge found as remarkable but self-evident in the assessment practise of social work. The cultural meanings of home may include controversies and complexities, which deserve to be noticed.





## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 1.4

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### Theme 4: Social work research as a framework for social work education

(Chair: Maja Lundemark Andersen)  
Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.  
Room: 6.3 - Nordkraft

#### 109 | 'What can we do for our mum?' Family experiences of end of life care for relatives with substance problems: implications for social work education

*Gemma Yarwood (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)*  
*Sam Wright (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)*

**Keywords:** end of life care, substance use, alcohol and other drugs, families, social work education

#### **Background and purpose:**

It is estimated that six million people in England are affected by the alcohol/drug use of a family member. Yet 94% of dependent drinkers are not engaged with services and only 40% of opiate and crack users access treatment. Family members, friends and carers (FMFCs) often play a significant role in supporting people with substance problems and typically experience chronic strain as a result. Families are also the main carers of people with terminal or life limiting illness. As the population ages, more people will be living longer with complex health needs including substance problems and end of life care needs. In the current economic climate of serious cuts to health and social services, families will remain the primary source of support.

This paper will present findings from research exploring family members' perspectives of end of life care for people with alcohol and other drug problems and the implications for social work education. This research is unique in exploring how families experience caring for a relative with both substance use and end of life care needs, the extent to which their own needs were met, and how these needs changed as their relative approached the end of their life.

This study comprised two strands. The first was secondary analysis of qualitative interviews with 102 adults in England and Scotland who had been bereaved through substance use. Interviewees included parents, children, spouses, siblings,



nieces and friends. The second entailed in-depth narrative interviews with 15 family members, friends and carers (FMFCs) of people with substance problems at the end of their lives. All interviews were audio recorded, fully transcribed and analysed using computer-based software NVIVO 10 project. Framework analysis was used to examine FMFCs need for, and experience of, support; and to consider whether opportunities for support were missed.

**Results:**

The key results were that families and friends of people with substance problems experienced extremely stressful lives over many years, yet continued to play a significant role in supporting their relatives at the end of their lives – often at the cost of their own health. Many opportunities for intervention and support by social and health care professionals were missed, or implemented in ways that highlighted their ignorance about substance use. As a result, families endured many years of trauma and emotional distress, with long-lasting negative – and sometimes devastating - consequences for their well-being.

**Conclusions and implications:**

As our population ages, the need for family care will increase. This research highlights the critical need for support for the families of people with alcohol and other drug problems facing the end of their lives. Social workers need to be adequately prepared to support them. Original social work research of this kind should provide a framework for future education; education that seeks to ensure social workers' are equipped to respond to the changing demographic. The findings of this study suggest they need substantive knowledge of substance use and end of life care to enable them to support individuals and family members facing the trauma of caring for a relative with substance problems at the end of their lives.  
(References available on request).

**170 | Sexuality in later life: Attitudes and knowledge of social work students**

*Ateret Gewirtz-Meydan (Bar Ilan University, Israel)*

*Ahuva Even-Zohar (Ariel University, Israel)*

**Keywords:** social work students, attitudes, knowledge, sexuality, older adults

**Background and Purpose:**

As the population in western countries continues to grow, new issues and dilemmas are placed. While much attention has been given to the impact of the physiological changes and the variety of illnesses of older adults, comparatively little focus was given to interpersonal and sexual issues. Little is known about undergraduate social work students' attitudes towards age-related sexual changes and behaviors and research in this area is insufficient. The purpose of this study was to examine social work undergraduate students' attitudes and knowledge towards sexuality in later life. In addition, the study examined the relationship between knowledge and attitudes toward late-life sexuality and acquaintance with the older population, undertaking courses specifying in gerontology or aging, experience working with older adults, the willingness to work with older people in the future, prior sex education and other sociodemographic elements.

**Method:**

After receiving ethics approval, students were approached via the universities and colleges faculty mailing list. Attached to the mail, the students received a link to the online survey using Qualtrics software. The sample consisted of 375 social work undergraduate students studying in six universities and four colleges in Israel. Participants completed the Aging Sexual Knowledge and Attitudes questionnaire (ASKAS; White, 1982), a questionnaire regarding exposure to various aspects of aging (e.g. providing help to older people, contact with older people, enrolling in courses related to aging, willingness to work with older adults after graduation) and an extended socio-demographic and background questionnaire.

**Results:**

Attitudes and knowledge were significantly correlated, as greater knowledge was associated with more permissive attitudes towards sexuality in later life. Religious, single, and first year students, held the most conservative attitudes and demonstrated the least knowledge. Married and non-marital cohabitating students held more permissive attitudes towards older adult's sexuality and married students were significantly more knowledgeable than single or non-marital cohabitating students. Findings indicate no differences between men and women regarding attitudes, but men have more knowledge about sexuality in later life than women. Stepwise Linear Regression model predicted less religious students and older students were to hold more permissive attitudes towards sexuality in later life. In addition, as the students were older they had more knowledge.

**Conclusions and implications:**

Through exploration and understanding of attitude and knowledge of sexuality in later life, researchers, clinicians, and educators can develop and evaluate interventions aimed at improving these attitudes and enlarge the knowledge regarding age-related changes in sexual function and expression. The practical conclusion is to insert later life sexuality content to the curriculum of social work students. Such courses in gerontology can offer an excellent venue to explore the attitudes, perception and beliefs of students towards sexuality in later life and educate them in this area.

### 419 | The Impact of Research Anxiety on Research Orientation and Interest in Research Courses in Social Work Students

*Daniel Gredig (UAS Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work, Switzerland)*

*Annabelle Bartelsen-Raemy (UAS Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work, Switzerland)*

**Keywords:** research anxiety, research interest, research orientation, research courses, teaching, social work students

**Background and Purpose:**

Social work professionals should underpin their decisions with scientific knowledge and research findings. Hence, research is used as a framework for social work education and research courses have become a taken-for-granted component of study programmes. However, studies confirm that social work students have negative beliefs and attitudes as well as frequently feelings of anxiety towards research courses. Against this background, the present study aimed to establish the relationship between student's research anxiety (fear of research courses), their research orientation and interest in research courses. We hypothesized that research anxiety predicts the interest in research courses. Further we hypothesized that research orientation (perceived importance, usefulness and unbiased nature of research) was a mediating variable.

**Method**

In the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, we invited students enrolled for a bachelor programme in social work in Switzerland to participate in the study during their introduction day to the



school taking place two weeks before their programme started. For data collection, we used an anonymous self-administered on-line questionnaire filled in on site. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and structural equation modelling (scale free least estimates method).

The sample included 708 students enrolled in a social work bachelor-programme, 501 being female, 184 male, and 5 intersexual, aged 19–56, having various entitlements to study, and registered for three different types of programme modes (full time programme; part time study with blocks of field placements; part time study involving continuous field placement).

### Results

Analysis showed that the interest in research courses was predicted by research anxiety ( $\beta = -0.31$ ) as well as by the perceived importance ( $\beta = 0.26$ ), attributed usefulness of research ( $\beta = 0.14$ ) and perceived unbiased nature of research ( $\beta = 0.07$ ). These variables were predicted, in turn, by research anxiety ( $\beta = -0.11$ ,  $\beta = -0.22$ , and  $\beta = -0.14$ ). Moreover, interest was predicted by age ( $\beta = 0.14$ ). Research anxiety was predicted by age ( $\beta = -0.09$ ) female gender ( $\beta = 0.30$ ) and the enrolment in the part time programme with continuous field placement ( $\beta = -0.05$ ). (GFI = 0.997, AGFI = 0.989, SRMR = 0.018, CMIN/df = 0.934, adj. R<sup>2</sup> = 0.30).

### Conclusion

Findings evidence a direct as well as a mediated impact of research anxiety on the interest in research courses in entering first-year students in a social work bachelor-programme. It highlights one of the challenges social work education in a research framework has to meet with. It seems, there have been considerable efforts to address the research orientation of students. However, these findings point out that, additionally, research anxiety in terms of fear of research courses should be considered and addressed by teachers when conceptualizing research courses.

## 427 | Why so few men are studying social work? Some insights in an ongoing research project

*Sigrid Haunberger (University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work, Switzerland)*

*Wim Nieuwenboom (University of Applied Sciences Switzerland, School for Social Work, Switzerland)*



**Keywords:** Mixed-method design, social work, gender-specific choice of field of study

In addition to discussing the ongoing lack of women in the so called MINT subjects – mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technology – there has been increasing discussions about the scarcity of qualified male specialists in the fields of social work, pedagogy and health.

Both point obviously out to gender inequalities in the educational system.

To this day gender inequalities could not be completely explained or even compensated, despite all educational efforts. The research project, carried out by the School for Social Work, is embedded in the Swiss federal program “equal opportunities for men and women at universities of applied sciences”, funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Science and Innovation. The research project tries to answer the question of why do so few men decide to study social work. With the project we would like to provide background circumstances and individual motivations that are significant for the decision to study social work.

The research project is carried out within a mixed-method research design. On the one hand high-school graduates in seven German speaking cantons has been surveyed twice, using an online survey. A pilot test with social work students has been carried out in advance. In accordance with theoretical assumptions we investigated social class, their parents' education and occupation, reasons for choosing a field of study, cost-benefit considerations, the impact of the social network and interest profiles in several multivariate analyses. On the other hand we conducted an empirical-qualitative study, within social work students has been interviewed. The purpose of the qualitative study was to get a deeper insight in strategies of educational attainment with regard to their social lifeworld's.

At first we present the international state of research concerning gender-specific choice of field of study/ career choice, which has been crucial for the research project. Afterwards we refer to the theoretical background (from the perspective of action theory) and research hypothesis. Finally we will disclose our quantitative results and discuss our findings.





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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 1.5

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### Theme 4: Social work research as a framework for social work education

(Chair: Claudia Olivier-Mensah)  
Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.  
Room: 10.15 - Nordkraft

#### 372 | A different way of looking at what you take for granted. Service Users living in poverty as partners in education programmes

*Kristel Driessens (Karel de Grote University College, Belgium)*  
*Vicky Lyssens Danneboom (Karel de Grote University College, Belgium)*  
*Fauve Heremans (Bind-Kracht, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** service user involvement in education, social work education, module evaluation, transnational research

In its fight against poverty, Belgium has been experimenting with service user involvement (or experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion) in public services for many years. The participation of service users in education, however, has upon today been scarce. At the Karel de Grote University College in Antwerp, an innovative educational project concerning service users living in poverty has been conducted by the department of Social Work. In this experiment, an entire training module was provided by both a lecturer and a service user in tandem. For the purpose of the project, two specific programme components were selected, namely a training course and a substantive course in 'family-centred practice in youth care'. The project was under the support and supervision of Bind-Kracht (Bonding/Bridging Strengths), a collaborative partnership of service users living in poverty, lecturers and academic researchers.

In total, 14 lecturers, 9 service users and 620 students were involved in the project during two academic years. To evaluate the programme, we used a mixed methods approach: a web-based anonymous questionnaire (with a response rate of 92%) for the students, supplemented with focus groups and interviews with lecturers and service users.

In this paper we will present the research findings of the



evaluation study. We will focus on the benefits for the students, the service users and the lecturers. We will discuss some ethical issues and the (organisational) conditions for a high quality cooperation which generate the most powerful and meaningful effects for students.

Some findings: Students learned how to engage in a respectful dialogue with people who had experienced social exclusion (84%). 80% of the students reported having become more aware of pitfalls and power imbalances. Students gained insight into the ways in which youth services are perceived by parents in poverty, and acquired more understanding for parents' reactions (see also Gupta & Blewett, 2008; Krumer-Nuevo, 2008). The transdisciplinary working methods as well as the interconnection of various types of knowledge – theoretical frameworks, practical professional knowledge and the experience-based knowledge of clients – were explicitly mentioned as benefits. The project has shown a collaboration between lecturers and service users to be fragile. It requires lecturers to adopt a (more) facilitating role. Organisational support in terms of training and coaching of service users and lecturers, as well as extra time to invest in creating a working alliance, for preparation and debriefing is necessary. The collaboration reveals also ethical dilemmas and touches the heart of the profession that we are training.

In different European countries, Universities and University colleges have their projects with the involvement of service users. These educational innovations deserve comparative analyses on what works and a more structural implementation, for which we start an ESF-transnational project together with the University of Lund and the University College of Amsterdam. Members of PowerUs and the Special Interest Group of Service Users Involvement of ESWRA are invited to join this project.

### 178 | Who drops out and who finishes? Admission criteria and success in Social Work studies

*Einav Segev (Sapir college, Israel)*

*Miriam Levinger (Sapir college, Israel)*

**Keywords:** admission, students, social work studies

**Background:**

This study explored differences between 389 Israeli students in a Social Work department who finished their studies and 120 students who began, but did not complete their degree. Three groups of variables were compared: demographic variables (gender and age), test scores (on the matriculation and psychometric exams), and assessment of participation in a group interview prior to acceptance.

**Method:**

This study examined information from 509 people – 429 (84.3%) were women and 79 (15.6%) were men. The mean age of the participants at the beginning of the program was 24.2 years (SD = 4.18). Approximately one quarter of the students (23.6%, N = 120) did not complete their studies in the academic institution where the study was undertaken. We used computerized data from our academic institution concerning candidates who applied for school between the years 2004-2013. Using this data base, we accessed information connected to the three-stage admissions' process used in our school: (a) Meeting acceptance requirements; (b) Inviting candidates who met the requirements to a group interview; and (c) Coming to a decision about the suitability of the candidate to be admitted to the program, based on the information and the professional opinions of the interviewers.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There will be significant differences between the scholastic achievements and the personal characteristics of the candidates who completed the program and the achievements and characteristics of those students who dropped out.
2. There will be a significant positive correlation between the pre-program achievements and characteristics of the students who finished their degree and their final GPAs.
3. There will be a significant positive correlation between the independent variables, and between the categories of finishing or dropping out of the program.

**Results:**

Except for gender, there were no significant differences between the students who finished their studies and those who dropped out. Among the students who completed their degree, only women, who received a higher score on the psychometric test, finished their studies with a higher average. Only the men, who had a higher score on their matriculation exams, ended with a higher GPA. The results also showed that, for the men, there was a significant positive correlation between the



assessment of their performance on the interview and the final GPA. Furthermore, there were significant correlations between the way the candidates were categorized by the interviewers and the overall assessment they received on this criterion. Implications: The results of this study add support to previous research that showed that gender, and the scores on the matriculation and psychometric exams, are connected to success in social work programs. In addition, it was found that the pre-acceptance group interview can differentiate between those candidates who will complete their studies and those who will not. These findings can hopefully help social work departments improve the procedures they use in their admissions' mechanisms.

### 306 | Learning on Social Work Practice Placement: Students' perceptions of what best facilitates their learning on Social Work Placement

*Elaine Wilson (University College Dublin, Ireland)*  
*Niamh Flanagan (Tusla, Ireland)*

**Keywords:** social Work Placements, students perceptions, learning tools on placements

#### **Background and Purpose**

Social work fieldwork placements are central to social work education. This paper describes a study that aimed to explore three themes related to students' experiences on placement:

To identify the types of practice learning opportunities which current social work students experienced on placements.

To guide first year students through the process of designing, administering, analysing and writing up a small-scale local survey.

To initiate dialogue between year one and year two students about placement learning opportunities.

#### **Methods**

The study took place in 2014/2015 involving 95 first and second year Masters in Social Work students in University College Dublin, Ireland. First year students were supported by a research advisor and practice placement coordinator to enable them to design an online survey as part of their programme of study. The survey sought the views of second year students about systems of support provided by practice agencies, practice teachers, practice tutors, peers and university staff.



Results were analysed and written up by teams of first year students. Findings were posted in an online Wikispaces classroom and second year students invited to engage in a dialogue on the findings.

### Results

Data were analysed using SPSS and students' rank ordering of learning tools from most to least useful revealed an interesting 'leader board' of learning tools. The five mainstay tools of learning on placement included a mix of dyadic and independent approaches: observing others at work; informal supervision; co-working; increased responsibility and critiquing one's own work. Three of the five mainstay tools related to engagement with real social work cases: observation; co-working; and responsibility. Students valued the importance of exposure to real cases over and above other learning tools.

Data were also analysed to identify how often students were able to avail of each to support their learning. The learning support tools that students rated most useful occurring on a weekly basis were observing others, informal supervision, co-working, having increased responsibility and being able to critique one's own work. Self-reflection, formal supervision, practice teacher feedback, discussing case notes, suggestions for improving work and brainstorming with considered useful on a weekly basis by students. Other learning support tools that were considered helpful by students, if they occurred on a monthly basis, included feedback on observations, induction, required readings, writing case studies, and oral case presentations. Things that were deemed neither helpful nor unhelpful were learning journals, process recording and role plays.

### Conclusions and implications

The paper concludes with an argument that the strength of this type of research is that it can enable students to learn about and apply research methods to explore a key aspect of social work education: placement learning. In doing so it reveals how students valued important learning tools.

## 85 | Ignoring social work research? Substance use in social work education and practice

*Sarah Galvani (Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** substance use, alcohol, drugs, social work education, social work practice



### **Background and purpose of the proposed presentation**

Social work practice with people who use alcohol and other drugs remains a frequent, if not daily, challenge for front line practitioners. This is set to continue with an ageing population who are taking their substance using habits into older age. In the UK, there have been more than three decades of calls to improve social workers' knowledge and skills for working with people with alcohol and other drug problems (hereafter 'substance use'). These calls have been largely ignored. This presentation draws on three main pieces of empirical research from England led by the author and one study led by colleagues in her research team:

- i) a study of newly qualified social workers about their experience of education in substance use,
- ii) a national survey of social workers about their attitudes towards working with people using substances, their current practice, multi-agency working, and their education experiences,
- iii) a national survey of qualifying social work education courses
- iv) a national survey of local government employer-based training departments.

It uses this research as a 'case study' to argue how social work research alone is inadequate to influence change in social work education and practice unless a number of other key drivers are present.

### **A summary of the main points of the presentation**

The main points of the presentation are:

- i) despite the burgeoning evidence in the UK, social work as a profession remains resistant to engaging with the topic of substance use at both education and practice levels,
- ii) what the evidence shows is a lack of consistency in education and post qualifying training despite calls from social workers for it,
- iii) many social workers are attempting to identify and address substance use with little to no guidance on how to do so effectively,
- iv) ignoring the evidence results in social workers entering social work ill-equipped for the realities of practice and ultimately failing people with substance problems (and their dependents).

### **How the proposed presentation addresses one or more of the conference aims and themes**

This paper speaks directly to two conference themes:





## 1. Social work research as a framework for social work education.

Two of the empirical studies on which this presentation draws are studies of social work education, a third includes data about social workers' education experiences, while the fourth focusses on post qualifying social work training provision.

## 2. Complexities and controversies about the effects or outcomes of social work and social work research.

The presentation argues that the evidence is often ignored due to the complexities of changing curricula and practice.

### **Conclusions from and implications of your presentation for practice, policy, or subsequent research.**

These combined studies demonstrate how social work research evidence is not enough to effect change if social work systems, structures and leadership are not open to hearing the evidence. Without political and systemic will, social work research is in danger of making no difference in areas where there is no history of engagement by the profession. Research is needed to how change is effected to reflect progressive evidence rather than solely in response to Government mandates.

## 143 | Working interdisciplinary in youth care in the Netherlands

*Floor Peels (Fontys Social Studies, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** interdisciplinary working, youth professionals, youth care, consequences of findings, conduct and implement research

Municipalities in the Netherlands have new responsibilities in the domains of youth care. Therefore many municipalities have chosen to work with district-oriented interdisciplinary teams, who can connect to requests for help in that area. The idea is that different professionals with different backgrounds can take care of all the questions in the community and that their knowledge will deepen and extend, so they can handle a multitude of different cases. One subject of this research project is how do interdisciplinary teams work?

The methods we use in this research project are qualitative techniques like interviewing and observing. We selected participants (N=40, N=10) for interviewing who work in youth care. These participants are from different working areas, have different backgrounds that vary from preventive youth care workers to more curative youth care workers. We asked them about their experiences with working under the new



circumstances and asked them about their perception of this new approach. We assembled data since 2 years. We also selected seven practices to observe for half a year. The practices differ from more preventive youth care to curative youth care. We observed how professionals of different disciplines work together, and the way they are talking about cases.

The first results are that interdisciplinary working comes along with friction. An essential condition of working together is trusting each other and we found a lack of trust between the participants in interdisciplinary teams. Therefore there is miscommunication and expectations about each other's role in cases.

This paper presentation I will elaborate on the consequences of these findings for the way we conduct and implement our research. This lack of trust seems to be important obstruction to come to cooperation. This result can be sensitive to communicate because municipalities expect to hear positive stories and youth care organizations want subsidy. Therefore it is important to think how you, as a researcher, communicate your results. We choose to anonymize all the data and to organize a workshop for professionals. In this workshop we discussed interdisciplinary working and did a simulation game. The professionals learned about the important aspect to trust and to know each other before you can work effectively together. The main key to connect people is to be open about your role and to be reflective about your role in team working. How this exactly works is the focus of our research in the future.



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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 1.6

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### **Theme 6: Research on different forms of partnerships/cooperation – including power and conflicts in social work**

(Chair: Alessandro Sicora)

Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Room: 3.3.17 - Nordkraft

#### **171 | Teachers and social workers: how to collaborate for a better Child Protection? Results from an action research**

*Francesca Corradini (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)*

*Elena Cabiati (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)*

**Keywords:** school, child protection, action research

Undoubtedly Child Protection is an important issue that concerns both social workers than teachers and school educators. International studies highlight that in the practice it's not easy to realize cooperative paths. Social workers often complain of a lack of support from teachers when they have to implement a child protection intervention, while teachers say they do not feel enough supported by social workers in dealing with difficult situations in school settings. However, it's evident that a joint planning process between social workers, teachers and families is the best way to protect children.

The current study aims to present the outcomes of an action research realized in two Italian Regions in 2016. The project involved more than 300 participants between teachers, school principals, social workers and managers of social services. Through a path of education, supervision and research the aim of the project was to create a common space of reflection about Child Protection starting from the real experiences of the participants. In this setting school professionals and practitioners directly involved in the practice shared professional needs, role expectations, negative and positive experiences of collaboration.

In a first step, an online survey was administered to all the participants. The survey was designed to collect opinions about several topics, in particular about the idea of Child protection which have professionals of different services, mutual expectations and elements that may facilitate or hinder



collaboration between the world of school and the world of social services.

In a second step, the same people participated in a training course on the theme of collaboration between schools and social services in Child Protection situations. In this course, participants experimented dialogical practices and learning ways based on mutual exchange.

In a third step, a follow-up survey was administered to detect changes in the opinion and in the professional attitudes of the participants after the course.

Results revealed critical aspects that affect the collaboration between the world of school and the world of social services: difficulty of communication between professionals, lack of specific knowledge, lack of confidence and distorted expectations about the different professional roles. Positive aspects emerged from the opportunity to have experimented communication and cooperation in a climate of dialogue and exchange.

The need to build child protection projects in a participatory way emerged from the voices of the majority of the participants. In the presentation all the steps of action research will be presented with reference to qualitative and quantitative data that could inspire both social work education and practice.

### 199 | Social workers' abuse through e-media in Israel: Extent, correlates, and consequences

*Guy Enosh, (University of Haifa, Israel)*

*Shay Tzafrir (University of Haifa, Israel)*

*Adital Ben-Ari (University of Haifa, Israel)*

**Keywords:** cyber Bullying, media, victimization, aggression

#### **Background:**

Aggressive client-behavior toward social workers has been studied and documented all over the world, focusing mainly on such forms of client aggression as verbal and physical violence. In recent years new forms of aggression have been developing, using electronic communication media (e-media) in order to abuse social workers. Such forms of aggression may include sending threatening messages through email and texting; or using the internet and related social-media networks in order to shame and stalk social workers.

The goal of the present-study was to assess the extent of e-media client violence in Israel, and examine its association with



other forms of client aggression, as well as its possible effects on the workers' health. It was hypothesized that a positive correlation will be found between workers' exposure to e-media victimization and other forms of victimization, and between exposure to e-media victimization and somatic and traumatic symptoms.

**Methods:**

A cross-sectional survey design was used, using a stratified random sample of 700 social workers, working in municipal social work agencies in Israel (Leshachot Revaha). Questionnaires were delivered to all participants during staff meetings, and collected later by the researchers in sealed envelopes. The return rate was 92.14% (645 out of a total of 700 questionnaires delivered). The age of participants ranged from 20 to 67 ( $M = 41.64, SD = 10.21$ ); 556 (86.2%) were females; and participants' experience ranged from two months to 42 years ( $M = 10.18, SD = 8.38$ ). The survey has used known measures of client violence as well as measures of PTSD and Somatic symptoms. All instruments had acceptable internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha). Analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, correlations, and GEE regression models (controlling for intraclass correlations within agencies).

**Results:**

More than 18% of the respondents were exposed to at least one form of victimization through e-media over a period of 3 months, compared with 71% for verbal-aggression, 69% for threats, 11% for property damage and 4% for physical violence. E-media victimization was significantly and positively correlated with all other forms of victimization, as well as with traumatic and somatic symptoms. The association between E-media victimization and traumatic and somatic symptoms remained significant after controlling for the effects of other forms of client-aggression.

**Conclusions and Implications:**

The findings highlight the prevalence of e-media based forms of client aggression and their health related effects on social workers. Given the growing presence of social e-media in social life, using this venue in order to abuse social workers is expected to also grow with time. Given the nature of the outcomes of such victimization in terms of PTSD and somatic symptoms, and their adverse impact there is a need to focus research and policy efforts in order to reduce client aggression in general and use of e-media in particular. The impact of such forms of abuse go beyond the individual workers who are exposed, and affect the organizations in which they work and the profession as a whole. Future research should examine



organizationally related outcomes such as burnout, intentions to leave, and presentism.

#### 440 | **Staying in Touch: How young people in care use social media with friends, family and carers**

*Andrew Sach (University of East Anglia, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** young people in care, foster carers, social workers, social media

This paper will outline the findings of a recently completed research project which has explored how young people in care use social media to stay in touch with friends, family and carers. The use of social media (using smart phones and computers to communicate via applications such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp) has grown at an exponential rate in the last few years, particularly amongst young people. The relatively recent emergence and growing popularity of social media means we are just beginning to understand its impact on society and on the development of children and adolescents. Research suggests social media is used by young people to explore themselves, their relationships and place in the world. Social media may be popular amongst young people but there is a growing awareness of risks associated with its use, such as cyber bullying, sexting and grooming.

Young people in care represent some of the most vulnerable in society, and how this vulnerability influences (and is influenced by) their experience of social media is of interest. Young people in care also have experienced disconnections in relationships with family and friends - can social media help people maintain supportive networks, or might it mean that it is difficult to restrict birth family contact, even when such contact is unhelpful? These young people also find themselves in a situation whereby multiple adults, including social workers, foster carers and birth parents share responsibility for their welfare. How can young people be supported in managing the risks of social media, and what are the respective roles of these various adults who have parenting responsibilities for them in providing boundaries, support and guidance? It is such questions that drove the development of this mixed methods project.

The project took place within two local authorities in England. Data collection consisted of 5 focus groups (3 with social





workers and 2 with foster carers), an online survey with young people in care aged 11 – 18, and 25 interviews with young people in care.

This presentation will report on the thematic analysis of the interviews with young people, contrasting these perspectives with those that emerged from the focus groups with foster carers and social workers. How and why young people use social media, and their assessment of the risks and benefits involved will be discussed, revealing the predominant need for young people to fit in with their peer group. In contrast the foster carers and social workers focused on the risks of social media, and the challenges in managing these brought about by their uncertain and sometimes conflicting “parental” roles. The challenge for social work practice is found in how the young people, their carers and social workers come together in partnerships that address the distribution of power and resolve conflicts in determining the use of social media in the lives of young people in care.

### 314 | Gendered debt – a scoping review study of household debt research

*Christian Kullberg, (Mälardalen university, Sweden)*  
*Pernilla Liedgren (Mälardalen university, Sweden)*  
*Julia Callegari (Mälardalen university, Sweden)*

**Keywords:** Gender, typical behaviour, power relation, differences, debt, social work

#### **Background and purpose**

Research on debt problems is an important area to study, not least because of the grave consequences such problems can cause for individuals and families in the form of bad health and other social problems. Despite its vital importance, research on debt problems is an understudied area which is scattered on many different disciplines. In addition to this, even though debt problems are fairly common among service users in social work, knowledge on gender differences concerning what leads to, are the consequences of and leads out of debt problems are rather scarce. On the basis of this it is of great concern to get an overview of the literature and to summarize findings on how gender differences in relation to household economy and debt problems are manifested.

Consequently the aim of this study is to get an overview of the literature and to summarize previous research concerning



gender, household economy, debt problems and economic counselling to indebted men, women and couples.

### **Methods**

The study was performed conducting a scoping literature review with a focus on research on gender and household economy or debt. Four different meta-search engines were used: 1) PsycINFO, which also included the databases Sociological Abstract and Social Service Abstract; 2) Web of Science; 3) Scopus and 4) Business Source Elite and search words used were, financial strain and debt in combination with gender. The search included articles from the first year records were available in the databases until July 2015. After the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria's thirty-four articles were reviewed.

### **Results**

The results shows that with respect to factors as for instance household type, socioeconomic factors, class and age gender is a crucial factor for the understanding of both the creation and the dealing with household debt problems. Research namely shows that different household models as well as different role expectations and power relations between men and women are key aspects for the understanding of how financial difficulties are created and the possibilities for men and women to solve such problems.

### **Conclusions and implications**

The results implies that a better understanding of how men's and women's gender typical behaviors and power relations within close relationships risk leading to debt problem is useful for social workers to help service users with financial problems and to avoid additional social problems.



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## SYMPOSIUM 1

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### 266 | Researching child protection inequalities in the UK and Belgium: changing the narrative

Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.  
Room: 6.7 - Nordkraft

*Paul Bywaters, (Coventry University, United Kingdom)*  
*Brigid Featherstone, (University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom)*  
*Geraldine Brady, (Coventry University, United Kingdom)*  
*Will Mason, (University of Sheffield, United Kingdom)*  
*Griet Roets, (Gent University, Belgium)*  
*Rudi Roose, (Gent University, Belgium)*  
*Lieve Bradt (Gent University, Belgium)*  
*Koen Hermans (Leuven University, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** child protection, social inequalities, poverty, integrated research methods, comparative research

#### **Background**

There is growing concern across a range of domains and contexts about the impact of social inequality on well-being and social cohesion. There are also very well established fields of inequalities research and policy in relation to health and education. While there is growing interest in developing a public health approach to child welfare and protection, sustained attention has not been paid to the interaction between a range of inequalities and child welfare and protection interventions.

This symposium contains four papers from researchers in the UK and Belgium who have been developing collaborative working relationships in the last period. The aim of the symposium is to:

Advance awareness of the need for research and policy and practice development in the area of child welfare inequalities and inequities.

#### **The objectives are to:**

- Share findings from studies of deprivation and its relationship with a child's chances of becoming subject to child protection interventions, including out-of-home care placements, and professionals' understandings of



the impact of deprivation on child protection interventions;

- Explore the methodological issues involved in doing research in this field and in comparative data analysis across different policy contexts;
- Share learning from combining quantitative and qualitative approaches through integrated research methods.

### **Outline of symposium**

Professor Bywaters will open the symposium exploring why there is a need to develop the field of child welfare inequalities research. He will discuss the extent of international collaborations currently and some specific initiatives being developed. He will signpost future plans including seeking to develop a sub-group within the already established Special Interest Group on social work with children and families across Europe.

In the papers that follow the presenters will address to differing extents the aims set out above, offering empirically grounded illustrations from a range of studies across different policy contexts within the UK as well as between the UK and Belgium. The paper led by Bywaters reports on a quantitative study across the four countries of the UK that linked data about children's identities, abuse type, legal status, and placement with neighbourhood deprivation ranks and population data to produce findings on the relative contribution of demand and supply factors to intervention rates. Mason et al. explore six case studies conducted in child protection services, within a selection of English and Scottish LAs. They focused on the interplay between families' social, economic and material circumstances and the decision, by children's services, to intervene where there were child protection concerns. Exploring social workers' attitudes to poverty in England and Scotland formed part of this work which then links well with the study by Hermans who presents results from a quantitative survey of practitioners from children and youth services in Flanders about their views on poverty, which actions they undertake and what kind of support they receive from their organization. Finally, the presentation led by Roets et al. explores the complexities involved in qualitative and mixed methods approaches to the study of the meaning of child protection interventions as constructed in the relationship between social workers and families drawing on diverse studies from Belgium and the UK.



## **Presentation 1- Researching inequalities in child protection: Comparing the Four UK Countries**

### **Background and purpose:**

Funded by the Nuffield Foundation (2015-2017) a research team in 7 UK universities has investigated large inequalities in the proportion of children with substantiated child protection concerns or in out-of-home care between and within England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The underlying aim is to establish child protection inequalities as a core concept in policy making, practice and research internationally. The study focused on the interaction of 'demand' related factors, in particular family socio-economic circumstances and ethnicity, with 'supply' factors: law, policy, practice and resourcing in generating inequities in intervention rates.

### **Methods:**

The study involved an integrated methods design including two key elements: a descriptive quantitative analysis of over 20,000 children in representative samples of the UK child protection systems and a mixed methods study of social work practice in 6 neighbourhoods. The quantitative study, reported here, linked data about children's identities, abuse type, legal status, and placement with neighbourhood deprivation ranks and population data to produce findings on the relative contribution of demand and supply factors to intervention rates.

### **Results:**

The presentation details inequalities in intervention rates between and within central and local government authorities in the four UK countries and between sub-groups of children. Findings will be presented on four key dimensions of inequality: the role of social determinants, the social gradient, intersectionality and the inverse intervention law.

### **Conclusions and implications:**

The study has quantified:

- the central significance of family socio-economic circumstances for service demand
- very large inequities in intervention rates between ethnic groups
- the role of legal, policy and practice frameworks in reinforcing social inequities in children's experiences.

It raises profound questions: whether inequalities in intervention rates are morally or economically justified and the priorities and focus of alternative approaches to law, policy and practice, data and inspection systems and staff training.



## **Presentation 2 - Investigating the inverse intervention law. Understanding inequalities in child protection: integrated methods case studies**

### Background and purpose:

Research by Bywaters and colleagues has established significant associations between social advantage/disadvantage and children's chances, experiences and outcomes of child welfare intervention. In England a child's chance of being on a child protection plan (CPP) is 10 times higher in the most deprived 10% of areas compared with the least deprived 10% of areas. This suggests that, as with health and education, child welfare is a matter of inequality. This research also produced an unexpected finding: the inverse intervention law. When comparing small areas, equivalent in socio-economic terms, more deprived local authorities (LAs) have much lower rates of child welfare intervention than less deprived LAs. These findings raise multiple questions about the relationship between deprivation, social work practice and the experiences of children and families in child protection systems.

### Methods

This presentation reports on a component of the larger, Nuffield funded (2015 – 2017), Child Welfare Inequalities Project. Using an integrated methodology six case studies were conducted in child protection services, within a selection of English and Scottish LAs. The case studies focused on:

- The interplay between families' social, economic and material circumstances and
- the decision, by children's services, to intervene where there were child protection concerns; alongside,

### Results

This presentation offers an early opportunity hear the emergent findings from this empirical work. Using an analytical model of 'demand' and supply' our data demonstrate how families' social and environmental circumstances can intersect with resources, policies and professional practices to produce variances in child welfare intervention rates.

### Conclusions and implications:

By detailing the relationship of deprivation, policy and other factors to child welfare intervention rates these data contribute to an emerging body of work that aims to reframe child welfare as a matter of inequality.





### **Presentation 3- Poverty reduction by practitioners of children and youth services. A survey on the views of practitioners in Flanders.**

#### **Background**

Social workers from children and youth services in Flanders (Belgium) are confronted with vulnerable children and families and an important fraction of them are confronted with poverty. This does not necessarily imply that they undertake interventions to combat poverty in their daily work. This depends, amongst other factors, on how they perceive poverty, how they conceive of their job and how they are supported by their management to combat poverty.

#### **Methods**

In this presentation, we present results from a quantitative survey of practitioners from children and youth services (youth care services, services for disabled children, youth mental health services) about these issues (N=418).

#### **Results**

Most of the respondents consider poverty as a structural problem in society. They select problematic debts, not able to telephone and not able to pay for leisure activities or even basic goods such as food as the main expressions of poverty which they are confronted with in their daily work. Psychic problems of the parents is selected as the most prevailing cause of poverty, followed by low educational background, long-term unemployment and single parenthood. 1 out of 2 practitioners is convinced that families in poverty have to be followed more intensively to secure the safety of the children. Almost 75 % of the respondents do not consider poverty reduction as their primary duty. They consider themselves as the specialists on the domains of activating informal social networks, parental skills, enhancing the self-image of the parents, and helping families with their paper work. For other domains (housing, employment, debts), they refer to other services.

#### **Conclusions**

These results point to a rather paradoxical view on poverty reduction by these practitioners. They are convinced of the



structural nature of poverty in society, but they consider themselves not as the primary actors to fight poverty of their users.

## **Presentation 4- Researching inequalities in child protection: challenges and complexities in qualitative research ventures**

### Background and purpose

For researchers who are interested in acquiring in-depth knowledge of how structural inequalities are reflected, reinforced and reproduced in child protection services, we argue that a major challenge involves the development of pertinent mixed-method research approaches. In an attempt to establish a comparative research approach across European countries, we critically reflect on the methodological challenges and complexities emerging from a diversity of qualitative research projects in Belgium. It is argued that qualitative approaches are of vital importance to tease out whether child protection services are of high quality and intervene according to a rights-based orientation, which might be experienced as supportive by the families involved even when children are placed in residential care. These research projects deal with examining whether socio-economic circumstances, including poverty, influence the risk of families to be the subject of intrusive and disciplinary social work interventions in the field of child protection, and whether social workers develop poverty-blind or poverty-aware practices.

### Methods

We discuss the research methodologies that were applied in this diversity of qualitative studies, and reflect on the potentials and pitfalls of particular research methods that were used.

### Results, conclusions and implications

Our exploration reveals both methodological and ethical complexities. We argue that preferably research approaches should be combined to capture the complexity and ambiguity of child protection interventions, and to examine what is constructed in the relationship between social workers and



families. Such a dynamic and interactional research approach allows us to grasp the lifeworlds, aspirations, and experiences of parents and children as well as the underlying normative rationales of social workers and their organisations in relation to dominant social policy frameworks.



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## SYMPOSIUM 2

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### **386 | Emotional, spiritual and environmental issues as topics in social work postgraduate research and education - Challenges and possibilities for social work sustainability**

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.  
Room: 6.8 - Nordkraft

*Carla Pinto, (ISCSP Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal)*

*Maria Irene Carvalho, (ISCSP Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal)*

*Ana Paula Garcia, (ULHT Universidade Lusófona, Portugal)*

*Cristina Duarte (ISCSP Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal)*

*Eduardo Marques (Instituto Politécnico de Portalegre, Portugal)*

**Keywords:** social work, challenges, sustainability

**Symposium:**

Emotional, spiritual and environmental issues as topics in social work postgraduate research and education - Challenges and possibilities for social work sustainability

This symposium highlights the challenges and possibilities that emotions, spirituality and an environmental focus can bring, as research and educational topics and approaches, for contemporary social work.

Social work is a practical science and a political practice, which not only produces Changes in society and individuals, but also produces Knowledge through its skills (assumed legitimacy) and political action (attributed legitimacy). The world we live in is one of emerging social risks and uncertainties, potentiated by a speculative capitalism and its global financial crises, neoliberal retrenchment social policies, armed conflicts and forced migrations and ecological disasters. In this context, social work, as a profession and a science, is permanently challenged to humanize its knowledge and practice. That includes improving its education and training and enhancing its critical vision on people's lives. In particular postgraduate education enables practitioners to enhance intervention skills to empower people, and themselves in the



process, in order to become engaged citizens, attentive to others and to humanity.

The symposium seeks to contribute to the conference's third subtheme: "Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research" by arguing for the relevance of less mainstream social work topics such as emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and "blue social work" in research and advanced education for practitioners. We defend that a better integration of emotional and spiritual dimensions, and a more ecocentered vision, in social work knowledge and practice may enhance social work, and social workers, power to respond more effectively to our present challenges and constraints. The symposium includes 3 papers and a discussion session of 20 minutes with the audience to expand the dialogue about the potentials of these topics for social work research and education.

**Paper 1: Transforming social work profession: developing critical and reflexive skills in postgraduate education**

Contemporary societies, complex and uncertain, call for new educational approaches in social work in order to enhance professional qualification and the construction of new training paths more adequate for new and grave challenges.

Social workers must expand their knowledge, question their actions and give visibility to their practice, allying a research oriented attitude and life long learning.

This paper aims to discuss the modes in which postgraduate education may improve and develop social workers personal, interpersonal and professional skills, at emotional, spiritual and environmental connectedness dimensions, by developing critical and reflexive practices. Special consideration will be given to Portuguese context, by presenting a review of master level programmes in social work and the presence /absence of the mention dimensions on their curricula and final dissertations.

**Paper 2: Emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence as research dimensions in Social Work**

The topics of emotional and spiritual intelligences have been neglected in social work education and research, but more recently they are receiving more attention and importance.



From this statement we aim to describe and discuss their presence in social work education and the ways they may integrate educational models centered in personal and professional development.

This presentation will be based on the results on a questionnaire to social work undergraduate students in several Portuguese universities, in order to understand the students' perceptions in relation to these topics and their applicability in practice.

We conclude that the majority of students does not seem to apprehend the concepts of emotional and spiritual intelligence, but they show interest in them and curiosity for learning more on these matters, recognizing their relevance for social work education.

**Paper 3: Blue social work: contribute for ecological community development. The artistic, social and environmental work of Jason deCaires Taylor**

Social work can have an important role in assessing the human impacts of environmental changes. One are particularly important is in ecological community development, empowering communities for innovative, sustainable and “blue” interventions.

This presentation aims to present an action-research project developed by the Atlantic Museum in Lanzarote (Jason deCaires Taylor). We discuss this project as an interdisciplinary best practice, and an example of using natural resources, art and culture to promote sustainable development to answer present economic and social problems. This project is a best practice by integrating different social sectors in a local community, namely economic, social and cultural, with the environmental dimension.

We argue for the importance of a territorial approach to human/natural problems, that it is possible to implement alternative approaches to dominant ones. Through dialogue and participation, it is possible to implement an approach bottom-up that enables an integrated and multisector intervention,





promoting cooperation and networking, and the construction of more solidary, resilient and sustainable communities. We conclude that local community development is a specific tool for a “Blue” social work, which integrates social innovation, environment and human rights as the central focus for this process. And therefore these are central issues for social work education if we are to prepare future and present social workers engaged with the environmental and human sustainability.

Audience discussion: researching innovation in local communities

The symposium includes a dedicated 20-minute audience discussion about the relevance of emotions, spirituality and ecocentrism for research in social work. Participants will be invited to reflect on these concepts, their potential for social work and how they can influence research and practice.



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## SYMPOSIUM 3

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### 250 | To question methods and pathways in producing and transferring knowledge from practice since four European Practice-Research Experiences

Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Room: 10.14 - Nordkraft

*Sara Serbati, (University of Padua, Italy)*

*Anne Moe, (Department of Social Work, NTNU, Norway)*

*Sidsel Natlan (Department of Social Work, Child Welfare and Social Policy, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Oslo, Norway)*

*Carmel Halton (School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork, Ireland)*

**Keywords:** practice research, knowledge-production, gap theory-practice

#### **Overall abstract**

Traditional approaches to research realize the typical dominance of social science and research over practice (Shaw 2011). But theories are not bodies of knowledge that can be generated out of a practical vacuum and social work is not "some kind of robot-like mechanical performance that is devoid of any theoretical reflection" (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 116). Several major evaluation reports agree that we know much about interventions that are effective but make little use of them to help achieve important outcomes for children, families, and adults (Fixsen et al. 2005). This theme is repeated in reports by the Surgeon General (United States of Health and Human Services 1999; 2001), the National Institute of Mental Health (2001), Bernfeld, Farrington, & Leschied (2001), Institute of Medicine (2001). The social work and academic context is now calling for applied research to fill the gap between theory and practice (Ferguson, 2003; Fixsen et al. 2005; Shaw, 2012).

Practice Research tries to respond to this request, grounding not only on more general and large-scale research but also on locally based research and/or evaluation. Inside the ESWRA, a Special Interest Group on Social Work Practice Research is developed, with the aim to strengthen possibilities for knowledge-based social work practice throughout Europe. In this SIG practice research is not understood as a specific research method but rather an evolving meeting point between practice and research, and a matter of negotiation between its



stakeholders. In their practices social work practice researchers prefer dialogue with those who are studied, with other researchers, and with decision-makers as well as with other central actors in the field.

The symposium is born inside the Practice Research SIG of ESWRA as an opportunity to promote scholarly debates and knowledge exchange related to social work practice. Thus, the symposium will discuss methodologies and theories used in five European Practice Research experiences in social work, with a strong emphasis on meta-reflection about methods and research processes and their theoretical implications. Particularly attention will be given to understand the realization of knowledge production: Practice Research carries on "mode 2" knowledge production, characterised by application-oriented research where both frameworks and findings are discussed and evaluated by all stakeholders (including users) (Kristiansson 2006). The central position of dialogue in Practice Research challenges the practical nature of social work and questions epistemologically what kind of rationality is needed (intending rationality as "the way in which subjects capable of speech and action using the knowledge", Habermas 1979), in order to understand in which way the available knowledge has to be used and produced in order to move 'action'. It is not sufficient an instrumental use of knowledge (the 'what works'), defined external by science (Habermas 1979, Kemmis 2001). Here, the theoretical discussion of professional practice remains far from real practice, which has no internal legitimacy with the reasons that explain the action (Soulet 2012). The European experiences presented in the symposium will give the opportunity to discuss what kind of knowledge is needed in order to make the encounter theory-practice.

### **SYMPOSIUM PAPER 1 - Possibilities of practical knowledge production in the Italian P.I.P.P.I. Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalisation.**

Since 2011, the Italian research-group LabRief (University of Padua) is working in an intensive-care-programme for vulnerable families which is called Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalisation (P.I.P.P.I.). This programme has been funded by the Italian Ministry of Welfare and it has now reached its 5th implementation involving 123 territories in Italy, more than 1500 children and about 3000 practitioners. The P.I.P.P.I. uses participative and transformative evaluation (PTE, Serbati & Milani 2013) that is not limited to determining whether practice is effective, but also is a mean of empowerment and social change (Shaw 2011).



Data were collected directly by professionals with families, considering all of them as co-researchers. They were expected to work together around data and measures that were used as means to identify both the strengths and the difficulties and to foster positive child developmental pathways.

The PTE shares with the practice research model (Flyvbjerg 2001, Uggerhøj 2011) the focus on solving problems in specific contexts of practice. The knowledge produced in these contexts is not an authoritative knowledge on evidence, even if this is central in helping practitioners in making decisions in the face of uncertainties (Mullen 2016). The knowledge produced by PTE is not characterized by objectivity, but it requires a shared inter-subjective agreement which will ensure that theories can be critically assessed (Kuhn 1970, Feyerabend 1975). The practical problems dealt by the P.I.P.P.I. do not require only technique, but reason and reasoning of people involved (Bernstein 1983, Dewey 1933). It is according with M.Soulet (2014, in press) affirmation that the final aim of social work is the development and promotion of people's capacity of action, thus pursuing the creation of a pedagogical ideal of human promotion. The presentation will discuss examples of such knowledge production, and opportunities and limits in order to build the encounter theory-practice.

## **SYMPOSIUM PAPER 2- General categorization vs empirical complexity**

This paper is based on findings from two large practice research projects with the purpose to develop knowledge and thereby contribute to better social services for marginalized people. The projects consisted of several sub-projects. Practitioners, educators, students, researchers and service users have been involved in the projects.

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Services (NAV) expect research to produce knowledge for more effective and targeted services. NAV as an organization seems to demand and question research that may lead to standardized assessments and interventions. The categories used in these assessments and interventions are unspecific and general, e.g. "youth receiving social benefit". Such a categorization is based on a belief that it is possible to generalize human life. This also implicates efficient and standardized solutions as if "one size fits all".

However, our research suggests that those categories are not transferable to practice due to the complexity of the life of the service users. "Youth receiving social benefits" are not identifiable as a single category. The concepts developed



within Critical Realism and the CAIMeR model (Blom & Morén 2010) are useful in order to shed light on the complexity of peoples` lives and the fact that the solutions might be long-term and differentiated. This can be conceptualized as a conflict between populist simplifications through the use of general categories and empirical complexity. Also, our research shows that the general categorization undermines good social work practice with marginalized people. Moreover, our research suggests the need for more reflective practice. In this paper we will discuss how practice research can contribute to produce and disseminate such knowledge.

### **SYMPOSIUM PAPER 3 - The doing of practice research: Lessons learned from a Norwegian practice research project.**

The paper will present and discuss findings from a research and development project carried out in Norway 2006-2011, funded by The Norwegian Directorate of Health and Social Affairs and designed as a four-way collaboration between academics, practitioners, users and students. The project had a goal to strengthen practice-based social research as well as the foundation of knowledge that underpins the practice of social work.

With Nowotny et al.s “Modus 2 knowledge production” (2001) as a guiding epistemological approach for understanding the knowledge produced, the paper will proceed by focusing the importance of recognizing practice research as an arena for knowledge production. Methodological, this calls for the need to approach practice research from the everyday perspective to enable exploration and understanding of incidents that may implicate the knowledge production.

The research conducted in the Norwegian project was marked by its processual character. In its initial phase, action research and participant action research was pinpointed from the funders. However, during the operational phase, there was an increasing awareness of how relations and collaboration between participants were crucial factors to succeed.

Partnership and collaborative research emerged as concepts in this ongoing negotiation on how to engage in practice research. Another finding was the emergence of conflicts and disagreements that arose within the context of different roles and power relations that the stakeholders represented, and how they identified themselves within the projects.

These are examples of how the practice research also developed as an arena for negotiation on what should be regarded scientific knowledge and what was assessed as



relevant topics for investigation. Conflicts may be potential obstacles for knowledge production in practice research. The paper will approach this as a challenge between epistemic cultures and highlight how this marks the importance of recognizing different epistemologies in practice research.

#### **SYMPOSIUM PAPER 4- Exploring professional identity in a mixed-methods research project.**

This research involves a social and economic analysis of the use of legal services (SEALS) by social work and educational welfare professionals working for Tusla, the child and family agency in the Republic of Ireland. There are many pillars to the methodology of this research project, including an economic cost-benefit analysis, a questionnaire survey and qualitative interviews with social work practitioners, members of the judiciary and legal professionals. Involving all the key players in the design phase of the research was a primary objective, thus serving a key aim of the project, to develop strategic alliances between the researchers and the participants towards the identification and implementation of change strategies that were responsive to emerging concerns. In developing the research, the team was committed to involving all the stakeholders i.e. the social work practitioners, social work managers and employers and the judiciary in an iterative process towards creating research instruments that addressed the concerns of all the participants and in addition served the research questions of the project. The rationale for engaging the key stakeholders in the early design and enactment phase of the research was to support more collaborative engagement between the researchers and the practitioners. One of the central concerns emerging in the design phase related to the issue of professional identity for social workers in an adversarial context where judicial interventions and economies of scale in child welfare and protection decisions are becoming ever more commonplace. The research team developed an on line questionnaire and designed individual interviews in order to probe the views, attitudes and experiences of social workers. Economic instruments were also developed to undertake a cost benefit analysis. The research instruments used were designed not only as methods of data collection but also as instruments of self-study for all participants in this project. Research participants were encouraged throughout the research process to reflect on the increasingly adversarial nature of the child welfare system in which they are operating and to become critically aware of its signature in their practice.





## **SYMPOSIUM PAPER 5- Collaborating in adversity; embracing the challenges and potential of integrating mindfulness in social work education and practice.**

This thesis explored the potential of mindfulness to better enable students to navigate the competing demands of social work education and the challenges of post-qualifying practice. It employed a participatory action research (PAR) methodology consistent with the researchers' commitment to co-producing research. It sought to exploit PAR's capacity for engendering creativity in the research endeavour; i.e. by using the methodology's inherent reflexivity to welcome and respond to challenges that arise in the intersection of academic and practice worlds, and through that process produce knowledge that has been tempered by and is thus usable in those contexts. A qualitative longitudinal research design was employed, comprising pre-planned semi-structured questionnaires and interviews, and recordings of a range of unscheduled practice sessions and discussion groups that arose from the PAR process. Emphasis was placed on gaining in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and using this knowledge to inform both the design of the project on an iterative basis and the longer-term plan of integrating mindfulness within social work education. The study faced challenges familiar to both PAR and longitudinal research, raising questions about what constitutes 'participation' and 'co-production', as well as practical constraints related to sample size. Contextual barriers, including time, limited the extent to which decisions about the study's design and progress could be made collaboratively. Nonetheless, key elements of the study did result from joint-decision making. Findings also demonstrate that sharing the challenges of participation throughout the process negated any sense of 'tokenism' for students. In sum, the methodology helped precipitate a deeply felt and shared sense of belonging to the study for participants and researchers alike, and to transformative outcomes regarding the impact of mindfulness on participants. The findings point to a clear strategy for incorporating mindfulness within social work education, further illustrating this methodology's potential for transferable knowledge production.



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## WORKSHOP 1

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### 444 | Critical Issues in Transnational Social Work Research

Thursday, April 20th, 10:20 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.  
Room: 4.105 - Rendsburggade

*Sharon Borja, (University of Washington, USA)*  
*Ciwang Teyra, (University of Washington, USA)*  
*Miriam Valdovinos (University of Connecticut, USA)*  
*Claire Willey Sthapit (University of Washington, USA)*

**Keywords:** transnational social work, international social work, social work research ethics, globalization

In order to respond to the influences of rapid globalization, transnational social work has become significant. This workshop addresses ethical issues in transnational social work research. The presenters see these challenges as largely produced by gaps in priorities and perspectives between entities including local communities, service providers, funding institutions, and nation states. Transnational researchers may be constrained by, and accountable to, each level in a variety of complex ways which has caused us to ask questions such as:

- Who benefits from our research?
- How do they benefit?
- Whose priorities are we responding to?
- What issues affecting human well-being are better understood, and which are obscured, when we use particular frames to understand social problems?
- What does social justice mean in the context of transnational social work research?

We will begin this workshop by proposing a working definition of "transnational," which for us does not only mean research that is conducted outside the borders of the U.S., but that addresses many forms of border crossing and transnational spaces. Furthermore, while our research is context-specific, it is not context-bound, since the various sites and participants with whom we have worked are intimately affected by larger national and international processes.

We will then briefly discuss our own research sites and positions as insiders/outsideers in relation to the various institutions and communities with whom we work. We will describe some of the ethical concerns that our experiences



raise with regards to transnational social work research. Our research experiences are informed by our experiences with various U.S. based social work institutions, with indigenous communities in Taiwan, Philippines and the U.S., with Latina immigrants in the U.S., with development institutions in Nepal, Central America, and with the United Nations. Though our research methods and sites differ, we share common concerns about priorities related to funding, internal review boards, research methods and measures, language, publication, representation, and audience. Specifically, we argue that when priorities are set by already powerful institutions, such priorities may actually serve to obscure local concerns and reproduce unequal social relations.

After this discussion, we will propose some models for conducting transnational social research, that are responsive to the above concerns. We will present a working framework for critical transnational social work research as a jumping off point for further discussion.

In today's global context, which is characterized by economic liberalization and increasing global economic inequality, migration, war, and fear based on religion and race, social work researchers cannot afford to ignore the transnational contexts of our work. However, any embrace of the transnational must be done with considerable attention to its potential for reproducing global inequalities and with an ethic committed to transforming these relations.



## PARALLEL SESSIONS 2

THURSDAY | APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>

TIME | 12:00 NOON TO 1:30 P.M.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 2.1

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### **Theme 1: Political, administrative and economic influences and challenges for social work research**

*Ethics and methods in social work research*

(Chair: Lotte Junker Harbo)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: Body and Mind - Nordkraft

#### **186 | Challenges in Conducting a National Survey on Prostitution in Israel**

*Yosef Aharonov (Ministry of Social Affairs and Services, Israel)*

**Keywords:** Prostitution, National Survey, Policy Planning

Prostitution has become a significant social and national problem in Israel. In many cases it is related to issues such as sexual abuse, violence, drug addiction, rape, poverty, and so on.

As a phenomenon that is usually covered up, its scope and characteristics are vague and illusive. Thus, in Israel, as in other countries, policy and services have been developed mainly based on estimations with regard to the phenomenon. Therefore, there was a vital need for more concrete data in order to establish policy based on evidence rather than conjecture and in order to develop suitable services.

With the collaboration of other government agencies, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services embarked upon a national survey of people engaged in prostitution in Israel in order to measure the scope of this phenomenon in the country, identify the types of existing prostitution, and delineate their characteristics. The survey included the various populations involved in prostitution, including women, men, and youth.

The research, which lasted for about 5 years, was accompanied by a professional steering committee composed of a variety of partners. A number of challenges were inherent in going forward with this research project in terms of its methodology, its oversight, in analyzing the data and presenting it.

The data was gathered by means of several research methods and tools, due to the complexity in gathering data in this field. The sample included 760 respondents to a closed-ended questionnaire and 100 in-depth interviews.

The research findings indicate that there were about 12,000 people involved in prostitution in Israel in 2014, of which 95



percent were females (women and girls) and 5 percent males. The findings included data on the characteristics of women in prostitution, including age, marital status (including mothers of children), country of birth, background to the entry to prostitution, gender affiliations, and so on. The survey has also emphasized the relatively low percentage of street prostitution in relation to indoor prostitution (7 percent and 93 percent, respectively).

The survey now serves as a resource for establishing skillful policies, developing services, and putting emphasis on areas that have received insufficient treatment in the past. Professional work in these areas is already underway.

## 51 | Evaluating Social Work Education: A Principled Approach

*Roger Smith (Durham University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** social work education, evaluation, independence, methodological Choices, openness

### Background

This paper will explore both strategic and practical aspects of the task of carrying out full, fair and informative evaluations of social work education, drawing on the author's experience of a number of projects in this area, including developing inter-professional learning (the Leicester Model) and fast-track qualifying programmes (Step Up to Social Work and Think Ahead). I shall try to address a number of key aspects of the terrain of inquiry which have a bearing on the shape and substance of the investigation; and I will conclude with some suggestions about how to ensure both quality and integrity of the eventual findings generated.

### Agendas

I will briefly outline the various agendas brought to bear on evaluations of social work learning, which are often policy driven and will naturally seek to set the terms for the inquiry; but where evaluators may also bring their own experience-based preconceptions and unsupported assumptions. These are perhaps already known, but it is worth acknowledging the issue of 'taking positions' if only to demonstrate the importance of ensuring integrity in the conduct of this kind of study.

### Challenges

In light of these potentially competing expectations, I shall go on to discuss the task for the evaluator of establishing





independence and underpinning the credibility, robustness and validity of the project and its findings, as well as gaining access to research data and participants, and retaining a degree of control over the process.

### **Strategies**

In concluding this very brief overview, I will outline some of the strategies which I believe offer some guarantees, in terms of independence, integrity and credibility of this type of evaluation; including arguments for multiple stakeholder involvement, a mixed methods approach to the inquiry, and a shared commitment to non-selectivity and openness in the reporting of findings.

## **195 | The Challenges of Studying the Experiences of Moral Distress in the Context of Frontline Social Work**

*Maija Mänttäri-Van der Kuip (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

**Keywords:** moral distress, professional ethics, work-related well-being

The aim of professional social workers is to improve the quality of life and the well-being of individuals and their communities. However, realizing these aspirations has become ever more challenging even in the most affluent welfare states which are currently facing serious budgetary strains. The shifts in the global economy, relative growth of the service sector, the maturation of governmental commitments as well as population aging have created an environment of permanent austerity, which affects the ability of the social workers to realize their professional aspirations.

It is evident that in the present era, the work-related well-being of frontline social workers and their capability to practice ethically responsible social work are at risk. In this paper I approach this phenomenon faced in the frontline work with the concept of moral distress. Here, moral distress is defined as work-related distress experienced by the workers. It develops when a person is not able to practice in a way he or she considers morally appropriate, owing, for example, to personal, institutional or organizational obstacles.

Defining the experience of moral distress in all its complexity, and building a valid instrument to measure it, has presented a major challenge for researchers conducting surveys on this



issue. The various and partially inadequate definitions of the concept have led to varying and sometimes even controversial ways of studying and measuring it. The aim of this paper is to introduce the concept of moral distress and elaborate the challenges that are present when studying this phenomenon.

The paper centers on the challenges that I faced when I was studying experiences of moral distress among professional social workers. The paper is based on an empirical article (Mänttari-van der Kuip, 2016) aimed at shedding light on the experiences of moral distress among social workers with specific focus on the role of perceived resource insufficiencies in explaining these experiences. In this paper, I focus in particular on the methodological and theoretical challenges presented by the conceptualization, operationalization and measurement of this phenomenon.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 2.2

### **Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users**

#### *Social worker perspectives*

(Chair: Elizabeth Frost)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: 6.1 - Nordkraft

#### **167 | Evidence-based practice and knowledge utilization - a study of attitudes and practices among social workers in Germany**

*Sigrid James, (University of Kassel, Germany)*

*Leoni Lampe, (University of Kassel, Germany)*

*Susan Behnken (University of Kassel, Germany)*

*Daniel Schulz (University of Kassel, Germany)*

**Keywords:** evidence-based practices, knowledge utilization, research-practice integration

#### **Purpose:**

Since the late 1990s Evidence-based Practice (EBP) has influenced the conceptualization and practice of social work in significant ways, and EBPs are being implemented in many countries. In contrast to other Northern European countries, Germany has only recently joined the EBP debate and views of its relevance and significance for social work are almost exclusively critical. Steeped in theoretical and predominantly non-empirical knowledge traditions, there is great reluctance toward quantitative research in general and standardized interventions more specifically. The aim of this pilot study was to examine German social workers' attitudes toward the role of research in practice, to investigate sources of knowledge relied upon in practice decisions, and to examine factors that predict openness toward EBPs.

#### **Methods:**

Recruitment and sampling occurred in a multi-stage process. (1) A list of public and private social service agencies was compiled for one urban area in Germany (n=435). (2) Agencies were randomly selected and called to determine willingness to participate and to receive a count of degreed and/or licensed social workers, which were the focus of this initial study. (3) Surveys (n=350) with stamped return-envelopes were



subsequently mailed to interested agencies. (A web-based survey was not feasible given data protection rules and lack of access to email-addresses). The survey instrument consisted of close-ended questions about participants' professional background, satisfaction with their job and the sources of knowledge used to inform their practice. The 15-item version of the Evidence-Based Practice Attitudes Scale (Aarons, 2004), an internationally used and normed instrument, determined attitudes and openness toward research-supported interventions. The EBPAS-15 has four subscales (Requirements, Appeal, Openness, Divergence) and a total score, which indicates overall openness toward EBPs. Items were translated into German and slightly adapted in wording as the term EBP is relatively unknown. Data collection occurred over an 8-week period in 2015.

**Results:**

158 surveys were returned after a single mailing (45% response rate). Participants were 69% female with a mean age of 42.1 (SD=10.7). More than two-thirds were unfamiliar with the term EBP. When asked about sources of knowledge that primarily inform their practice, the least mentioned were research and theory. Professional experience (95.5%) and exchange with colleagues (77.3%) were cited as the most important sources. The EBPAS had good to acceptable reliability overall ( $\alpha=0.75$ ) with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.67 (Divergence Scale) to 0.87 (Appeal Scale) for the four subscales. Inspection of individual items indicated considerable openness toward research-based interventions but confirmed concerns about standardization. Multiple regression analysis indicated that higher job satisfaction and younger age to some extent predicted a greater degree of openness toward EBPs.

**Conclusion:**

This is the first study that used the EBPAS scale with social workers in Germany. Studies about knowledge utilization in Germany have traditionally relied on qualitative or heuristic methods. Survey findings indicate openness toward research-based interventions. Concerns about manualization may be alleviated through further education as many EBPs are principle-based and offer room for a client-centered approach. Questions remain about how to best introduce EBPs to social workers in Germany and reduce misconceptions.



## 44 | Social Workers' Attitudes, Access, and Confidence in Engaging in Evidence Based Practice

*Barbra Teater (College of Staten Island/City University of New York, USA)*

*Jill Chonody (Indiana University Northwest, USA)*

**Keywords:** evidence-based practice, social Work practitioners, research in practice, attitudes towards EBP, access to evidence, confidence in research

### **Background:**

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is defined as “a decision-making process integrating best research evidence, practitioner experience, and client or community characteristics, values, and preferences” (Manuel et al., 2009, p. 614). Despite integration of research in the social work education curriculum, the extent to which social work practitioners use and engage in research in their practice is variable. Facilitators to EBP include outside pressures, organizational support (e.g., access to research), mentorship and support from peers or experts in the field, and ongoing training and education (Wharton, 2010). Barriers include lack of time, access, funding, knowledge and skills of the practitioner, and organizational support (Gray et al., 2015). The extent to which practitioners are currently prepared to engage in EBP is relatively unknown. Therefore, this study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What are social work practitioners' attitudes, access, and confidence in engaging in EBP?; (2) To what extent do social work practitioners perceive their social work education to prepare them to engage in EBP?

### **Methods:**

This cross-sectional exploratory study consisted of an online survey comprised of basic sociodemographic questions, a standardized scale measuring attitudes, access, and confidence in engaging in EBP, and several open-ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed online in the US to known social workers, university databases, social media, and listservs. Data (N=152) were analysed with SPSS using descriptive statistics.

### **Findings:**

Participants were predominately female (85.6%) and White (82.4%), with a mean age of 42 years. Most held a Masters of Social Work degree (77%) and had an average of 14 years in practice. Attitudes toward EBP were positive (M=30; SD=7.1) (10 items from 1=strongly disagree – 4=strongly agree), and practitioners were moderately confident in appraising social work evidence (M=19.8; SD=5.4) (6 items from 1=not at all



confident – 5=very confident), yet reported rarely to occasionally accessing social work evidence (M=33; SD=5.9) (9 items from 1=unfamiliar – 6=very often). Participants generally agreed that social workers should utilize EBP (M=6.9; SD=1.9) (1=should not apply at all – 6=should always apply), yet indicated their education only moderately prepared them to do so (M=5.4; SD=2.9) (1=not at all prepared – 6=greatly prepared).

**Implications:**

The findings indicated that although practitioners had a positive attitude toward engaging in EBP, they were only moderately confident in doing so, rarely accessed social work evidence in their work, and were only moderately prepared through their social work education to engage in EBP. In order to prepare and support the use of EBP in social work practice, social work education, continuing education, and professional organizations should further support enhancing the skills and providing time and access for practitioners to engage in EBP. Of particular importance is the likely need for more advanced training for social work students in terms of how to critically analyze and understand research methodology and analyses, particularly quantitative methods.

**References:**

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### 304 | Shifting sands: Researching carers' and professionals' dilemmas in the changing world of substitute care for children in England

*Helen Hingley-Jones (Middlesex University, United Kingdom)*  
*Lucille Allain (Middlesex University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** kinship care, researching children's rights and needs, policy and practice in austere times

#### **Background and purpose:**

England has seen an increase in the number of children who have experienced abuse, placed in kinship care placements rather than with 'stranger' foster carers or adoptive families; in particular under Special Guardianship arrangements (DfE 2015). Concerned about the impact of these changes, three inner city, local authorities asked the researchers to investigate how professionals and Special Guardians (SG Carers) of children placed under these arrangements were experiencing the changes. We identified a group of carers and professionals, to explore the lived experience of policy, legal and practice frameworks in a state of flux during austerity. Funding was made available by the researchers' academic institution.

#### **Objectives and research questions:**

- What are professionals and carers' experiences of the circumstances leading to children being placed in kinship networks under Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs)?
- How well prepared are carers thought to be when the child/ren come to live with them?
- How does the current austere policy environment impact on the lived experiences of the carers, children and the professionals working with them?
- What were carers' and professionals' suggestions for improving services?

#### **Methods:**

We used a psychosocially-informed, qualitative research methodology. Our semi-structured interview design was informed by an essentialist or realist method, 'which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants' (Clarke and Braun 2006:81). It is interpretive, seeking to surface and work with emotional dimensions; (Kvale 1996); a psychosocial, 'practice-near' (Hingley-Jones 2009) methodology.

Ethical approval was gained from Middlesex University and purposive sampling used to identify ten professionals and carers. Semi-structured interviews were transcribed, followed by thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun 2006). Data analysis



included a reflexive element informed by Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) notion of the 'defended subject'.

### **Findings:**

Our findings are presented using a series of vignettes, illustrating the themes:

1. Conflicted workers who felt their professional ethics were challenged; 'squeezed' by the local authority and courts to identify and assess carers from the network hastily.
2. Professionals wondered whose interests were being served by this evolving policy. Is it in children's best interests or is it to save money?
3. Carers' ambivalence about caring for the child/ren emerged: 'I didn't think I'd have to give up my whole life'.
4. Withering of the state, vulnerable carers and children left to manage with minimal state support. Neo-liberal policy appears to idealise and denigrate 'the family' by turn.

### **Conclusions and Implications for Policy and Practice:**

While children are thought by most to benefit from placement within the family network, SG carers need more careful preparation beforehand and ongoing emotional and practical support over time. Often older relatives are caring for young children, well into their older age, without support and advice on parenting children with complex needs and on managing challenging relationships with birth parents during contact. Parity with adoptive parents and professional foster carers is proposed.

## **426 | Social work in mental health. Epistemological identities and preferences among social workers**

*Tor-Johan Ekeland (Volda University College, Norway)*  
*Vidar Myklebust (Volda University College, Norway)*

**Keywords:** epistemology, therapeutic models, mental health, social work

### **Background and purpose:**

The mental health field is an inter-professional arena where psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, and social workers comprise the largest groups. For decades, there has been great differences, both within and between professionals concerning the most vital subject matter: how to explain mental illness and suffering and how to argue for the best treatment strategies



and regimes (Ghaemi, 2003; Luhrmann, 2000). Historically, these differences have created substantial tension, both within and between professionals, and the tension still exists (Ekeland, 2011; Ringen & Dahl, 2002). Brendel (2009) characterized the necessity of healing—what he termed the conceptual wounds—in the mental health field as “not simply an abstract task, but an urgent ethical imperative on which rigorous and humane clinical care, research, and training depend” (p. 24). In other words: our conceptualization generate practice. However, we do not know much about how different professionals identify themselves within this variety of epistemological stances. This study aims to measure that for social workers. Based on an epistemological model by Ekeland (2011) diverse theoretical models in the field can be placed along two epistemological dimensions: i) whether explaining models is understood with reference to objectontology (as in medical models) or subjectontology (as in psychodynamic models), and ii) whether therapeutic theories can be based on either intentionality (as in empowerment models) or causality (as in psychoanalytic models). We hypothesises that social workers in the field identify themselves more with theories and models founded in subjectontology and intentionality.

**Methods:**

As part of a comprehensive survey to 2060 social workers in four counties in western Norway, recruited by their labor-union, those working in the mental health field (N=410) was asked to rate on a Likert-scale which of six specified models (psychodynamic/medical/cognitive/behavioral/humanistic/systemic) inspired them most/least. Furthermore; which of the models they regard as dominating on their workplace, and their evaluation (agree/disagree) to some statements about services and treatment in mental health.

**Results:**

As expected, most social workers identify themselves according to our main hypotheses, with CBT as the “winner”, followed by systemic and humanistic. CBT is also experienced as the most dominating model at the workplace, followed by psychodynamic and behavioral. The most characteristic are the eclectic attitudes (inspired by many), and their own perception as more



eclectic than others at their workplace. Interesting, however, is that the more educated the social workers are (clinical courses at master level) the less eclectic. The most educated are also the most critical to services as being too individualistic and based on medical tradition.

**Conclusions:**

According to the definition of social work, one could expect a more explicit identification with social and contextual models among social workers in the mental health field. We suppose that such identity has implication for practice and the social workers ability to promote social work at interprofessional arenas. Strengthen the educations seems to have the potential to also strengthen such identity.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 2.3

### Theme 3: Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research

*Social work with children, young people and families*

(Chair: Francisco Branco)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: 6.2 – Nordkraft

#### 429 | Effectiveness of a psychosocial counselling intervention on quality of life and psychosocial burden in family members with children suffering from cancer, A quasi-experimental study

*Edgar Baumgartner (University of Applied Sciences Switzerland, School for Social Work, Switzerland)*

*Sigrid Haunberger (University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, School for Social Work, Switzerland)*

**Keywords:** psychosocial counselling, quasi-experimental study, children suffering from cancer, quality of life, psychosocial burden

On average, approximately 168 children are diagnosed with cancer each year in Switzerland. Although survival rates have increased, cancer is the second leading cause of death in children (after accidents). Cancer in children often leads to acute psychosocial burden, necessitates changes in daily living, and has serious effects on the child and the child's whole family. Evidence shows that the psychosocial burden of family members can be just as serious as that of children with cancer. Particularly in the first phase of cancer diagnosis it is extremely important for parents to be offered professional help as soon as possible. This is where professional social work comes in; social counselling is active support and affects in a planned manner the subjective life conduct of individuals in cases where life conduct can potentially become socially problematic. Social counselling aims to reduce strains and burden, to make it possible for people to actively conduct their lives and cope with everyday life, to strengthen their sense of coherence, and thus to improve or at least stabilize the quality of life of families with a child with cancer. However, little is known about the effect of social counselling with family members of people with cancer.



To demonstrate the effectiveness of social counselling based on different social diagnosis methods, systematic trial and testing in experimental settings is required. To answer our research questions and hypotheses, we chose an experimental design, in the framework of a longitudinal prospective study with three measurement points.

The population for this randomized intervention study is all parents of children who are newly diagnosed with cancer in a period of two years and are admitted to the University Paediatric Clinic Zurich. Based on estimations for the past few years, we expect an average sample size of 120 cases in the period.

To measure effects of social counselling, target dimensions must be defined initially. The assessment of health-related quality of life is increasingly accepted in medicine (and other scientific disciplines) and has been acknowledged as an essential component as a measure of therapy/counselling success. We view “quality of life” as synonymous with effective coping with a difficult situation and as a determinable indicator for acceptable life conditions.

To measure our dependent variables we used three proven questionnaires: the German version of the Impact on Family Scale, the Munich List of Quality of Life-Dimensions and last but not least the short version of the Sense of Coherence Questionnaire.

At first we present the international state of research concerning the impact of social counselling, which has been crucial for the research project. Afterwards we refer to the research design and research hypothesis. Finally we will disclose our first quantitative results and discuss our findings with special attention to methodological challenges of quantitative impact research in social work.

## 90 | Network dynamics in local networks combating child poverty in Belgium

*Dorien Van Haute (Ghent University, Belgium)*

*Michel Vandenbroeck (Ghent University, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** Inter-organisational networks, network dynamics, child poverty





The fragmentation and categorical organisation of welfare services is currently perceived as problematic, since these services are not responsive to the wicked issue of (child) poverty. Children and families in poverty face multi-faceted problems and strategies are sought in order to meet their needs and concerns in a systemic approach (Anthony, King & Austin, 2011; Hood, 2014; Kodner, 2009). As an answer to the problem of (child) poverty we observe an international trend towards more collaboration and integration of services for families with young children. An extensive analysis of local, federal and European policy papers as well as of scientific literature reveals the dominant discourse that integrated social services are inherently seen or evaluated as more effective and efficient (Allen, 2003; OECD, 2001; DfE, 2013). We analyse this dominant perspective from a social work perspective, thereby drawing upon the global definition of Social Work as a normative framework. The aim of the study is to get a better insight into the dynamics, logics and interventions from the recently constructed local networks together with what this implies for the development of social work and more specific anti-poverty strategies. We investigate the changes, opportunities and struggles of the network and relate them to the lived experiences of social workers, local policy makers and families. We also focus on how is dealt with personal information, as an exemplary case to concretize these dynamics and their impact. This presentation addresses local networks of social provision engaged in combating (child) poverty in two municipalities in Belgium. Multiple methods for data gathering were used. Next to a literature review of recent policy papers and scientific literature, the researcher performed a participant observation in the local network to discover the network dynamics. This study also includes a multi-layered perspective by conducting qualitative in-depth interviews with local policy makers, social workers and families in poverty (clients). In our study we find that the discussions during the network meetings reveal different visions and logics on how to make a good network. These different interpretations also imply different results for clients. Also the selection of the partners and domains involved in the network give an additional insight in the view on poverty and poverty reduction strategies. Next, the input of material and/or immaterial resources and family versus child oriented actions, are other elements that influence the network interventions and final outcomes. The network dynamics also show a tension between selective and targeted strategies. Lastly, concluding reflections and implications for practices, policy and research are discussed from a social work perspective. The procedure of the study is approved by the ethical committee of the faculty. All interviews were conducted by using an informed consent.



## 129 | Exploration of children's participation in Flemish youth care

*Wendy Eerdeken (Artevelde university college, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** participation, youth care, research with young children

The right of every child to participate in decisions about their own life has become widely accepted. Professionals in youth care are using a more participatory approach. Youngsters, parents and other educators are subject of research. Nevertheless, if it concerns younger children we see more hesitation and insecurity to involve them. Not only in the field of youth care but also in research the voice of younger children is rarely heard.

In this project, we have investigated the perspective of six to twelve years old children in Flemish youth care. The focus was on participation in the process of the care they get: what is important to children themselves? What are necessary conditions for children to participate and how can professionals facilitate their participation?

Children's Rights and the Flemish policy on youth care participation serve as the conceptual framework for this research.

From an interpretative paradigm, we have performed twenty in-depth interviews with children, using a creative and interactive approach, tailored to the child's abilities and preferences. The data are qualitatively analyzed (phenomenological approach). The research itself as well as the attitude of the researchers were consequent to its paradigm, a participative approach of the children. In every phase, from first moment of information up to the presentation of the results, maximum possibility to participate by children was a concern. Besides the data of the interviews, we could use the process of the researchers in enquiring the children as a reflection of the process of the caregivers.

This research provides professionals with tools and guidelines to support children's participation. The results of this study are also informative for policy makers within the domain of child and youth care.

The research has resulted into a brochure legible for as well professionals as the children. They can go through the results, quotes of the children and reflection questions addressed to children on one hand and to professionals on the other hand.



### 313 | Young Boys' placements into Reformatory school in the 1950's and 60's – Memories, life stories and (male) identity building

*Paula Salenius (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

*Marjo Kuronen (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

**Keywords:** reformatory school, biography, identity, narrative research

Reformatory schools were (are?) the "last resort" of the child protection residential care system in Finland. My research concentrates on the memories and narratives of men who as young boys have been living in a Reformatory school. Boys' placement into the Reformatory School has had a significant impact on their later lives and self-image. In my research, I'll ask how have the men built their lives and their own identity. Men have lived in the Reformatory School in a given historical period, at the 1950s and 60s, which has had its own cultural conception of citizenship. In accordance with the associated educational system, the boys have socialized to the society. In my research, I particularly pronounce a man growing up with possible options. Their narration is culturally structured, even when the most private experiences are narrated. Individuality and subjective meaning, therefore, can be opened only by opening the socially shared layers of the story. On the other hand, the subjectivity is related to the fact that the story is an important mediator of experience. Individual stories are part of the common cultural story.

The research data are the men's stories of their own lives. The stories consist of memories and memories as part of their present life stories. I contacted nine men who have been placed in Järvilinna /Pernasaari reformatory schools using so-called "snowball" method. The Biographical interview I used is one of the narrative interview formats.

This study specifically deals with phenomena related to the institutionalization of boys Reformatory Schools in the 50's and 60's and their later life and identity. During this period institutional care and education in Reformatory Schools had been organized and practically given by men. The boys were brought up to be "real men". The boys faced a lot of violence and display of emotions was not permitted. My research relates to men's life periods after Reformatory School, and what kind of identity they have built up as adults.

**The key findings from the research are:**

Some men have traumas and difficulties to adapt themselves



into normal life. They also had problems with alcohol and they committed crimes. Most of the men told about the influences of the Reformatory School time on their later relationships to opposite gender and their own children. Some of them told, that fatherhood has been an important issue in their lives and they want to be "present fathers" to their children.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 2.4

### Theme 4: Social work research as a framework for social work education

*Educational and training aspects within social work and social work research*

(Chair: Gasper Krstulovic)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: 6.3 - Nordkraft

### 86 | Rethinking Social Work Doctoral Education: Preparing Students to Engage in Translation Research

*G. Lawrence Farmer (Fordham University, USA)*

*Antoinette Farmer (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, USA)*

**Keywords:** doctoral education, translational research, doctoral students

Background and proposed purpose of the presentation

In recent years, there has been an increasing demand to have interventions developed in clinical settings to be implemented in community-based settings with fidelity. This demand has resulted in the need to have more individuals trained in how to conduct translational research. While there are various definitions of translational research found in the literature, for the purposes of this presentation we will use the following definition: "Translational research generally refers to the advancement of basic science research findings into application and everyday practice" (Bardo & Pentz, 2016, p. 69). The purpose of this presentation is to describe how social work doctoral education can be designed to prepare students to engage in translational research.

#### **A summary of the main points of this presentation**

Presently doctoral students in social work are not provided many opportunities to engage in translational research. We argue that the preparation of social work doctoral students to engage in translational research will involve changes to the methods course work (i.e., research methods and statistics) and providing students with the opportunity to get involved with interdisciplinary research project development. Furthermore, it is necessary that competencies be developed related to translational research. Opportunities for students to engage in these competencies must be built into social work doctoral



programs for students to attain them. To ensure that students acquire the knowledge and skills about translational research, they should be encouraged to pursue post-doctoral work in this area.

### **How the proposed presentation addresses one or more of the conference aims and themes**

In this presentation, we discuss how social work doctoral education can be conceptualized to prepare social work doctoral students to engage in translational research. What we will be presenting is consistent with the conference theme possibilities in social work.

### **Conclusions from and Implications of your presentation for research**

Developing a social work doctoral curriculum to prepare students to conduct translational research, presents opportunities to evaluate the curriculum. Moreover, if doctoral programs adopt the competencies outlined in this presentation, there will be opportunities to assess students' attainment of them and to develop measures for such assessment.

Bardo, M. T., & Pentz, M. A. (2016). Translational research. In A. E. Kazdin & A. E. Kazdin (Eds.), *Methodological issues and strategies in clinical research*, 4th ed. (pp. 69-84). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

## **119 | Is there a trend on PhD Social Work research topics and methods?: analysis from 12 years of a PhD programme at Lisbon/Portugal**

*Jorge Ferreira (University Institute of Lisbon – ISCTE, Portugal)*

*Inês Amaro, (University Institute of Lisbon – ISCTE, Portugal)*

*Maria João Pena (University Institute of Lisbon – ISCTE, Portugal)*

*Pablo Alvarez Perez (University Institute of Lisbon – ISCTE, Portugal)*

**Keywords:** social work, social work research, research trends in social work, research designs in social work

### **Background and purpose**

The development of social work research throughout years has become one of the biggest and ever-present concerns emerging from the social work field. Moreover, in the context of public universities the reinforcement of the support to social work research has been seen as critical for the acceptance and





acknowledgement of social work as an academic discipline, peer with other disciplines of the social sciences realm.

In Portugal, there is only a recent experience of PhD programmes in Social Work, administrated by two different universities, with a total of 28 concluded PhD thesis.

The University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL) was the first public university in Portugal to host a PhD programme in Social Work in 2004, first in consortium with one of the historical schools of Social Work in Portugal and, since 2010, as exclusive school. It presently involves over 40 doctoral students.

From 2010 onwards the first thesis were concluded and, until September 2016, 14 PhD thesis have been presented to and approved by ISCTE-IUL.

It is time now to endeavor an analysis of the meanings, paths, added value and challenges posed by the produced knowledge entailed by the PhD programme. That will be the purpose of the present paper.

### **Results**

The proposal is to conduct an analysis of the 14 concluded PhD thesis in order to obtain data on selected topics for research; the object of study; and methodological design. Also a content analysis of the main findings/results/conclusions of each thesis will be carried out.

### **Conclusions and implications**

The aim is to develop an in-depth vision of the capacity of knowledge production of the Portuguese Social Work scientific community and to understand, with more objectivity, the kind of trend (if there are any) Social Work research is developing in Portugal.

In the future, the analysis might be enlarged, either through a set on interviews with the authors of the thesis, and/or through an analysis of the thesis concluded in the others PhD programme.



## 92 | The impact of ethics education

*Sabrina Keinemans (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

*Mariel Kanne (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** ethics, most significant change approach, evaluative research, professionalization, impact of ethics training

### **Background and purpose**

Since 2008, the research group "Innovation of Social Work" (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences) studies the 'ethics works' (Banks, 2013) performed by social workers. To understand what ethics work is about, we developed a model of Ethical Agency, which refers to philosophy of the self and virtue ethics, and which consists of six dimensions:

- Ethical competence
- Ethical motivation
- Ethical frames of reference
- Ethical sensibility
- Ethical identity
- Context

The model of Ethical Agency proved to be useful as an analytical tool in our research, but also proved to be useful for social workers. They engaged in lectures, workshops and communities of practice about the model, and noticed that this was very helpful to reflect on the ethics work they perform. As a research group, we were very much interested in these experiences. How can workshops and training contribute to the ethical agency of social workers? (How) does it impact their daily practice? (How) do social service users appreciate this impact? Momentarily, we are focusing on these issues in a study about the impact of ethics education. The goal of this study is to find out whether an ethics training, based on our model of ethical agency, has impact on professional social work practice.

### **Methods**

To study this, we use the Most Significant Change approach; a participative and dialogical research strategy (Davies and Dart, 2005). This strategy can be considered as an appropriate means to conduct empirical ethics (Pols, 2014; Willems & Pols, 2010). In the first phase of the study, 17 social workers from three social work organizations in the Netherlands participate in a training, composed of two series of three meetings. After each series, the participants write a narrative about the



changes they experienced in their professional thinking and acting. These narratives are collected and discussed in a focusgroupmeeting with all the participants. In the second phase of the study, once the training is finished, these 'stories of change' are analyzed, by presenting them to stakeholders in the participating organizations such as colleagues, clients and managers of participating professionals. Together, we try to discern the most significant changes in light of the social service which is provided by the participating organization.

### **Results**

The project started in September 2016, and in December we will finish the first series of meetings. Two elements of the first results will be discussed at the conference:

- Do the participants experience any changes in ethical thinking and acting? What are the changes they report?
- Is the Most Significant Change approach suitable (methodologically) to study the impact of ethics training? This is especially relevant, as ethical impact is a very difficult concept to study in empirical research, because operationalization of ethical indicators is hardly possible nor – in our opinion – desirable.

### **Conclusions**

The outcome of our study is very relevant for ethics training on the job and during social work education, as it explicates whether ethics training impacts the social worker and his or her actions, but also whether this impact is considered relevant with regard to the social services which are delivered. Further, the findings may help to explicate research strategies which are useful for empirical ethics research, as traditional strategies quite often have some limitations when studying professional ethical thinking and acting.

### **References**

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Davies, R., & Dart., J. (2005). The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique. A Guide to Its Use. Retrieved from: <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

Pols, A.J. (2014). Radical relationality. Epistemology in care and care ethics for research. In G. Olthuis, H. Kohlen & J. Heier (Eds.) *Moral Boundaries Redrawn. The Significance of Joan Tronto's Argument for Political Theory, Professional Ethics, and Care as Practice* (pp. 175-194). Leuven: Peeters.



Willems, D., & Pols, A.J. (2010). Goodness! The empirical turn in health care ethics. *Medische antropologie* 22 (1) , 161-170.

### 239 | Family social work education based on collaborative practice-and-practitioner research

Lea Šugman Bohinc (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work, Slovenia)

**Keywords:** MSW education, social work process, family in the community, collaboration, individual working project of help, qualitative action research

The critical observation that both the contemporary social work research and higher education keep focusing on the “what” (contents) rather than on the “how” (processes), served as one of the starting points for an action research and developmental educational project (Norwegian Financial Mechanism Programme), designed and conducted at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work, in the years 2015 and 2016.

The project combined research and education perspective with two main purposes: a. to help families in the community by co-creating desired changes in order to reduce social exclusion and strengthen wellbeing, and b. to provide learning contexts and support social workers in the master programme Family Social Work (FSW) in their professional and personal growth.

The objectives, referring to the project’s educational dimension, were to provide opportunities for the MA students (MSWs) to a. experience autonomous work with families, b. upgrade their professional competences in the field of FSW, c. take an active role in practice-and-practitioner research.

Two fundamental education-focused research questions were: a. how useful is the transtheoretical concept of “working relationship of co-creation” realized in concrete “individual working project of help (IWPH)” from the perspective of MSWs collaborating with multi-challenged families in the community?, b. how do the MSWs evaluate the model of education with the research integrated within the Practicum in the FSW curriculum?

The sample encompassed 19 MSWs, 22 families, 6 supervisors-researchers (SRs). The average time span for an IWPH was 4



months. The methods of gathering empirical data by the MSWs included: a. forms filled out with descriptions of the work process in each IWPH session (14 sessions per IWPH); data collected by interview questionnaires evaluating the IWPH's effectiveness according to b. the initial expectations of the families about the IWPH, c. the interim and final family evaluation of the IWPH; d. MSWs' final papers reflecting on their experience with IWPH. The SRs conducted: e. evaluation interviews with families at the end of IWPH, and f. focus groups with MSWs. Supervision groups (14 sessions per student) were organized for the MSWs.

All empirical data was qualitatively analysed with the grounded theory-based methodology.

The results are very encouraging, showing the role of the MSWs in the action research project as the missing link between the multi-challenged families, their communities and, specifically, social work institutions. The MSWs' positive expectations were fulfilled, initial thirst for new experiences satisfied, participation in the project interpreted as a huge learning challenge leading to their professional and personal growth with group supervision very helpful in the process. Strong emphasis was given to the richness of their experiential learning about FSW concepts in practice as well as to the importance of connecting with many mezzo and macro systems of care, education, etc. along the processes of collaborating with families in the community.

The whole experience and two published scientific monographs will serve as an excellent practice example and a model of FSW education with integrated collaborative research for the future generations of MSWs within and, hopefully, beyond the Slovenian border.

## 96 | The education of looked after children in Wales: aspirations, experiences and barriers

*Alyson Rees (Cardiff University, United Kingdom)*

*Louise Roberts (Cardiff University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** looked-after-children, education, aspiration, barriers

The low educational attainment and future prospects of looked after children and young people is an issue of widespread international concern (Berridge 2012; Jackson and Höjer 2013).



Across the four UK nations, looked after children, on average, achieve poorer educationally than their non-looked-after peers (see Jackson 1987; 2010). The gap widens across all Key Stages and continues into higher education (Stein 2012). In Wales, Government policy has sought to tackle the problem of 'underachievement' (Welsh Assembly Government 2007), and supporting educational attainment is recognised as key to ensuring looked after children reach their potential (Welsh Government 2015). Looked after young people, the major stakeholders and service users, however have rarely been consulted about their educational experiences and preferences. In 2015, the Welsh Government commissioned the Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE) to investigate the educational experiences and opinions, attainment and aspirations of looked after children in Wales. This paper will provide an overview of the innovative research design employed to work in partnership with young people and to present the key findings of the study. The paper will focus predominantly on the qualitative phase of study which sought to privilege the 'voice' of looked after children and young people. Looked after children and young people are "experts in their own lives" (Clark and Statham 2005) and the research was committed to enabling their voices to be heard. To that end, an in-depth, qualitative study involving 67 looked after children and young people was undertaken. Creative, visual methods and focus groups facilitated by peer researchers were utilised to engage children and young people aged between 5 and 27. The outputs include music, poetry and film. Feeling the same or different to their non-looked after peers was a key theme across the data and this will be considered in relation to aspirations, school experiences and barriers. The barriers relate to feeling stigmatised, and the low aspirations and expectations of the professionals involved, who themselves controversially contribute to and become part of the complex problem which young people face.





## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 2.5

### Theme 6: Research on different forms of partnerships/cooperation – including power and conflicts in social work

*Research on different forms of care*

(Chair: Hannele Forsberg)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: 10.15 Nordkraft

#### 333 | The role of social work in an 'Integrated Community Care Model'

*Siebre Nachtergaele, (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Didier Reynaert, (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Hildegard Gobeyn, (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Leen Van Landschoot, (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Lieve De Vos (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Nico De Witte (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** 'integrated community care model', integrated care, community care, human rights

As a worldwide trend, social work practice and policy increasingly focus on integrated forms of care with a clear orientation towards community care (Bunnell et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2014). This Integrated Community Care Model is developed as an alternative for the highly fragmented care delivery at the one hand and the growing interplay between social care and health care at the other hand. The Integrated Community Care Model is characterized by an integration of different social work and health perspectives and logics. In order to successfully implement the Integrated Community Care Model, a multi-perspective analysis of complex social questions and problems, is needed. (Suter et al., 2009).

In the context of policies of austerity and the withdraw of the welfare state, the Integrated Community Care Model is often imposed as the new social policy agenda (Enthoven, 2009). At the same time, the Integrated Community Care Model is legitimized from the framework of human rights and social justice.

In our presentation we will discuss how health and welfare issues are often intertwined and give form to different perspectives on care, and how the Integrated Community Care Model can contribute to the realisation of social justice and



human dignity in care. This will be illustrated using data of an ongoing research project in Flanders (Belgium), where the 'Integrated primary care' approach is studied in the context of community-oriented primary health and social care. In this study, researchers from various academic disciplines (social work and health care) are involved. Based on ethnographic research methodology design (participant observation, document analyses and interviews with professionals and service-users), three particular community health centres in Flanders are studied. In the 45 interviews with both (health and social work) practitioners and clients (of the three community health centres) we explored the different social work perspectives and logics that underlie and shape integrated community care.

In this presentation we will present the preliminary findings of this research project, with a focus on the "multiperspective character" in conducting the Integrated Care Model. Main discussions include the role of the social worker in relation to other professionals in integrated community care practice; the relation between formal/professional and informal care; and the discussion of a collective and community-driven approach to social problems against the tendency of individualizing social problems and answers.

## 18 | Solving the 'Personhood Jigsaw Puzzle' in End-of-Life Care at Residential Care Homes for the Elderly

*Sui-Ting Kong, (University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)*

*Christine Meng-Sang Fang (University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)*

*Vivian Weiqun Lou (University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)*

**Keywords:** end-of-life care, personhood, patienthood

### **Background and purpose:**

End-of-life (EoL) care straddles medical and social care systems. While both systems concern the preservation of dignity of the dying, their professional practices are rooted in ostensibly incommensurable discourses of human being—patienthood and personhood. In response to the demand for holistic integrated care for the dying and the family, the patienthood-personhood incommensurability has to be transcended. Medical and social collaboration in EoL care is hence considered a site where potential integration of patienthood and personhood can be observed.

**Methods:**

This study was conducted with an EoL care project that provided EoL care in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) in Hong Kong, aiming at capturing the best practices of medical-social collaboration in conserving dignity in end-of-life care. In this study, 12 interviews were conducted with 10 EoL care practitioners, including an EoL project coordinator, 2 project social workers, 3 residential care home nurses, and 4 residential care home social workers. We purposively sampled both nursing and social work practitioners from the four representative partnerships with the hospital settings to offer maximum variations in the context regarding where EoL care is delivered. The duration of the interviews ranged from 1 to 3 hours.

An “EoL case graph” was invented to facilitate the development of a “plot” during the interview. In-depth interviews are therefore not merely tools for data collection but for developing practice narratives, a process of giving the disorganized practice experiences meaning, and for sustaining the reflection–action–reflection cycles as guided by Cooperative Grounded Inquiry (CGI).

**Results:**

Findings show that a person-centred and family-oriented EoL care model is helpful to achieve dignified death in RCHEs, especially in socio-cultural contexts where both medicalization of dying and concept of ‘interdependent self’ prevail. In this case Hong Kong Chinese communities. Transcending the disciplinary differences of medical and social care in EoL care requires putting the dying elders and their families back in the centre of decision making, and sometimes in challenging organizational rules.

This particular EoL care model consists of three major structural-social processes which are (1) identifying personhood-inhibiting experiences: processes in which the elderly experience a loss of self by ageing and dying in institutional care; (2) understanding the person-in-relationships and the person-in-time alongside diagnosis of the biological person; and (3) enabling personalized care for enhanced psychosocial outcomes: how to balance the current medically inclined care with enhanced psychosocial outcomes in institutional care settings. Findings of the study also shed light on the suitability of the ‘ring theory of personhood’ for integrating patienthood and personhood in EoL care.

**Conclusions and implications:**

The framework developed in this study notes the structural and social changes necessary for the dying elderly in RCHEs to re-assume their sense of self. Cultivating values of respect, care and humanity in the staff of EoL care facilities equips the organizations with the critical competence to identify the suffering of the elderly, particularly with respect to their loss of the sense of self as catalyzed by physical deterioration.

**95 | Family carers affected by harmful behaviour from the older people for whom they care**

*Louise Isham, (University of Birmingham UK, United Kingdom)*

*Caroline Bradbury-Jones (University of Birmingham UK, United Kingdom)*

*Alistair Hewison (University of Birmingham UK, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** family carers, abuse, violence, participatory research

**Background and purpose:**

This study investigates the experiences of family carers affected by harmful behaviour from the older person for whom they care. There is very little empirical or theoretical knowledge about this issue across different social, medical and psychological disciplines. There is also limited practice guidance for social workers and allied practitioners to aid identification, intervention and long-term support to affected families. Harmful behaviour towards carers raises uncomfortable questions about what can be considered abusive or exploitative practices within relationships affected by illness and care. How intimacy, inter-dependency and mutual vulnerability develop and change over the life-course of family relationships is central to exploring the impact and identification of abuse and violence within care and caring. This study aims to develop the existing knowledge base about this sensitive and hidden issue.

**Methods:**

Because contemporary empirical and theoretical knowledge is limited and fragmented we sought to incorporate the experiential knowledge and reflective insights of people with experience of care and caring in the design and implementation of the study. To this end we worked in partnership with a group of advisors with an interest in research and experience of caring. The project was in this way underpinned by a participatory and collaborative approach and a commitment to



developing knowledge for the purpose and benefit of practical application. At the time of writing this abstract, the research team are carrying out one-to-one interviews with carers and ex-carers affected by violent, abusive or harmful behaviour from the older person for whom they care. We aim to find out more about their experiences and needs. We are also carrying out group interview meetings with carers and ex-carers to explore collective understandings and ways of engaging with this issue. This will assist our work to develop knowledge about the perceived barriers and facilitators for families in talking about and seeking support to alter the dynamics of care and abuse.

**Results/ implications:**

By the time of the conference we will have empirical findings to share. The issue of harmful behaviour towards family carers requires partnerships between practitioners, researchers and families to capture the plural and heterogeneous ways the issue is defined and understood. It may also help to make visible some of the conceptual and ethical dilemmas involved in identifying what is and is not abusive behaviour and to what extent intentionality of action and perceptions of vulnerability affect how people identify and respond to harmful behaviour toward carers. We suggest that the complex and in some ways uncomfortable nature of this issue requires a similarly complex and iterative approach to knowledge development in social work research. In this way, our study is an exercise in some of the practical, intellectual and ethical issues at the heart of contemporary social work research's challenges and opportunities. We share its methodologies and findings as point of learning and reflection for the field.

**326 | Collective Advocacy: Benefits for All? A partnership approach to research as a tool to influence social policy for older people**

*Sarah Donnelly, (University College Dublin, Ireland) Marita O'Brien, (Age Action, Ireland)  
Emer Begley (Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Ireland)  
John Brennan (Irish Association of Social Workers, Ireland)*

**Keywords:** collective advocacy, social impact, partnership, social work, non-government organisations, older people

Academic research is often criticised for its lack of social impact in the 'real world' and the challenge of research findings influencing social policy have been repeatedly highlighted at a



time when this type of knowledge is often not well used by policy makers and practitioners. (Carnegie Trust, 2016). It is therefore critical that knowledge brokers understand the cultures of both worlds; partnerships between civil society organisations and academic institutions can traverse these worlds. This paper evaluates one such model where a range of Irish social work and other organisations developed methods of achieving policy and practice impacts to improve services to older people.

The paper describes how in 2015, the Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW), Age Action Ireland, Alzheimer Society of Ireland and University College Dublin designed a study to explore social workers' skills in accessing care and support services for older people. It then highlights the way in which the partnership used a range of communication and media approaches to enhance the impact of the evaluation. This included coverage in national and local newspapers and 10 radio interviews on national and local radio. Study findings were used by Age Action and Alzheimer Society of Ireland to inform their pre-budget submissions to government and provided an important evidence base which they could draw on for other organisational purposes. In addition, the study triggered an 'Invest in Homecare Campaign' where seventeen NGOs including the Irish Association of Social Workers collectively lobbied government for changes to policy and funding for older people in Ireland. The original study was also extended so that data was collected from social workers working with older people in Ireland on a monthly basis in order to grow evidence and to continue advocating for systemic change and increased resourcing for this sector.

Conclusions: This study indicates that there is clear scope for universities and third-sector organisations to explore working together to influence social work policy and practice while also capitalising on voluntary and community organisations' apparent success in reaching policy and practice audiences. Of additional benefit were the processes involved in the co-production of knowledge that has potentially beneficial outcomes for partnerships.





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## SYMPOSIUM 4

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### 42 | Matters of Professional Identity and Social Work

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.  
Room: 3.3.17 - Nordkraft

*Martin Kettle (Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom)*  
*Stephen Webb (Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom)*  
*Maura Daly (Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** professional identity, slow social work, narrative research

The issue of professional identity has presented a significant challenge for social work in recent times, and is a matter of considerable concern for both social work practitioners, policy makers and educators, a substantial part of whose role is to support students in the development and sense of their professional identity. In a Scottish context Changing Lives (Scottish Executive, 2006) the report of the review of social work in Scotland asserted that, "There is an urgent need for social work to clarify its professional identity in order to establish clear roles for individual social workers". Ten years on it is difficult to see much in the way of emerging clarity. If anything developments since then, particularly in respect of the integration of health and social care, have increased that urgency, and it is these concerns that the topic of this symposium seeks to address. Although written in a Scottish context, it is evident that issues of professional identity have much broader implications.

As Webb (2015) has argued there are a number of challenges in addressing professional identity. Firstly there conceptual ambiguity, where there is a lack of consensus as to what the term actually means. Beyond that there is a lack of agreement as to what the core attributes of professional identity and concomitant problems in identifying what counts in the constitution of identity. However, there does appear to be some areas where there is some element of consensus about social workers' professional identity. Firstly, it is dynamic and the nature of identity as 'becoming' is one that has gained currency. Secondly, and relatedly, it is provisional in that it is not seen as being possible to say that, 'I am a finished professional'. Rather it increasingly seems that identities are formative and in the process of becoming. Further, professional identity is not given or constructed. It requires an active



process of work by social workers in conjunction with peers and people who receive services.

In exploring professional identity from a theoretical and empirical perspective, this symposium will explicitly address the conference subtheme, "Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users", with a clear connection being the issue of professional identity.

In developing the Glasgow Caledonian social work key strategic research theme the symposium will consist of three linked papers, two of which draw on empirical studies of professional identity. One of these is a doctoral study, that takes a narrative approach to professional identity. The second is a study of a group of student social workers reflective accounts and the narrative identity work that students undertake. The third paper is of a theoretical nature and applies the concept of 'slow' to social work, going on to explore its implications for professional identity in relation to time and speed.

This symposium will offer a range of original insights, both theoretical and pedagogical, about how professional identity is developed. It will identify implications for social work education and explore possibilities for research.

### **Paper 1- An appeal for slow social work and mobile identities**

The manner in which identity is made through time, rhythm, pace and speed is often overlooked in the social work literature. This appeal draws on the way that a supposed authentic identity is dependent on arrangements of time whether this be the speed of case closing or time limited assessments. Urgency, crisis, emergency and delays are all framed through this lens. Here we witness the ways that having a working identity makes demands on the pace of time itself (Adkins, 2013). Applying the concept of slow to social work, in the context of hot desking, flexi hours, agile working as they are entangled - with managerialism, marketisation, regimented workplace culture and performance bench-marking - enables us to focus upon the vicissitudes of time and speed. Identity is framed through the increasing pace and quickening tempo of social work. The possibilities for being slow are radical for professional identity and examined through the work of Isabelle Stenger. A healthy social work identity, it is argued, is achieved through slowness and a slow militant sensibility.

### **Paper 2 Professional identity and institutional logics**

This paper presents the initial findings from a PhD research study of the social work professional identity. Following a



literature review which deconstructs the contested concepts of social work, professionalism and identity, the study draws on findings from empirical research into the lives of social workers. Life story interviews of twenty social workers were undertaken to explore the factors which constitute their professional identity.

In addition to the influence of personal beliefs and attributes and early socialisation experiences on the formation of professional identity, contextual organizational and workplace factors are equally influential (Webb, 2015). The sociological concept of institutional logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991) provides a theoretical framework within which to conceptualise these changes; institutional logics provide a link between individual agency and cognition and socially constructed institutional practices and rule structures. They determine the rules of the game for policy makers, managers and social workers (McDonald, 2006). Changes in institutional logics in a field over time require that managers conform, and social workers, as actors in the institutional field, also change. The research builds on the work of others who have considered how various institutional logics have impacted on the way in which social work is performed. The logic of risk management and audit has replaced more relational practice, managerial strategies compete with client-centred care, while the informational dimension of practice has replaced the social.

The study used a narrative approach, which is currently under-utilised in social work research. It seeks to explore influences upon, and continuities and discontinuities within those narratives, as well as turning points or pivotal moments. The originality of the study comes from its use of a narrative approach within a theoretical framework of institutional logics. Emerging themes and methodological considerations will be explored as well as the implications for future research and practice.

### **Paper 3 Fateful moments, reflective practice and narrative identity work**

Professional education has been identified as a key factor in the development of professional identity. In his exploration of identity formation Giddens (1991) identified the importance of fateful moments, which he defines as when 'business as usual' is disrupted and new perspectives require to be adopted, as being important points in identity formation. This aligns closely with Applebaum's notion of the 'stop' This paper will use that concept as part of a theoretical framework that will also draw on the notion of narrative identity work (Ibarra and Barbulescu,



2010) narrative identity transformation doesn't just happen but needs to be actively worked at.

The basis of this paper is an empirical study of reflective accounts written by social work students at the end of their professional education. The advantage of the approach was this was data produced for another purpose and the researcher influence was reduced. Ethical approval was granted by the university involved. The study undertook a thematic analysis of those accounts and a number of key findings emerged. Firstly, students were very sensitised to their professional identity as transitory and in a state of becoming. Secondly, students found themselves occupying a liminal space between power and powerlessness with all the uncertainty that that brings and they were sensitised to the apparent paradox they presented. Finally, students very clearly were able to identify and articulate fateful moments in their careers, which sometimes related to being involved in key decision points in the lives of people, often at the point of exercising professional authority, but on other occasion came from 'lightbulb moments'.

It will be argued that, rather than professional identity being a by-product of professional socialisation, it is something that requires to be specifically addressed as part of the education process.



## SYMPOSIUM 5

### Paper 293 | Fighting men`s violence against woman in the age of evidence and NPM

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: 6.7 - Nordkraft

*Verner Denvall (Linnéuniversitetet, Sweden)*

*Mikael Skillmark (Linneaus Univeristy, Sweden)*

*Lotta Agevall Gross (Linneaus Univeristy, Sweden)*

**Keywords:** domestic violence, men`s violence against women, evidence-based practice, performance measurement, assessment

Men's violence against women is a widespread global problem and a serious threat to women's health. Comprehensive efforts in social work are needed to overcome the problem and to contribute to a more equal society free from violence and oppression against women.

This symposium will report from a study in Sweden that studies mechanisms that influence the design of interventions contesting domestic violence in two cities. Social work in these cities have implemented and organized different interventions and risk assessment instruments. The research examine the prevalence of interventions and how different forms of governance – non-profit organizations, government agencies and local social work – are affecting interventions in a time of evidence and NPM. According to the project's theoretical basis knowledge represents diverse interests and positions of power. We test the hypothesis that there exist differences between stakeholders and professionals regarding the problem definitions, suggested interventions, and what are considered a successful outcome.

The fighting of men`s violence against women is affected by the creation of evidence-based practice with the application of assessment instruments and treatment methods. In order to support national governance, coordination and efficiency, the quality of the work performed is to be strengthened through extensive monitoring. However, domestic violence is characterized by a high degree of complexity consisting of stakeholders with partly interconnected and partially contradictory understandings of problems and solutions, also consisting of limited evidence for the interventions to perform. Domestic violence is strongly politically and ideologically influenced. Abused women are a heterogeneous group with varying necessities, and may be assumed to be in need of



different types of interventions, support and protection. All this is creating a mess of opinions, blurring the view of agencies responsible for implementing adequate solutions. The two organizations were selected strategically as critical cases. They have been, and still are, driving forces and in the front of practice development in Sweden and thus function as catalysts for mimetic isomorphism in their field. The social work in those two social service organizations have been followed during a two-year period during which hundreds of internal documents have been collected and analyzed together with interviews with politicians, managers and professional frontline staff locally and nationally. Also observations of meetings between social-workers have been conducted together with a survey.

The symposium will provide three presentations that will answer the following questions:

1. Given the fact that the organizations face many different views and ideologies; how does this affect the ways the problem of domestic violence is represented?
2. In what way affects ideas from performance measurement and new public management the interventions?
3. In what way are the social services organizing towards an evidence-based practice in this field?

Discussions with the audience will be appreciated. Three written papers will be provided. The symposium should well address the theme of the conference and should be highly interesting for researchers within the areas of domestic violence, evidence-based practice and new public management.

### **Paper 1: Interpersonal violence-From policy to local practice; Lotta Agevall Gross**

During the last ten years the Government in Sweden has distributed economic funding to municipalities and nonprofit organizations, in order to develop the work with domestic violence. Responsibility has been delegated to stakeholders at all levels, in order to better meet the needs from abused women and children. This resulting in an increased professionalization process in the social services and many municipalities organized specialized units in order to support the women. At the same time the social services met the logics from New Public Management. New administrative systems were established, and systems of documentation, monitoring and control were incorporated into the social service activities. In this part of the symposium the implications of these two parallel processes for the political governance in this field will be discussed. Carol Lee Bacchis, "what's the problem-





approach” will be applied in order to identify and analyze how interpersonal violence is articulated. The questions that are being answered using this analytic frame are

1. What is the problem of (domestic violence.) represented to be?
2. What effects are produced by this representation?
3. What kind of solutions are presented ?

During the symposium those questions are in use in order to study how the social services at the local level are relating to these representations, when they are developing their work.

And

What are the implications of implementing a feminist practice into a social context formed by the logics of new public management.

### **Paper 2: Open Comparisons in social work; Verner Denvall**

Since the 90s the ideas of new public management have caused extensive changes in the public sector, such as rationalization and increasing demands for documentation and review. The changes have also affected social work that increasingly has been subject to various forms of regulation, such as requirements for monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance. This paper aims to examine one of the monitoring systems applied: the instrument open comparisons. This instrument consists of a collection of indicators developed in collaboration between state agencies, the voluntary sector and an association of municipalities. They were first used in 2006 in health care, and subsequently in social work. Gradually expanded, around 350 indicators now cover all areas within social work, for example addiction care, elderly care, homelessness and social work with crime victims. Swedish municipal social services annually respond to surveys with questions about their activities. The data are then compiled and officially published online by a national agency. Analytically the study has been inspired by programme theory, which made it possible to concentrate on clarifying the operational idea in which open comparisons are based and catching the consequences.

The study shows that open comparisons have been implemented without support from existing research. However, strong normative support for open comparisons exists within governmental agencies. They provide national agencies with local data. This data is of poor quality due to severe validity-problems. Counter to present visions, the performance is not affected to any significant extent. In contrast, a comprehensive administration is created, where employees of municipalities



are supposed to collect data, register information and analyze the results generated by the open comparisons. Open Comparisons represents a trend in social work demonstrating global influence of performance measurement in social work. It is suggested that this development changes routines and provides new kinds of standardized information affecting the organization of social work.

### **Paper 3: Negotiating in risk assessment practices; Mikael Skillmark**

As the struggle to acknowledge men's violence against women on the political agenda as a social problem and as the social services responsibility for this group has been amplified, social work practices are developed to meet those expectations. However, we know little about those practices. In this presentation, a specific, but of utmost importance, part of the social services work in this area is discussed, namely: how risk assessment strategies concerning men's violence against women are developed, organized and executed in social work. Standardized risk assessment tools are now suggested by national agencies to be in use as a way to prevent future violence and homicide. Social workers are suggested to conduct risk assessments when meeting woman who may be in the need of protection from domestic violence. The assessments made concerns client's life and liberty. How this work is executed at the frontline of practice will be presented.

A case study methodology was used during the research. Findings draw on qualitative data from interviews with social workers before they executed an assessment and afterwards. Observations were also made of their discussions. Data include various types of documents (formal routines, applications for government funding, activity reports, client journals, risk assessments etc.). As recommendations about how to work with risk assessments were slim in the development phase, each organization now has its own story of how risk assessment practices are organized. Today, different models are executed (actuarial decision making and structured professional judgment) and to various degrees. This presentation will focus how assessments are implemented in client cases and how social workers negotiate when their professional knowledge interferes with different and sometimes conflicting sources of knowledge from the assessment tools.



## SYMPOSIUM 6

### 353 | Social Work, Decision-making and Complexity

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: 6.8 - Nordkraft

*Bente Heggem Kojan, (NTNU, Norway)*

*Nicole Hennem, (Oslo and Akerhus University College of Applied Science, Norway)*

*Halvor Fauske, (Lillehammer University College, Norway)*

*Karen J Skaale Havnen (Uni Research, Norway)*

*Øivin Christiansen (Uni Research, Norway)*

**Keywords:** social work, child welfare, child protection, decision-making, complexity, ethics, implications for practice and research

Complexity has always been a part of social work practices, and is increasingly used to characterize social problems. Complex interventions are also emphasized as a necessity when meeting marginalized peoples' needs. In the symposium we describe various forms of complexity and analyse how they are all interwoven in social work decisions and outcomes, using Child Welfare Services (CWS) as a point of departure. We explore how scientific, - normative, - human and system complexity affect social workers decision-making in Child Welfare Services. These are related and sometimes conflicting complexities in social work practice. There is strong evidence that system differences and context influence the decisions and the way decisions are being made. Additionally, scientific knowledge is an important ideal in decision-making, but also characteristics of the people and their affiliation to various norm cultures are influential.

Several stakeholders are involved in Child Welfare decisions and sometimes they have conflicting interests. Discussion and knowledge about conflicting and complex perspectives make social workers, service users and other stakeholders better equipped to make fair and good decisions.

The objectives of the symposium:

- Present and describe challenging complexities associated with decision-making in social work and child welfare services
- Go into the relationship between principles and theory on the one hand, and realities in decision-making on the other hand



- Suggest strategies to ethical decision-making in CWS practice and to highlight some implications for social work research.

In the symposium there will be a short and joint presentation with emphasize on the decision-making landscape in social work, using Child Welfare as an example. This introduction is followed by four presentations. In sum, the papers illustrate that not only can the families' problems be described as complex and wicked, these descriptions might apply for theories, research, practices, systems and policies too. Hennem's paper analyses conflicting scientific and theoretical perspectives in social workers decision-making. She uses a single mother's meeting with the CWS as an example. Fauske's presentation points at although there is a shared belief in research and policies that cooperation is necessary to deal with the problems people face, cooperation is an enduring challenge between professionals from different welfare and health agencies. In the third paper, Havnen discusses whether a deliberative practice such as Family Group Conferencing is one of the answers to deal with complexity in decision-making. In the closing section, Christiansen and Kojan ask if the set boundaries for CWS decisions need to be reconsidered. Additionally, challenges and possibilities when applying a complexity perspective in practice and research is discussed in the end of the fourth paper.

### **Paper 1 (Nicole Hennem)**

#### **Are social work theories concealing social problems rather than solving them?**

The paper aims to discuss the use of theories in a political climate emphasizing more use of scientific knowledge when dealing with social problems. By theories, I mean explanatory models about phenomena supported by a body of evidence and constructed through a process believed to make them reliable and valid. These models are useful tools to organize knowledge, to interpret reality and to intervene. Moreover, the paper asks if the use of some theories conceals and distorts social problems rather than solving them. It concludes that the use of scientific knowledge by child protection agencies demands ethical sensitivity and responsibility in light of their limitations and consequences for children and their parents. In order to illustrate these issues, a case study shows the pitfalls when scientific theories are used uncritically as undisputable truths. In the case examined, a key concern is with attachment theories involving parent-child relationships and the issues they raise, particularly about the need for early intervention.

The paper illustrates some fundamental issues appearing in it.



Central among these are how the specificity of scientific theory easily can narrow perception and what may happen when everyday life is viewed through scientifically-defined lenses. The case exemplifies how theories cast light on some phenomenon while leaving others in darkness. This has consequences for the mother and the child. The case reveals the need for ethical responsibilities related to the production and use of knowledge.

### **Paper 2 (Halvor Fauske)**

#### **Cooperative working a necessity – so what then makes it so hard?**

The aim of this paper is to discuss why interprofessional working seems to stumble across obstacles when it comes to cooperation between different professions in the child welfare services. It is widely accepted that there is a need for cooperation between professions in many cases, but in spite of a general agreement, there seems to be hard to work out how to cooperate successfully in concrete cases. Cooperation between different professions and different welfare services has been on the political agenda for a long time. The development of the welfare state and the increasing specialization of services and professionalization, led to a concern about fragmentation of services. And fragmentation created a need for more interprofessional cooperation and coordination of services. Moving beyond statements as better coordinated services and more cooperation, has proved problematic.

The paper argues that the long history of little and problematic cooperation and coordination, indicate that the character of the problems themselves might have been underestimated. Cooperative working is especially needed in so-called complex cases, but at the same time there is lacking an understanding of 'what makes a case complex? The paper illustrates complex cases with examples from an empirical study of child protection cases and argues that using complexity theory may lead to a better understanding of interprofessional working in such cases.

### **Paper 3 (Karen J.S. Havnen)**

#### **The potential and challenges of Family Group Conferencing as decision making model in social work**

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is a model for decision making that may be used in the child welfare services. In contrast to traditionally decision making models, FGC ensures the involvement of children, family members and the extended family network in the decision making processes. The involvement of the larger family as a group, give the family the





opportunity to find their own solutions to their problems, and furthermore to take responsibility for the implementation of their solutions. The method reflects a strong belief in the family's resources and their abilities to protect their children to ensure health, welfare, well-being and development both at short and long term. It is also expected that to transfer responsibility and empower the family will encourage a collaborative atmosphere between the family and the child welfare services, especially in the serious cases. For the social worker, FGC leads to a change of role, from that of an expert towards a facilitator of change in the empowered family.

FGC emerged in New Zealand in the late 1980s, and has since spread and evolved across countries and global regions. In spite of great enthusiasm in establishing FGC and the positive experiences on behalf of the participants, the method is still marginal in use in most countries. Why is this so? Based on a recent review on the experiences and effects of the FGC, the potential of the method as well as the challenges are discussed.

**Paper 4 (Øivin Christiansen and Bente Heggem Kojan)**  
**The boundaries of social worker's decisions in Child Welfare**

The paper aims to discuss the distinction between "children in need" and "children at risk" orientations in Child Welfare Services illustrated with policy and practice in Norway. The orientation and the priorities in child welfare policy and practice vary among different countries. The variation concerns general assumptions about how family and public responsibilities for children are balanced. Further, differences are observed related to the relative assessment between the provision of services to vulnerable families and children in need on the one hand and the "rescuing" of children at risk on the other hand. Child Welfare Services (CWS) in Norway along with the other Nordic countries are characterized as 'family service systems' with a low threshold for access to family support.

The "Children in need" orientation in Norway has resulted in a gradually increase in number of children receiving homebased measures from CWS over the last 25 years. Recently, voices are raised expressing a concern that the wide-ranging family service approach has come at the expense of interventions for the most vulnerable children. The evidence for this assumption is however weak. Despite of considerable public investment, until recently little Norwegian research has focused on CWS's in-home services. Nevertheless, this paper presents findings





from studies which aimed to fill the gap of knowledge about reasons for offering and receiving such services. Furthermore we discuss the need for more in depth studies as well as comparative research to shed light on how complexity in policy and practice correspond with the needs of children, young people and their families.



## WORKSHOP 2

### 215 | Social Work vs. Social Support Groups

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

Room: 10.14 - Nordkraft

*Joyce Mols (Fontys Research Group of Professional Innovation Social Work, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** social support groups, social workers, rol conflict

The contemporary social policy in the Netherlands requires more participation, social support and informal care by citizens and volunteers. How does the practice of social work relate to the practice of informal care? Which role has a social worker in social support? How can social workers stimulate and support informal care, in particular social supportgroups? What dilemmas do they run into? Which actions should they take and, even more important, which not?

This interactive workshop will give you a glimpse into 'the social supportgroup' as a complementary or alternative form of aid to the professional healthcare system. It contains a theoretical and empirical approach to this phenomenon, that we'd like to call 'Social and Healing Participation'.

Results of (international) research on self-help and social supportgroups shows positive effects on physical and mental health. In recent years it has attracted political attention and it is posed on several political agendas. Governmental and municipal grants provides local social support-initiatives in their recognition and 'raison d'être'.

This workshop is actually NOT about the effects and benefits of social support; to this end we invite you to take a look at the several publications about this subject. Participation in a social supportgroup is proposed as an easily-accessible form of mutual-aid, as you share your problems with like-minded people rather than with a professional. The main purpose of this workshop is to let you experience that participation in a social supportgroup is not so obvious as it might initially seem.

During the period 2012-2015 we did a practical qualitative research on the stimulating and obstructing factors for participation in supportgroups, particularly by non-Western citizens, because they were represented relatively low in these groups. We also work on a project (2015-2016) about the role that social workers (want, can and may) play in the practice of social support, based on the experiences of and dialogues between citizens, volunteers, experience-experts, social



workers and managers.

At first, we approach this issue throughout the perspective of citizens by showing you the main results of our research, in which we have encountered a few dilemmas. Secondly, we will focus on the role of professionals in social supportgroups, because they are an important part of the interplay of actors in the practice of social support.

I am especially interested and curious about your own experiences regarding social supportgroups and the way social workers are involved with them.

Joyce Mols (the Netherlands, 1977) works on qualitative practice research among social supportgroups, experiential expertise and the role-shaping of social workers in these contexts, at the Research Group of Professional Innovation Social Work (Lectoraat Beroepsinnovatie Social Work Noord-Brabant). She is also a lecturer at the Bachelor of Social Work Fontys Eindhoven and has worked for several years as a social worker in the mental health care for psychiatry and addiction treatment.



## PARALLEL SESSIONS 3

THURSDAY | APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>

TIME | 2:45 P.M. TO 4:15 P.M.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 3.1

### **Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users**

#### *Partnerships and participatory research*

(Chair: Britta Nørgaard)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: Body and Mind - Nordkraft

### **335 | Participatory research and relational social work: an intersection of knowledge**

*Francesca Corradini, (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)*

*Giulia Avancini (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)*

*Chiara Panciroli (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)*

**Keywords:** participatory research, relational social work, service users involvement

#### **Background and purpose**

The model of Participatory Research (PR) has been used for a long time in the field of social research, particularly in social work research (Fleming et al., 2014). In this context, its use is growing, and it is suitable for investigating conditions such as vulnerability and social fragility (Aldridge, 2015). Within the Research Centre on Relational Social Work of the Milan Catholic University, researchers are experimenting with participatory research methods in different fields (poverty and social exclusion, elderly people suffering from dementia, child protection and foster care). In those researches, the participatory methodology was used in the light of a social work approach called Relational Social Work (RSW) (Folgheraiter, 1998; 2003; 2007). More specifically, it was possible to observe that the principles inspiring RSW are able to provide PR with a clear theoretical framework, and that the practice suggestions from RSW can offer useful guidelines also for the PR context. The presentation will highlight the contribution that Relational Social Work can offer to participatory research in order to better explain the basic research steps, the participants' role, and how some critical issues can be addressed.

#### **Main contents**

The guiding value principles of RSW are the same that can be found in PR: promotion of empowerment, enhancement of experiential skills of citizens and service users, reciprocity in



the process construction and recognition of equality between practitioners and service-users, and promotion of an anti-oppressive work perspective.

Starting from these inspiring principles, RSW can contribute significantly to PR in defining the role of researcher, as a facilitator of relationships and joint work within the group, and the role of co-researchers, whom can be seen as a coping network moving collaboratively towards shared purposes. During the various stages of a research, meaningful insights from RSW can be derived. In particular, RSW helps to set the initial phase, that is a crucial one, because all participants are required to jointly define the purpose and to recognize themselves as members of a group (or network) in which each member provides a unique and priceless contribution, regardless of him/her professional role. Starting from this setting it is possible to promote a real, non-rhetorical participation across all research phases, just as across all social work intervention phases.

RSW offers also suggestions to constructively address some critical issues and ethical questions related to PR. It helps to manage the gap between the freedom of expression of co-researchers and the need to ensure the research's scientific value. Therefore, it helps to go beyond the imbalance of power between professional researchers and "experts by experience".

### **Connection with conference aims and themes –Implication for practice**

This presentation addresses the conference theme about connections between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users, because it highlights how participatory approach can be used both in research and in social policy and practice. The service users involvement in social work research and practice is a theme to be further explored.

### **89 | A "Push Me Pull You" partnership of social work research and practice: Are we there? Examples from social work in health care**

*Varda Soskolne (Bar Ilan University, Israel)*

**Keywords:** evidence-based-practice, practice-based-research, research-practice partnership, health social work, continuity of care, family caregiving



**Background:**

The pressure in the last decades on evidence-based-practice (EBP) has expressed itself as a research-to-practice direction of knowledge transfer in social work. In social work in health care this has been particularly strong, heavily influenced by the demands in medicine for EBP and translational research. The professional knowledge of practitioners, once being the basis for health social work interventions was overshadowed by the push towards EBP. In recent years, arguing that practitioners have restricted access to research findings relevant to social work practice, but that the real-world practitioner experiences should inform theory, interventions and policy making via practice-based-research (PBR).

**Main points:**

The presentation will use two examples from health social work in Israel to demonstrate the process of developing an academic practice partnership of both evidence-based practice (the push, interventions based on research findings) and practice-based evidence (the pull, the practitioners' experience to inform intervention and policy). Example 1 - Continuity of care: Research findings showed the extent of post hospitalization unmet needs and difficulties in obtaining key services, confirming social work practitioners' description of their experiences. Voices of practitioners also highlighted the ambiguity of social worker's role in hospital discharge planning, leading to a formal regulation issued by the Ministry of Health and local formation of hospital-community service coordination. Findings of further studies, conducted by an equal collaboration of practitioners and researchers will be presented. Example 2 - Family caregivers to frail or ill elderly: Research findings on psychological distress of caregivers were used to guide social work support group programs. Yet, their efficacy has not been assessed and only recently social work practitioners look also at research findings on the impact of caregiving on the family caregiver's physical health, with its implications to continuity of family caregiving and resultant nursing care hospitalizations. A better "Push Me Pull You" partnership is still required.

**Conference theme:**

The presentation relates to the sub-theme of "Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users" by addressing connections, yet with controversies or "gaps", between social work researchers and practitioners.

**Conclusion:**

EBP and PBR partnership contributes to social work professionalization and affects policy. Yet, it requires efforts by both sides to work as one body, they need to reach out, respect and accept that working together for further research would yield better social work interventions and have a greater impact on policy. Although we are on the right path, the road ahead is still long for many issues.

**131 | Multitude perspectives in action research: The use of co-researchers**

*Ellen Syrstad (VID University college, Norway)*

**Keywords:** professional practice, action research, collaborative group, multistage focus group

**Background:**

In Norway, the Child Welfare Services are responsible to working and collaborating with children and their parents after custody loss. Child Welfare Services often struggle to manage this double-position. Therefore, the free of charge governmental Family Counseling Services are now supposed to offer these parents professional services. The aim of this research project is to focus on how the concept of professional practice within Family Counseling Services are able to meet the needs of the parents. Professional practice refers to a kind of profession that possess a particular knowledge, and practice services on the background of that knowledge. The professional practice is complex. Since knowledge is exclusive for the particular profession, that means there is power aspects related to this. Thus, action research has an opportunity to influence the practice field during the research process. Hence, there is useful to collaborate with co-researchers in this project, to get local experience and to raise more perspectives on both the research process and the use of the outcomes within the field. In this presentation, I will present the tentative findings of the use of co-researchers in an action research project.

**Methods:**

This research is based in an action research methodology, where I bring in a collaborative group as co-researchers during the entire research process. The group consist of two parents who have lost custody of their children, two therapists who have worked with these parents, two Child Welfare workers and two researchers (my supervisors). This group's role in the research is to contribute during the whole research process from discussing the research questions and the interview guide,



participate in the interviews and the analysis, experiment with new knowledge, and reflect upon this. For data collection, I used multistage focus group discussions, where the same focus group explores themes through several meetings. For this research, I have established two homogenous focus groups; one with parents and one with therapists working in the Family Counseling service. Each group will meet three times in total. In addition, in-depth individual interviews with the same participants will be used. I will use a theme-centered analysis to identify central topics in the data material. This will be done together with my co-researchers, and the themes will also be brought back to the focus groups for additional reflections.

**Results:**

- Local experience was useful to have in mind before entering into the focus group, especially the focus group with the parents
- The questions in the interview guide were adapted to local conditions, and multiple perspectives were visible in the analysis
- Co-researchers were assets to the focus. Their double-role as parents and co-researchers helped me to hold track of the themes. Co-researchers were especially helpful when I became emotionally touched by some of the stories, and they facilitated group dynamics by telling their own stories
- A common engagement in the group gave energy to the research process
- Participants used experiences from the focus groups in the practice field, and in their lives

**Conclusion:**

There is substantial gain related to bringing in different perspectives from different user and professional perspectives to the research project. The participants in the collaborative group have given me a valuable local experience that will strengthen my findings. Both focus groups gave feedback of valuable knowledge to use in own processes and in their professional practice.

### 340 | Co-producing Community with Disabled Citizens as Researchers-the challenges and potential for successful collaboration

*Sue Hollinrake, (University of Suffolk, United Kingdom)*  
*Sara Spencer (Suffolk County Council, United Kingdom)*



*Geof Dix (Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** co-production, disability, participatory research, challenges, potentials

Co-producing Community with Disabled Citizens as Researchers-the challenges and potential for successful collaboration.

This paper will report on the development of a collaborative research project being undertaken in an English county between a service user-led Coalition of Disabled People, the local authority and the local university to map the assets and resources for/of disabled people in their local community as well as needs and gaps, in order to inform the Coalition's strategic planning and raise awareness of disability issues across the county. The research project has been set up co-productively with two experienced researchers (from the university and from the local authority), working alongside disability experts from the Coalition.

The initial pilot and early expansion of this 'listening project' will be considered, examining the utilisation of an inclusive approach to the differing roles and competences within the project co-ordinating team; how we worked together with the required knowledge exchange and power-sharing to recruit researchers with expertise from their experience of disability to ensure they had relevant qualities, knowledge and skills that could be developed, increasing their confidence, knowledge and skills set as Expert Researchers. The research methodology was developed collaboratively, and a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews was utilised with the use of cameras by the co-researchers, to photograph their experiences to form the basis of the qualitative interviews, from which a detailed analysis was then undertaken by the expert researchers and project co-ordinators, and used in a photographic exhibition to disseminate findings which can be repeatedly shown at different venues to various audiences to ensure widespread dissemination.

Drawing on relevant literature about participatory and emancipatory research, ownership of knowledge and collective action for change, the paper will examine how different kinds of expertise have been harnessed to develop this project collaboratively, to inform the research strategy; confirm shared values; ensure accessibility; develop training for people with lived experiences of disability to become Expert Researchers;



and support them to gather the views and experiences of other disabled people which may be presented differently because they are gathered by Expert Researchers who will understand what living with a disability means and will therefore be better placed to capture their views and experiences to develop a collective voice to promote change. The implications of the approach to dissemination (a public exhibition, as well as a report) for the wide range of stakeholders – commissioners, practitioners, service users, and local policy makers, including from other county council departments, will be examined in terms of the conflicts, barriers and possibilities.

## 19 | Research with Refugees - Effecting Change through Partnership and Peer Research

*Maeve Foreman (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland)*

*Muireann Ní Raghallaigh (University College Dublin, Ireland)*

**Keywords:** asylum seekers, refugees, effecting change, peer research

### **Background and Purpose**

In Ireland, asylum seekers live in institutional settings known as 'Direct Provision' where they are not allowed to work or study while waiting, in some cases for years, for their asylum claims to be processed. Drawing on research with former asylum seekers, this presentation will focus on the challenges and opportunities of working in partnership with advocacy/activist organisations and of adopting a peer researcher methodology within social work research. The purpose of the study was to examine the challenges experienced once people receive refugee status or leave to remain and begin the transition from Direct Provision into local communities.

### **Methods**

A partnership approach was adopted from the outset whereby the researchers worked alongside the Irish Refugee Council to identify a research topic of relevance to their work and to policy. Peer researchers were trained in qualitative research methods and worked alongside the researchers throughout the research process from research design to implementation of findings. In total 22 former asylum seekers and six stakeholders participated in qualitative interviews. The data was analysed thematically.



## **Results**

Findings from the study suggest that the challenges faced by those transitioning from the asylum system into the community were compounded by 'wasted years' spent in Direct Provision. Former asylum seekers encountered a multitude of challenges both in attempting to move out of Direct Provision and in attempting to integrate into wider communities. The challenges included lack of information, financial problems and difficulties securing housing, as well as problems accessing employment and education and problems with family reunification. The findings suggest the need for asylum seekers to have opportunities to integrate throughout their time in Direct Provision and to have support available to them during their transition out of Direct Provision and beyond.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

While some of the findings will be presented, the main focus of this presentation will be on the challenges and benefits of working with peer researchers and advocacy/activist organisations in effecting positive change in society. The presentation will elaborate on the research process, and discuss ways the researchers have engaged with policy makers to progress the recommendations of the research.





## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 3.2

### Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users

(Chair: Ian Shaw)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 6.1 - Nordkraft

#### 325 | Negotiating Knowledge in Social Work Research

*Håvard Aaslund (Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway)*

**Keywords:** marginalization, drugs, action research, ethnography, practice research, community work

#### **Background and purpose**

This paper aims to reflect upon demarking lines between practice research, participatory action research and ethnography. Based on an ongoing study of a resident managed housing facility, the paper explores how different methodological approaches can foster different outcomes in relation to knowledge claim and project feedback, especially when controversies and diversities occur.

Taking a position within the 'linguistic turn' of social sciences, this paper addresses methodology as a linguistic construction of a study. The construction can be seen as more or less useful to illuminate possibilities and challenges within the study, rather than as an accurate description of the methodology.

The study object used as case in this paper, is a service user lead temporary housing project for people with former substance dependency. The project includes a volunteer center, a dormitory and social entrepreneurship projects providing work and activity. A focus is to change the language and public perception of people with a difficult relationship to substances. The case will be used to highlight challenges relevant to discuss the three different methodological approaches.

#### **Main points**

The research design is developed in collaboration with professionals, user representatives and other stakeholders (mode 2 research). Data is gathered by participatory observation, interviews and document assessment over a period



of two years, covering project initiative, planning, and implementation. Participatory action research, practice research and ethnography have all influenced the research design. Although, in times of controversies and diversities the methodologies offers both complementary and differing perspectives concerning the role of the researcher - especially when it comes to epistemology (negotiating the 'truth') and feedback.

All three approaches accentuate the positioned aspect of knowledge, and to a certain extent the ambition to produce something alternative to this. In times of controversies, the action research approach seems more apt to focus on suppressed voices, while practice research and ethnography can be read as more harmony-oriented, or at least obliged to present the multitude of views and controversies.

Correspondingly, the feedback or mode 2 learning output is both complementary and differentiating, seen from the three different perspectives. Practice research highlights the learning process and the relevance of the outcome, while action research puts a higher emphasis on the concurrent feedback and loyalty to 'the action'. An ethnographic approach opens for a variety of feedback related to the more genuine understanding of participation.

### **Relevance for conference themes**

This paper addresses controversies and diversities between researchers, practitioners and service users in a concrete case as seen through different methodological approaches regarding both outcomes and process.

### **Conclusions and implications**

The construction of a research project is both a social and linguistic construction. No methodological approach is identical to the social reality, but choices in constructing feedback and epistemology have large impact on practice, outcomes and power relations between different stakeholders. There is no guidelines to follow in addressing these controversies. Rather, methodological approaches must be chosen pragmatically, with both ethical and epistemological considerations.



## 370 | "Truth Plus Publicity": Paul U. Kellogg and Hybrid Practice, 1902-1937

*Caroline A. Lanza (University of Washington, USA)*

**Keywords:** social work history, multimedia social work research, Paul U. Kellogg, social survey movement, Pittsburgh survey, the survey, survey graphic, public scholarship, community-engaged research

"Truth Plus Publicity": Paul U. Kellogg and Hybrid Practice, 1902-1937

Intended as a historical starting point for a critically informed assessment of the state of multimedia social work research, advocacy and practice, this dissertation explores the methods and practice models envisioned by Progressive Era social work leader and media producer, journalist, and editor Paul U. Kellogg (1879-1958). Kellogg harnessed the most advanced visual technologies of his time in service of progressive social change. In social surveys such as *The Pittsburgh Survey*, and in his editorship of two widely read periodical publications, *The Survey* and *Survey Graphic*, Kellogg brilliantly combined documentary photography, art, maps, data, and textual narratives with the goal of making unavoidably visible the inequities of industrializing America.

Key aspects of Kellogg's contributions—particularly his vision for a social work practice deploying media production in service of community-based research, education, and political advocacy—have largely been forgotten, particularly in social work. Responding to this historical amnesia, this dissertation aims to document and analyze, in their innovation and limitations, the projects Kellogg undertook during his career. I aim to enrich the field's historical memory of Kellogg's variation on the social survey method, which sought to assess conditions of health, environmental safety, and labor conditions in a given geographic area as carried out during the *Pittsburgh Survey*, 1907-1908.

Representing a moment in which the social work profession was focused on environmental intervention in low-income urban communities, Kellogg's variation on the social survey method emphasized the significance of multidisciplinary teams and partnerships with local community organizations. In light of a recent re-commitment by social welfare researchers to environmental, place-based practice (Kemp & Palinkas, 2015),



it feels especially timely to explicate Kellogg's social survey methodology.

Kellogg's approach was distinctly journalistic in that it demanded that social workers should be producing media in order to disseminate findings not only to community stakeholders but also to the larger voting public in order to influence social action and policy-making. As social work research methods employing media approaches ranging from photography and video to participatory mapping rise in popularity, there seems to be little awareness of this prior rich period of media-based practice and research during the Progressive era. Revisiting Kellogg's methodology counters a presentism in current scholarship regarding media-based methods.

Several scholars of social research have measured the success of the Pittsburgh Survey by contemporary standards of empirical, quantitative research and found it lacking (Bulmer, 1991, 1996; Turner, 1996; Zimbalist, 1977). I believe I bring a fresh perspective by considering it as a genealogical forebear of community-engaged approaches operating in epistemological frameworks that appreciate the significance of both emic and etic knowledges of place and community.

Paul U. Kellogg's publications positioned social workers as public pundits in regards to interventions in poverty and social welfare policy (Chambon, 2012), providing them with a public voice that the field has largely lacked since his journals closed down in 1949 and 1952. By exploring Kellogg's publishing collective, Survey Associates, and their publications, *The Survey* and *Survey Graphic*, I hope to raise questions regarding the loss of a media platform upon which social work practitioners and scholars can engage each other and the public regarding a variety of issues and to consider what the legacy of what this period means for current practitioners of public scholarship in social work.



### 317 | Homeless People and Adult Social Care in England: Exploring the Challenges through Practitioner-Researcher Partnership

*Karl Mason, (Department of Social Work, Royal Holloway, University of London, United Kingdom)*

*Martin Whiteford (Health Services Research, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom)*

*Michelle Cornes (Social Care Workforce Research Unit, Kings College London, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** homelessness, adult social care, eligibility, practice-informed research

Homeless people's access to adult social care services remains a significant challenge in the UK and internationally. Viewed from the perspective of social care in England, the 'intractability' of this issue has recently been brought into sharp focus through the winding down of 'Supporting People' funding and the overhaul of England's community care legislation, including eligibility rules, through the Care Act, 2014.

In this paper, we will provide an illustrative example of academic practitioners working in collaboration with frontline practitioners from both adult social care and housing-related support services to critically and reflexively explore the challenges and opportunities associated with these recent policy changes through the development of a 'community of practice'. Drawing upon these inter-professional discussions, we will outline the helpful links between theory, practice and research in supporting the practitioners with daily challenges and also supporting the academics with developing a practice-informed research bid.

The paper will also pay special attention to the key challenges facing social workers and homelessness practitioners in understanding and navigating the new eligibility regulations per the Care Act. Challenges are shown to include continuing tensions between the homelessness sector and statutory adult social care in terms of referral, maintenance of support, a shared understanding of the complexity of homelessness and the problems raised given the 'atypical' nature of homeless referrals within statutory adult social care. We then focus on a number of strategies and opportunities, which have been developed and shared through the study groups. These include shared practice examples such as the use of 'Care Act compliant' language in referrals or the explicit identification of



self-neglect issues, following the Care Act statutory guidance categorizing this as a safeguarding issue. We argue that social workers in statutory adult social care welcome new ways of working as well as the ability to (re)conceptualize their role following the Care Act's implementation. This leads us to push at ideas about social workers' capacity to use the Care Act to secure new and improved outcomes for homeless people at a time when adult care services and related systems of welfare face deep funding cuts under what has become known as 'austerity'. The implications of this conjunction for frontline practitioners, policy makers and academic practitioners are considered.

We conclude by suggesting that the paper's contribution is found in its attentiveness to the possibilities of understanding the support needs of people affected by homelessness through different forms of partnership and cooperation between academic researchers and social care practitioners.

### 73 | participating on a par in social work

*Katrien Boone (Ghent University, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** poverty, parity of participation, Nancy Fraser, power struggles in social work, social justice

Since the 1990's, a growing emphasis on the participation of people in poverty in social work practices is noticeable, deriving from the belief that it is essential to link theoretical knowledge to their life knowledge to fully grasp the problem of poverty. However, this participatory rhetoric is also criticized, mainly referring to the loss of its political substance by putting an instrumental approach of participation forward.

In our research, it is argued that the framework of Nancy Fraser provides a convincing set of ideas to revisit the social justice aspirations of social work. Her notion of 'parity of participation' is inspirational to conceptualize a role for social work, where people in poverty can participate on a par in the translation and representation of their stories in public debate.

Notwithstanding parity is a conceptual point of departure, this doesn't imply that power struggles vanish in practice. Hence, empirical research on actions of practitioners is relevant in practices that claim to engage in the fight against poverty from such a participatory ideal.





Our research domain is 'Organizations where the Poor Raise their Voice' (Belgium, n=59), whom state that their raison d'être is collaborating with people in poverty to shape practice and to influence policy. An exploratory study consisted of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with practitioners and participants of 37 organizations. Following, participatory observations and interviews with practitioners and participants took place in five organizations.

**Our preliminary findings show that:**

- Parity of participation is not a definite concept, seemingly referring to diverse meanings in practice (having an equal worth, doing the same things, being able to participate in processes...). Nevertheless, practitioners experience a lot of tensions in trying to engage on a par with people in poverty, potentially leading to excluding the less powerful and lapsing into individualistic strategies.
- Intentional steering processes of practitioners are apparent. Potentially contradictory to the idea of parity, is the finding that these processes are almost never brought in conversation and are masked by conveying the idea that participants made decisions or by consciously ignoring that their voice is more decisive in conversations 'on a par'.
- The creation of a low-threshold environment where an ideal exists that everybody is 'allowed' to participate on a par also seems to create unintended processes of steering and blindness for actual power relations that stand in the way of the ideal of parity.
- A difficulty for the research was that practitioners as well as people in poverty showed reluctance in discussing processes of steering or power.

Our research suggests that putting the ideal of parity of participation central in practice might influence practitioners in masking their own actions or make them blind for power-issues. This makes further research in and exchange with practices who find their existence precisely in this participatory ideal relevant, in which researchers need to take the motivations and reservations of all the people involved into account. This abstract contributes to theme 6: Research on different forms of partnerships/cooperation – including power and conflicts in social work.



## 25 | Findings from a social work student survey spotlight a balancing act for students, universities and the discipline

*Susan Gair (James Cook University, Australia)*

**Keywords:** tertiary study success, social work, student poverty, paid work, field placement, balancing realities

It is presumed that social work educators need to help students understand the lived experience of poverty. Yet, a recent collaborative study revealed the significant impact of low levels of income on Australian social work students' lives and study success. In 2015, a sample of 2,320 current students from 29 Australian social work programs completed an online survey. Results revealed students regularly were going without necessities, including food, medications and textbooks, and they identified that juggling insufficient finances and long hours in employment was adversely affecting their study commitment, experience and outcomes.

Qualitative and quantitative data identifies that financial problems became acute during unpaid field placements when most students reduced or forfeited paid work. Yet, tensions between competing realities for students may parallel tensions for key stakeholders in the sector. At the highest policy level evidence points to low and declining financial support for tertiary students that makes life, study and work increasingly difficult to juggle. Yet, for Australian Universities and the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) other competing tensions exist. For universities, decreased funding has necessitated competitive expansion. This reality may be contributing to field placement saturation in a sector with its own financial constraints. As a result, emerging online technologies that require less face-to-face teaching and learning may be attractive to both universities and struggling students. The AASW has responsibility for accrediting programs and ensuring that graduate outcomes meet field expectations and national and international practice standards. The requirement of 1,000 hours of social work field placement is a tension flashpoint. Finding new collaborative solutions appears to be an imperative. This landmark research has implications for the future of social work education and practice.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 3.3

### **Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users**

*Research on perspectives of children and young people*

(Chair: Suzy Braye)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 6.2 - Nordkraft

### **36 | Growing up with a parent with a severe and enduring mental illness: Living on the edge of multiple services yet belonging to none**

*Kate Blake-Holmes (University of East Anglia, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** growing up with a parent with a mental illness, barriers between services, service users experiences

#### **Background:**

This paper presents a key finding from a PhD research project exploring how adults, who grew up with a parent with a severe and enduring mental illness, make sense of their childhood and family narrative.

Significant numbers of children grow up with a parent with a mental illness and this can impact on their experience of childhood and formation of adult identities. While there is a body of literature that examines the risks and psychiatric outcomes for children growing up in this way, an exploration of how they experience their childhood is only recently emerging.

#### **Method:**

As part of this qualitative piece of research 20 participants were interviewed across the UK. Both narrative and thematic methodology was applied to the analysis. A biographical reflection on childhood was captured by interviewing adults. This study was not restricted to any specific illness as the interest lies in the subjective experience of the individual as opposed to the evaluation of symptomology.

#### **Discussion:**

A key finding of this research was the difficulty social workers face in addressing the complex needs of children who grow up with a parent with a mental illness. Many of the participants in the study spoke of sitting on the edge of services such as education, health and social care and that the distinct



boundaries between services meant that children often fell through the gaps in-between. This is exacerbated by the separation between adult mental health and children's services and the policy drive towards a more patient led experience. Thus placing barriers which prevent social workers from engaging with families in a holistic or systematic manner.

Participants not only felt isolated and vulnerable without access to support for their own needs, but also excluded from the considerations of their parent's needs. Often intrinsically involved in caring for their parents both physically and emotionally, they were rarely included in the information sharing or decision making. It would seem the rationale for this was often grounded within the service focus on patient led care, and the theoretical understanding of child development. Which informed concerns regarding age appropriateness. However these children were regularly performing tasks beyond their developmental years and felt strongly that their own resilience and relationship with their parent could have been enhanced with the development of a better understanding of their experience and acknowledgment of the impact it had upon them. Finally the stigma experienced by families affected by mental illness enforces the hidden nature of children's care roles and experiences further.

This raises implications for social work research in examining the experiences and vulnerabilities of these children, which in turn could inform a more inclusive and collaborative approach between social policy, service provision, professionals, families and crucially the children themselves.

### 455 | Grand Challenges for Social Work: Preventing Behavioral Health Problems and Promoting Healthy Development in Young People

*Jeffrey M. Jenson (University of Denver, USA)*

**Keywords:** no keywords

The Grand Challenges for Social Work is an ambitious initiative developed by the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare that seeks to identify and ameliorate pressing individual and social problems facing all people. Following a public call for proposals, 12 topic areas aimed at promoting individual and family well-being, creating a stronger societal fabric, and building an equitable and just society were selected



as grand challenges by a committee of the Academy. This presentation describes the Grand Challenges for Social Work initiative and outlines work undertaken by leaders of the grand challenge called Ensure Healthy Development for all Youth. A strategy to promote healthy development by preventing behavioral health problems in young people called Unleashing the Power of Prevention is described. Progress made in implementing preventive interventions and advancing policies that promote healthy development is noted. Implications for training social workers for advanced practice and policy in the substantive areas of prevention and healthy youth development are discussed.

## 98 | Early parenthood for young people in and leaving state care: care outcomes and experiences within Wales

*Louise Roberts (Cardiff University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** state care, leaving care, early parenthood

Young people who have lived in foster, residential or kinship care are more likely to become parents at a young age (Biehal and Wade, 1996; Barn and Mantovani, 2006; Dixon, 2008, Courtney et al., 2010). For some care-experienced young people, early parenthood can be a positive experience (Wade 2008, Chase et al. 2009). However young parents in and leaving state care are also likely to face additional challenges. These include higher than average likelihood of being economically marginalised, having fewer family and social supports, and facing emotional and social challenges related to early trauma and/or unstable placement histories. There is also a concern on the part of many looked after young people and care leavers that they may suffer stigma and low expectations about their parenting skills. Research has found that young care-experienced parents can be reluctant to seek support, fearing unhelpful interference and monitoring by social workers (Corylon and Maguire 1999). A mistrust of social workers, a 'presumed incompetency' by professionals and increased monitoring and scrutiny (Chase et al. 2009, Mantovani and Thomas 2014) have also been noted.

Little evidence exists in relation to outcomes for children born to young parents in and leaving state care. The Midwest Study reported mothers who had previously been in State care were six times more likely than their peers to report living apart from at least one biological child by age 25/26 (Courtney et al.



2011). Dworsky (2015) concluded from an examination of social work data in Illinois, in relation to 2487 children born to young people in foster care, that parents who gave birth whilst in the care of the State, were more likely than other adolescent parents to experience child welfare involvement.

This paper provides details of an on-going post-doctoral fellowship study research concerned with young people in and leaving state care, who are parents. The research aims to provide new insights into the extent of the social issue within Wales. The project involves:

- Initial scoping interviews with care-experienced parents.
- A review of international literature in relation to family experiences, support provision and outcomes.
- Data gathering from local authorities in Wales regarding numbers of parents in and leaving state care, support service provision and current child status.
- Longitudinal data collection involving periodic qualitative interviews with looked after children or care leaving parents in their first year of parenthood.

The paper will provide details of the research findings to date. The perspectives of key stakeholders, including young parents, carers and professionals from the statutory and third sector, will be compared and contrasted. Key challenges in attempts to generate positive change, inform policy and social work practice will be explored. These include allegations of mistreatment and mistrust, recognising and responding to risk, as well as service development within the constraints of austerity.

## 280 | (Ir)reconcilable differences? The lived citizenship experiences of young people and the active citizenship debate

*Jitske van der Sanden (Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** young people, lived citizenship, civic empowerment gap, belongingness, having a say

In Western societies, we see a gradual movement from a welfare state to a participation state in which citizens are called upon to become co-producers of welfare, also referred to in the literature as the active citizenship regime (Tonkens, 2012). In response to concerns about a decrease in social





cohesion and a presumed democratic deficit in society, the concept of citizenship and initiatives that stimulate 'good' citizenship have emerged as central themes in political discourse.

Many of these citizenship initiatives focus on young people, because of a presumed decline of political interest and social engagement among this group (Weller, 2007; Biesta Lawy & Kelly, 2009). Also, transitions of young people are often theorized as problematic (De Winter, 2012). Especially vocational education, at the lower end of the educational track in The Netherlands, is associated with various kinds of problems, such as violence and school drop out, which makes vocational students a pivotal target of government initiatives aimed at stimulating 'good' citizenship.

There is however no consensus when it comes to an unambiguous definition of the concept of citizenship. Lister and colleagues (Lister, Smith, Middleton & Cox, 2003; Smith, Lister, Middleton & Cox, 2005) state that the narrow conceptions of citizenship often used in social policy, which portray youngsters as citizens-in-the-making, serve to exclude young people. Also, social policy interventions often neglect young people's subjective realities (Walther, Du Bois-Reymond & Biggart, 2006). Furthermore, Levinson (2010) states that there is a large civic empowerment gap in Western societies: political and civic influence is reserved for white, affluent and well-educated middle-class people. This can have consequences for the way lower-educated youngsters are represented in society, for their social identities and their motivation to participate.

In this research the focus therefore is on the lived citizenship experiences of young people (16-20 years old) in vocational tracks in The Netherlands: what does it mean for them to be a citizen, what's their sense of belongingness in their communities, and do they feel they have a say in society? And how do their experiences relate to the active citizenship debate currently dominant in Western societies?

In this paper presentation, findings of focus group interviews, individual in-depth interviews and photo diaries with 79 young people attending different levels of vocational education in The Netherlands will be presented, and implications of the results for professionals (e.g. teachers, social workers, youth workers) and policymakers will be discussed.



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## 252 | Where the need is greatest: Working conditions for social workers in low-income and other areas, 2003 and 2014

*Pia Tham (University of Gävle, Sweden)*

**Keywords:** working conditions, low-income areas, social workers, child welfare, follow-up study, questionnaire

This study is the third in a series of studies comparing the development of the working conditions of child welfare social workers in Sweden during the last decade. The same



questionnaire was distributed in 2014 (n= 349) to the social workers handling investigations of children and youth who were working with the same types of tasks in the districts previously investigated in 2003 (n=309). The questionnaire (QPS Nordic) contained questions about their job content, role conflicts, demands, organisational climate, job satisfaction and intention to leave the workplace or change profession. The aim of the present study was to analyse this development in relation to the low-income, middle-income and high-income districts where the social workers were employed. The results reveal two different patterns. The first concerns the social workers' perception of their work tasks where the situation seems to have deteriorated in all three income areas but more so in the low income areas. Furthermore, the social workers' intention to leave the workplace and health problems had increased overall, but were more pronounced in the low income areas. The second pattern concerns the differences in the social workers' perception of their workplace in terms of support, leadership and organisational climate. In the low-income areas the social workers today are significantly less satisfied with how their organisations function than their colleagues were in 2003, whereas the social workers in the other areas today seem significantly more satisfied than in 2003. The consequences of these changes and their probable background are discussed.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 3.4

### **Theme 3: Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research**

*Potentials and barriers in professional social work with adults*

(Chair: Pernille Wisti)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 6.3 - Nordkraft

#### **349 | The work of getting work - institutional obstacles and service users' problematics in labour activation**

*Helle Cathrine Hansen (Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway)*

**Keywords:** service users perspective, labour activation policy, social work practice, institutional obstacles, institutional ethnography

#### **Background and purpose:**

Since the 1990s European welfare policy has aimed to move unemployed citizens into paid employment by offering comprehensive labour activation measures. There is substantial research exploring front-line workers' role as activation policy implementers. Nevertheless, activation policy goals are in the end realized through the everyday work and efforts of the service users. Therefore, this study explores labour activation implementation from the perspective of the service users, with the aim of understanding how the institutional framing of the Norwegian Qualification Program (QP) influenced the participants' efforts towards labour market inclusion, and how social workers mediated their difficulties.

#### **Methods:**

The study has a qualitative design, and data is based on fieldwork in four Norwegian work and welfare offices, including 20 observations of conversations between QP-participants and social workers and 16 interviews with QP-participants. All together 17 QP-participants and 10 social workers participated in the study.

The study combines a street-level perspective with an institutional ethnographic approach. Both are bottom-up-perspectives and useful to explore how QP-participants' efforts to obtain paid employment is connected to and shaped by the



policy context and its institutional dispositions and practices in this particular activation field. With this analytical framework, it is possible to connect the micro level of individual experience and action to the macro level of institutional frames and structures, i.e. rules and regulations, and policy, in order to understand the outcomes of labour activation policy.

**Results:**

The findings suggest that participants faced a set of interrelated problematics that relate to the institutional framing of the activation program. On the one hand, their problematics relate to lack of being provided with adequate qualification measures and job-search assistance, and on the other hand to their experiences of not being able to comply with the program's requirements. In either case, the social workers had some but limited possibility to mediate the participants' difficulties. Due to local NAV-office policies and institutional discourses, social workers' interpretations of regulations, and municipal economy, the program not only promoted participants' labour market inclusion, but also impeded their work of getting work.

**Implications:**

This has important implications for policymakers as well as for social workers, as the institutional framing of activation programs may represent obstacles for policy outcomes, and lead to prolonged activation trajectories for the participants.

**408 | Research into practice - Can recovery models address racial inequality in mental health services**

*Frank Keating (Royal Holloway University of London, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** recovery, research into practice, black and minority ethnic men

Recovery and models of recovery have recently entered the discourse on mental health to offer a more community focused way of responding to mental illness. There have been longstanding disparities for Black and minority ethnic (BME) people in relation to mental health and service provision in the United Kingdom. This is despite the fact that there have been policy initiatives and service innovations to address racial inequalities in mental health. This paper will explore to what extent recovery and models of recovery can be utilised to



inform social work practice in order to address racial inequalities in mental health. It will specifically draw on findings from a study that explored how BME men construed mental and emotional well-being. A central focus of the paper will be BME men since they seem to be disproportionately represented in mental health statistics on, for example, diagnosis, compulsory treatment, community treatment orders, etc.

In a qualitative study, utilising focus groups (12) as the primary data collection method, to explore BME men's constructions of emotional well-being it emerged that those men who have had extensive contact with mental health services seem to be trapped in what we termed 'a stalled cycle of recovery'. The men talked about lacking hope inspiring relationships with mental health practitioners and how their view of the world has become limited to issues of mere daily living and survival instead of making a broader contribution to their families and society in general. The men talked about how their narratives often were ignored or unheard whilst professionals adopted narrow medicalised views of their situations. There are very obvious messages for social work practice from these findings, but the challenge remains in how to ensure that these messages are translated into practice.

Therefore, drawing on the findings from this study, the paper will:

- a) explore the complexities of doing research with marginalised groups such as men from BME communities;
- b) explore why such powerful messages from research are not taken up by social work practitioners;
- c) examine the challenges and controversies in attempts to ensure that findings from research that focus on marginalised discourses are incorporated into mainstream discourses; and
- d) provide some recommendations or suggestions for how these challenges could be overcome or addressed.

This paper relates to the sub theme in that it will aim to explore how we can utilise the outcomes from social work research to inform and enhance the outcomes of social work practice.





## 220 | Operationalizing the Capability Approach for social work practice and research

*Erik Jansen (HAN University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*  
*Lisbeth Verharen (HAN University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** capability approach, operationalization, positive freedom, evaluation of social practices

The Capability Approach (CA) as developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum is a promising theoretical and political framework for social work research and social work practice. In a symposium during the ECSWR-2016 in Lisbon the potential of the CA for social work was explored identifying several advantages of the CA over traditional functioning-focused approaches to quality of life. The CA offers a perspective on persons in their personal, environmental and social contexts, while acknowledging human diversity and plurality in the lives people have reason to value. Thus, the CA enables a truly integral perspective on what it means to be a human being.

The purpose of the current paper is to operationalize the CA for social work practice and research by (a) distinguishing four topics within capability theory in which limitations in the positive freedom of individuals require the attention of social workers and social work researchers, and (b) providing a practical method for the evaluation of social arrangements through the lens of the CA.

The first of the attentive topics limiting people's positive freedom concerns the conversion factors that influence the degree to which a person is able to convert her realistic options (capabilities) into functionings. Among others, these conversion factors can be personal such as disabilities or special talents, or social such as bonding social capital or institutional structures. The second topic is the clustering of capabilities and/or functionings. These may have corrosive effects e.g. when a deprivation on the capability for social relations leads to disadvantages on capabilities such as education or building up social capital. On the other hand, a well-developed functioning such as enjoying education may be fertile in developing practical reasoning and critical reflection which are conditional to a whole range of other capabilities. Third, social work (research) should be critical with regard to processes of deeply entrenched inequalities based on stigmatization and adaptive preferences, e.g. in the case of people with disabilities who respectively may be engaged by others in a



demeaning way but also tend to regard themselves as less able and therefore less entitled to full participation. The fourth and last topic concerns the need to be aware of tendencies to absolutize dominant social norms thereby decreasing tolerance and denying human diversity, e.g. in the marginalization of minority groups by downplaying their social and cultural norms.

To enable critical analysis of these topics in everyday social practices and research, we present a practical method for public deliberation in which a participatory evaluation of a social arrangement is performed in terms of its indirect versus direct effects and intended versus unintended effects on people's capabilities. An example case of such an evaluation will be presented and it will be shown how this procedure may enable social work (research) to recognize the above-mentioned attentive topics. Finally, we will reflect critically on the method as an operationalization of the CA in social work research.

### 165 | Beyond disability legislation - examining subordinate role of people with intellectual disabilities in society

*Gašper Krstulović (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of social work, Slovenia)*

**Keywords:** intellectual disability, social work practice, disability movements, patronizing attitude, institutional care

The presentation examines the discrepancy between ratified EU disability legislation and its implementation in Slovenia and finds reasons for the discrepancy in insurmountable heritage of big institution in post socialist East European ideology. The research conducted presents stories of people with intellectual disabilities, their everyday life, absence of social power and power to make decisions, as well as their experiences of oppression and systemic violence. This is achieved by presenting narratives of people with intellectual disabilities and extensive visual material taken both by the author and people with intellectual disabilities. Visual material further demonstrates patronizing everyday practices towards people with intellectual disabilities and the discrepancy between formal rights given by the ratified EU disability legislation in Slovenia and big institution ideology that gives persons with disabilities a subordinate position in Slovene society. The underlying paradigm of the research is the social model of disability. To be a disabled person is to have restrictions



placed upon one by society that devalues people with impairments.

This research concludes that social workers, parents and society frequently think about people with intellectual disabilities in linear, binary opposites and with a clear conviction of their difference, which is one of the fundamental criticisms of postmodern theories of social work. Such thinking, which is exclusive, categorical and hierarchical, it is not obvious at first glance, but is hidden in language and surrounded by the best of intentions and is largely unaffected by legislation. Negative categories are embedded in language in such a way that certain experiences, practices and forms of intellect are privileged, while others are marginalized. It is therefore important to recognize the social inequalities for the oppressed side. Social work as a science and a profession must contribute to the elimination of discrimination, exclusion and inequality. Despite the fact that social justice is the essential principle of social work, social work profession often finds itself in the role of those who reproduce social injustice, oppression, exclusion and racism. This research is an important step towards a more just society, because it reveals basic social mechanisms that keep people with intellectual disabilities in a subordinate position. It also shows how patronizing attitudes are maintained by language by which the society addresses people with intellectual disabilities and how the result of the social assumptions that people with intellectual disabilities are 'merely eternal children' prevents society to have real insight into lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

## 62 | Self-determination and citizenship for people with intellectual disabilities

*Gunn Strand Hutchinson (University of Nordland, Norway)*

**Keywords:** intellectual disability, self-determination, citizenship

In Norway, as in many European countries, there has been a major change in living conditions for people with intellectual disability over the last 25 years. State policy has changed, involving the reduction of institutional care with the aim normalizing people's life situations and service provision. Political aims today are self-determination and citizenship. The UN convention of the rights for people with disabilities (CRPD) has underlined these aims. This paper is based on a study in



which we have looked at whether the ideological basis of the reform has influenced the normative conditions in a way that is in line with the stated intentions.

The question raised is how the deinstitutionalization has influenced the possibilities for self-determination and citizenship. We have interviewed people aged around 60 with intellectual disabilities who have experienced life in institutions when they were young. The interviews were biographically oriented and focused on childhood and growing up, schooling and employment, family and network, leisure and community involvement and contact with different welfare services.

The main conclusion is that the reform they have experienced has had a major influence on their life situations, not only for the possibilities but also as a condition for exercising self-determination and citizenship.

The development of life-conditions for people with intellectual disabilities today will be discussed in the light of our findings.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 3.5

### Theme 5: Complexities and controversies about the effects or outcomes of social work and social work research

Decision-making, judgment and inclusion in social work with children and families

(Chair: Johanna Hietamäki)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 10.15 - Nordkraft

#### 91 | Making sense of the initial home visit: the role of emotion in professional judgement

*Laura Cook (University of East Anglia, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** professional judgement, home visiting, emotion, intuition, bias, heuristics, child and family social work, psychosocial analysis, anxiety

The notion of effective professional judgement, and how to promote it, remains a pressing concern for social care agencies, policy-makers and social work researchers. Recently, attention has been paid to the role of emotion in social work reasoning, with calls to reclaim and acknowledge the vital role of emotions and quasi-rational processes (such as intuition) in professional judgement. Despite this, there is relatively little empirical research examining the role of emotion in social workers' professional judgements. This research project investigated how social workers experienced and made use of their emotional responses in relation to a specific aspect of assessment: the initial home visit.

This study used narrative interviews (n = 18) and focus groups (n=2) in order to elicit child and family social workers' experiences of undertaking initial home visits. A Psychosocial approach (which combines narrative and psychodynamic theory) was used to analyse social workers' stories about these visits, drawing out the emotional experiences and reasoning processes involved in the judgements made by workers on the basis of their initial encounter with the family.

The findings of the study indicated that social workers' emotions had the potential to act as a resource (informing and enhancing professional judgement) or as a risk (distorting professional judgement through the creation of bias). As a



resource, the emotional responses of the social worker were motivating, facilitating persistence in the face of parental resistance. Attending to the emotional nuances of the encounter with the parent enabled social workers to manage the encounter effectively, gathering information in a sensitive, yet purposeful way. Crucial to professional judgement, the social worker's intuitions or 'gut feelings' sensitised them to 'clues' around risk, drawing their attention to potentially salient information before it was rationally accessible. Where emotions acted as a risk, excessive emotional demands combined with a lack of agency support had the potential to impair workers' ability to think clearly about their cases. When relied upon uncritically, social workers' intuitions or 'gut feelings' had the potential to lead to bias, distorting professional judgement.

The extent to which emotions acted as a resource, or as a risk, for professional judgement depended on the worker's ability to reflect on, and process their emotions effectively. While individual differences were important for understanding social workers' use and management of emotion, the research identified the worker's team as a key space for emotional processing. There were a number of specific team characteristics which facilitated or impeded the effective processing of emotion. The study therefore makes a number of recommendations for social care organisations in terms of supporting effective self-regulation among workers in order to enhance professional judgement.

## 217 | Social work in and around the home – using home as a site to create inclusion

*Mia Arp Fallov (Aalborg University, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Denmark)*

*Maria Appel Nissen (Aalborg University, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Denmark)*

**Keywords:** home interventions, vulnerable families, marginalized neighbourhoods, social work with children, local community work

This paper is an exploration in to how the home and the local milieu is activated as sites of social work intervention in social work with families at risk and local community work. It is argued that not only does social work intervene in the affective space in the home, but 'work the home' (Ferguson 2016) to draw individuals into social networks and relations with





professionals deemed as essential for securing inclusion and preventing social problems. Thus, the paper follows the call from Ferguson (2009) for more research on how home is a key practice site of social work, and as a site to explore the role of social work in relations of power in modern modes of governance (Winther & Cree 2016). The paper draws on material from an ongoing research project, and more specifically on a historical document study and multi-sited ethnographic field work from social work with vulnerable families and local community work in Denmark. In the first part of the paper, it is laid out how the historical roots of social work with families at risk and local community work are closely intertwined with interventions in the home. It is shown how supporting the role of the mother in shaping home environment, is central for early professional development of scientific methods in social work (Seltzer & Haldar 2015). In the second part of the paper, it is analysed how social workers use home visits to gain knowledge of the complex social situations of families. Home is used as a site in which to register, record and judge how families manage their home. Practices of recording health related behaviour around the home becomes an access point to get at more complex social problems. Intervention in the practices in and around the home is instrumentalized as a technique to form the family as an object for social work intervention and normalization. In the third part of the paper, it is shown how interventions in the home is used to connect citizen and families with local milieus and thus to enmesh individuals in social networks and relations of care in order to make their daily lives better. Moreover, how interventions at home is used to connect citizen to professional networks extending their reach into the most private spheres of the home. In conclusion it is discussed how focusing on interventions at home is a way to research how social work creatively juggle the demand to gain more and faster knowledge of the complex issues facing vulnerable families in marginalized neighbourhoods, while keeping costs low. Moreover, how home interventions become a way to retain dignity and develop holistic orientations to the social problems facing such families.

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## 147 | Moving between play and serious talk in social work home visits to children

*Michelle Lefevre (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)*  
*Chris Hall (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** children, play, child protection, communication, conversation analysis, video

In social work with children, direct, verbalised conversations are only part of the interaction and communication. Particularly with younger children, practitioners generally have to engage the child in play or other activities as a way of encouraging their interest, building a relationship of trust, and entering their way of seeing the world. This is most often done during visits to the family home, which are a key site for learning about the child's psychosocial world and family life. Whilst there is much existing literature on engaging children in play and activities, there is very limited guidance on how practitioners should move between play-based and relational interactions and the more direct and focused dialogue which is related to particular roles and tasks. This moving between two interactional modes becomes particularly challenging in child protection contexts, where conversations about sensitive and contested issues may encompass investigation, assessment, information-sharing, explanations, support and a seeking of the child's view. Very strong feelings, such as anger, anxiety, mistrust and distress, may be present in either party, complicating the communicative endeavour still further.

The most likely reason for the limited literature is the dearth of empirical data on what the interactional struggles look like in real world situations, and how social workers seek to overcome them. Most existing research is post-hoc, seeking the views of social workers and children after the event (e.g. McLeod, 2010). Whilst this has given us a useful picture, it is recognised that memories are fallible and participants' opinions subjective. Ethnographic observations are now appearing (e.g. Ferguson, 2016) but as they are not videoed, talk, physical



interactions, body language and play cannot be scrutinized in detail.

This paper, by contrast, draws on data from an empirical study of social workers' home visits to children in the south-east of England whereby the workers video their interactions and conversations with children. The recordings and transcriptions are then subjected to Conversation Analysis (a linguistic method for micro-analysing the talk) and psychosocial analysis (evaluating emotions and relational processes). The workers and children are interviewed subsequently, to explore their views on what was occurring in the videoed encounter. The focus of the analysis is on how things happen, rather than why, to avoid leaping prematurely to assumptions about what constitutes good practice.

Analysis of these videos enables us to see how social workers negotiate the moving back and forth between play and more serious talk, mediating this through the building of an engaged relationship with the child, characterised by warmth and 'holding the child in mind'. This becomes very important where a child uses distraction, disruption, distancing or other techniques to move away from sensitive topics. It is suggested that play and 'chat', whilst on the surface not seemingly related to the purpose of the home visit, are indeed purposeful in building and maintaining a relationship where the child trusts the worker. It is this which facilitates a (patient and persistent) worker's next introduction of focused 'serious' talk.

### 117 | Opening the black box. How social workers make risk decisions by a incongruity procedure

Katharina Freres, (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany) Pascal Bastian (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany) Mark Schrödter (Universität Kassel, Germany)

**Keywords:** decision-making, professional judgement, ethnography, child protection, incongruity procedure

#### **Background and purpose**

The presentation focuses on a research project that examines the production conditions of professional decisions in child protection at unannounced home visits. Social workers in child protection often have to assess complex issues and make decisions with severe consequences. Empirically little is known about how professionals actually make those decisions in



practice. Most studies have their focus on judgment errors, biases or external influences that complicate the professional judgment. Some qualitative studies suggest that decision-making is influenced by professional cultures and are always embedded in contexts of social interaction. In this study we explore systematically to what extent the production of family normality by clients contributes to professional decision-making. The study shall contribute to the question of how professional decisions are made in practice and how a case becomes a case.

### **Methods**

Following the ethnomethodological research paradigm we assume that professional decisions are made in social interaction. Our ethnographical approach uses mainly the method of close participant observation in five child welfare agencies, because the observation provides the opportunity to reconstruct the constitutive conditions of the process of professional judgments.

### **Results**

The social workers in the presented observational study have to make an assessment about the child's risk. First results give a good impression how they come to this conclusion in interaction with the families at an unannounced home visit. Social workers use an incongruity procedure (Sacks 1972). In-depth interpretations of the empirical material show, that the social workers don't look for established predictors that could inform them about future child maltreatment. They rather assess if the families are able of doing being ordinary in front of the caseworkers. If they don't know how to be an ordinary family or if they are not able of doing being ordinary or doing it convincingly there is a risk for the family to be assessed as being at risk.

### **Conclusions**

The influence of clients as active participants of the first impression have not been systematically investigated in previous studies. Based on the concept of doing being ordinary (Sacks 1985), it can be shown that professional judgments are influenced to a large extent on the actions of the parents. Private rooms are transformed into public spaces by unannounced home visits. For families it is very difficult to produce an acceptable "social surface". The results show how fruitful an ethnographic approach can be to get a broader understanding how social worker manage the complex task to assess a risk without much information to get a comprehensive case presentation.



## 141 | Making the toughest decisions. Structures and actors of decision-making models in child protection in four Nordic countries

*Elin Hultman, (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)*

*Torbjörn Forkby (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)*

*Staffan Höjer (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)*

**Keywords:** decision-making models, child protection, nordic countries

This presentation is based on an empirical, comparative study on the decision-making systems in child protection in four Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Decisions about child protection and interventions in families are one of the most difficult responsibilities welfare states have to handle. Not least decisions about involuntary care. As it can be seen as an intrusion of individual privacy the decision must be of the highest quality. One challenge is to support the family as well as to protect the best interest of the child in the investigation process with many actors involved. How this challenge is handled and decision-making is organized varies between child welfare systems and countries.

The Nordic countries are often described as having family oriented systems with great focus on early intervention and services to the whole family. In addition, great attention is paid to children's participation and children's perspectives. This, in contrast to countries that have more focus on providing intervention when children are in need of protection. Despite the similarities there are differences in the organization of the decision making bodies. In Norway, Finland and Denmark the decision system for child protection cases have been reformed several times during the last 25 years. One aspect of these reorganizations is that experts have replaced laypersons that previously played important roles in all countries. The aim of this presentation is to compare and analyze the role of different actors involved in the decision-making system in child protection in the Nordic countries. A special focus will be to discuss the role of laypersons and the motivations for leaving or keeping them in the decision-making.

The study is based on a comprehensive document analysis of official documents, legislation, guidelines and reports about child protection in each country, together with a review of recent research articles in the area. This is complemented by 12 interviews with experts and scholars with vast knowledge about the child protection system in their respective country. Despite the fact that Nordic child protection is described as family oriented and stemming from a similar cultural background



the result presents great variation in the appointed actors and also what recent reforms have led to. For instance is Sweden the only country where a committee of politically appointed laypersons still is the one to make decisions about voluntary out of home placements. In the other countries the systems include different actors such as lawyers, social work managers, and other experts with different professional backgrounds. Laypersons do participate in the decisions in three out of the four countries. However, one similarity is the core position of social workers in assessing the situation in the families and writing the investigation that represents the main document that is used in the decision-making.





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## SYMPOSIUM 7

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### 56 | Researching women experiencing violence in oppressive contexts: conducting critical research of “invisible events”

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
Room: 3.3.17 - Nordkraft

*Darja Zaviršek, (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)*  
*Chu-Li Liu*  
*Hemma Mayrhofer*  
*Shulamit Ramon*

**Keywords:** researching women experiencing invisible events, oppressive contexts, violence against women, doing research in oppressive contexts, sensitive qualitative methodology, research practice wisdom

The symposium intends to analyse specific forms of violence against women, which have been least researched and which pass as a normalized non-violence. The researchers will focus on four oppressive contexts of normalized violence which make women's experiences invisible: culturalized violence towards Roma girls; institutional violence against women with intellectual disabilities; violence against women in refugee camps and violence against women with psychiatric diagnosis within a patriarchal environments. In all cases gender-specific violence is perceived as non-violence and violent contexts become protective space of “invisible events”. The researchers will analyse the consequences for conducting research in oppressive contexts and will suggest methods and tools with which to conduct research with people who become vulnerable due to the socially recognized context. Sensitive qualitative methods, research tools and skills are called for in order to expose the violence in such oppressive contexts. The symposium will also give an evaluative overview of the existent research studies on particularly vulnerable people and contexts and will give the comparative summary of what are the methods, tools and methodologies most often used in these researches. The symposium will consist of the contributions by Darja Zaviršek, University of Ljubljana; Shula Ramon, University of Hertfordshire; Chu Li Liu, Tunghai University and Hemma Mayrhofer, Institute of Criminology, Vienna. The symposium is led by Darja Zaviršek.



## **Hemma Mayrhofer - Dangerous bodies and needs: Researching eugenically motivated sterilisations of women with (mental) disability in the recent history of Austria**

Up to the present, persons with disabilities have been perceiving as different and abnormal. As a consequence, reproductive sexuality of and with persons labelled as mentally retarded was – and still is – regarded as a matter of concern by various parties although after the fall of the Nazi era discussing this issue has become highly sensitive. Nonetheless, even coercive sterilisation has remained a tacit practice applied and demanded by different institutions in Austria. The practices are heavily gendered: women's bodies are the central targets in the efforts to prevent the reproduction of persons labelled as disabled.

The “Department for Children with Developmental Disorders” was a key actor in such implicit practices in Austria. A research project recently conducted demonstrates that sterilisations were carried out on young female patients of the Department to the late 1980s by cooperating with gynaecological departments of other hospitals. The data conducted reveal eugenically motivated indications, mixed with psychosocial arguments such as the inability of women with disability to bring up a child. At the same time, the measures were promoted as protecting the women from sexual abuse – which only means the avoidance of a pregnancy after being raped.

The presentation will focus on the challenging research process resulting from the tabooed research topic on the one hand, and the great difficulties to reach the affected women and speak with them on the other hand. Therefore, the research aimed to exploit complementary sources of information such as interviews with the former staff and medical records as well as other files of the department. During the research process different questions of ethics had to be discussed, at the same time the available resources for the research project implied specific limitations. Some selected results that could be achieved by combining the different data will be presented.

## **Chu li liu - Researching the discourses of intimate partner violence prevention systems from an anti-oppressive perspective: the case of female survivors with mental health problems in Taiwan**

Patriarchal values are prevalent in Taiwan and mental health problems are stigmatized as “madness”. Female survivors who



suffered both from intimate partner violence and mental health problems experienced multiple sources of oppressions and resulted in being in an extremely vulnerable situations. The study used the Taiwanese example and explored how the system in such a context responds to the needs of women in such vulnerable situations. A qualitative research methodology was adopted. In-depth interviews with social workers at the domestic violence prevention centres were utilized to collect data; discourse analysis was utilized to analyse them. Comparing the results to relevant literature and peer debriefing served the purpose of research findings validation. The research showed that the discourse on domestic violence prevention system in Taiwan focuses only on women survivors without disability, middle age with no diagnosed mental health problems. Social work intervention includes working with survivors particularly on safety issues and terminating the cases within a prescribed period no matter how complicated the woman's situation is. Professionals who work with survivors longer are seen by the system as "incompetent". Under such circumstances, participants reported that the complicated needs of female survivors who suffered from male intimate partner violence and mental health problems as consequences of violence, are not settled as only survivors' safety is addressed by the social welfare system. Many female survivors with mental health problems thus experience repetition of abuse, referrals into the systems and leaving the systems when the life-threatening crises vanished. The repeats reinforce the stigmatization of madness. Failing to take mental health disability into considerations, the system however does not serve as a helping mechanism yet become a source of exclusion for these survivors in vulnerable situations. Possible changes and a research issue about approaching "invisible survivors" meanwhile ensuring safety within are discussed.

**Darja Zavirsek - Conducting critical research on the "invisible events": Roma child marriages in the context of ingroup and outgroup patriarchy**

Research evidence shows that Roma people are one of the most oppressed group in Europe, especially in postsocialist countries where the majority of Europe's Roma live. Due to economic discrimination, poor education and racist violence, they are



seen as “different” and “invisible” all at once. Violence against Roma women and girls is routinely overlooked and normalised, ethnicized and culturalised. Consequently, violence against women and children is seen as culturally specific, while Roma men are seen as prone to violence, and Roma women as violent mothers. In the European “gender-balanced” continent, Roma women’s experiences are systematically overlooked by social work practice, the necessary interventions notwithstanding. Those social workers who recognise the mainstream homogenised, pathology-driven view of the Roma try to shift the focus from violence towards “positive aspects of Roma life”: a strategy that makes the violence against women and children, especially girls, invisible. One of the widespread forms of violence against children is child marriage that is increasingly socially acceptable as purportedly a cultural practice of the Roma, a view that is shared by some Roma communities as well as the majority population. This view is increasingly adopted also by social workers whose professional ethics are bound to the principles of the UNCRC. The “invisible events” that are thus part of the taboo both within the Roma communities and the mainstream society are inordinately difficult to research. A researcher has to overcome barriers posed by the local Roma communities; the anti-Roma majorities; and by the victims themselves. One of the major research issues is how to make the “invisible events” of gender-specific and culture-specific violence visible without stigmatizing the already ostracised communities, and how to deal with the violence that is seen both from within and without the Roma communities as a form of economic protection of the girls.

### **Shulamit Ramon - Issues in Understanding and responding to increase in domestic violence in European refugees camps**

Domestic violence in refugees camps may be known to those close to the victim, but is likely to be largely invisible unless the physical harm cannot be kept hidden. This is partly because other issues are perceived as demanding more immediate responses and partly due to the often hidden treatment of domestic violence in ordinary living, where it is associated with victims experiencing shame and guilt.



Thus the real rate of domestic violence in the European refugees camps is unknown, but there are indications from workers in the current Greek and Italian camps for new refugees that it is increasing, according to those few women who have been given support to disclose it.

While the sense of loss of one's life and position, coupled by the lack of useful activity in the camps, and of considerable unclarity about the future, is likely to increase frustration and anger of all, only a minority of men are known to resort to treating their wives violently in the camps.

Hence the need to engage in sensitive, yet critical, research which would enable understanding both groups of men as well as the women's responses. We also need to find out how best to help women get out of their victimhood while in the camps, and how can the perpetrators be supported to stop their violence behaviour, which is known also to affect their children, even if the latter are not victims of violence themselves.

This presentation will focus on analyzing exiting relevant research and action research projects, as well as experiential knowledge of domestic violence in the camps, in order to indicate the more useful social work research responses to this invisible violence.



## SYMPOSIUM 8

### 207 | Conceptualising shame for theory, research and practice

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
Room: 6.7 - Nordkraft

*Elizabeth Frost, (UWE Bristol, United Kingdom)*  
*Matthew Gibson, (University of Birmingham, United Kingdom)*  
*Alessandro Sicora (University of Calabria, Italy)*  
*Veronika Magyar-Haas (University of Zurich, Switzerland)*

**Keywords:** shame, ontology, mistakes

Shame has recently been the subject of considerable social science attention: of interest to philosophers and political scientists, as well as sociologists and psychologists, and more latterly social work theorists. The common ground that emerges here seems to be that shame, coupled with its more moderate iteration- embarrassment- massively impacts on issues of identity, agency, motivation and life outcomes. It has been seen as the most social of emotions and the most hidden and 'un-speakable'.

The essentially social nature of shame is emphasised across a range of conceptualisations of the 'social'. Scheff uses the frame works of e.g. alienation - to consider how shame is perpetuated through complex pervasive social systems (2010), and also of structural inequalities, such as class. However, that shame also inextricably relates to actual and potential interpersonal relationships and to the emotions is core to its conceptualisation. Psychoanalytical work (e.g. Winnicott) has also considered shame as an unconscious state.

Shame has also been a source of interest to symbolic interactionists such as Giddens (1991). Shame he suggests is by no means superficial or part of fleeting inter-relational interchanges, but becomes part of who people are and how they can be, part of their reflexive narratives of self, where shame feeds-back into shame. Shame depends on feelings of insufficiency and inadequacy and is serious identity damage. Shame offers a sound theoretical structure for understanding the experience of contemporary social work service users. In many parts of Europe – perhaps more widely - even simply having contact with a social worker is a source of shame, - let alone the shame of their situations, for example poverty or family struggles. Houston's recent work on recognition and shame also acknowledges 'the repressive impact of shame on





service users lives' (2015, p. 13), through multiple sources: a climate which could be described as constantly defining the service user as inferior, a scrounger, dysfunctional, so that being shamed becomes internalised as 'ashamed'. Additionally, work from Gibson 2014 and Walker 2011 considers how shame also impacts of social workers.

The four papers in this symposium represent different European intellectual and theoretical traditions, though with considerable overlap in relation to key thinkers. Each builds on the theoretical backdrop sketched above.. Frost's paper attempts to make structuring inroads into the vast and disparate body of thought accruing to the idea of 'shame', in research, theory and social work practice. Gibson's paper considers the ontological framework of shame itself, drawing on, for example, theories of emotion. Sicora takes a section of this - an element of Scheff's 'family of emotions' - and considers what it means to make mistakes (and to experience the emotional impact of this) in the context of social work practice. Magyar-Haas's contribution formulates how shaming can impact through the eyes of the researcher, in social work research practice. The papers together, and the discussion they generate, offer the opportunity for sustained engagement with how the concept of shame can inform reflection research and practice in contemporary social work.

### **Author 1: Making sense of shame theory: a possible structure.**

The sheer volume of versions and approaches to the concept of 'shame' circulating contemporarily, and the ubiquity of its use, render it confusing and opaque. It is, for example, both a very personal, even confessional experiences of oneself feeling unworthy, a sense of a highly negative evaluation of the group (like internet shaming) through to the horror of a whole continent ashamed to be European as it watches refugees drown on its shores in attempts to flee war zones.

'Shame' applies to so much. Rather like 'Recognition', a concept with which it is often oppositionally linked (see e.g. Houston, 2015; Frost, 2016) its potential as an analytical tool for social work theory, reflection and practice is beginning to be understood (Walker, 2011). However, whereas Honneth's work in particular, formulates 'recognition' as comprehensible, accessible and structured, offering both an analytical framework and potentially a normative critique, the concept of shame remains amorphous, burgeoning and slippery. Even though its devastating impact on service users and, it has been argued, social workers themselves (Gibson 2014), is evident,



introducing new workers and students to shame thinking can be confusing. Even though, it seems, of all the human states they encounter in many situations they deal with, the most prevalent, complex and often obscure is shame.

This paper draws on the author's work formulating a three-part structure for understanding shame: as political, social and personal. In each category it will consider how and by whom this type of shame might be generated, some key ideas or arguments within its purview, and some effects and/or practices that it leads to. This will inform a discussion about how social work might use shame thinking to address service users', and their own, needs.

### **Author 2: Understanding shame: An overview of the issues and debates in shame research**

What does it mean to feel shame? While you may understand what I mean if I were to say "I feel ashamed", different theoretical and research traditions would understand what I meant by this very differently. For example, does it mean that I feel bad for transgressing a moral boundary, or that I feel rejected, or that I feel my identity is threatened? Or does it mean all/any of these things? Despite over a hundred years of theory and research there remains a healthy academic debate regarding the nature of shame.

Such differences, however, do not divide neatly by discipline and there can be as much agreement between sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and biologists as there can be differences. This is often because the debates within and between disciplines mask the ontological foundations of their positions. Indeed, much shame research and theories fail to engage with the issue of ontology at all, leading to questions about the usefulness of the resulting findings and suggestions for changes to policy and practice.

This paper seeks to outline these debates by drawing on emotion theory more generally, and shame theory, more specifically, while linking these to experiences of researching shame in social work (Gibson, 2016). It highlights the issues that shame researchers have been grappling with for over a hundred years, links these issues to contemporary research programmes, and offers suggestions for theorising and researching shame in social work.

### **Author 3: Mistakes, Criticism and Shame: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Workers**

Being wrong is an emotional experience. It is not only a recognition of a deviation from external reality and an internal



change in what the subject believes and his/her consequent acts, but is also the condition of being stuck in wrongness with no immediate way out (Schulz, 2010). This is unpleasant, especially when accompanied by the sight of the damage done and when internal or external voices not only blame for the wrong action but criticise the whole person. The shift from 'I/you made a mistake' to 'I am/You are a mistake', that is 'I am/you are a failure as a practitioner or even as a person' is easy and common, and shame may be the resulting feeling. Even if criticism may be useful feedback to give constructive opportunities of learning from mistakes, it is more often felt by people as an attack and a sabotage to their own self-confidence and this produces more commonly a defensive reaction, rather than listening and reflecting. In these circumstances learning from mistakes becomes almost impossible (Sicora, 2017). Shame as a state of being is hopefully rare amongst social workers, but many people could have experienced this feeling even intensively during their career. Nevertheless, mechanisms of denial and self-defence deeply affect the quality of any intervention and may lead to the refusal to continuously do 'maintenance' of personal work tools, like continuing training. This paper will present some conclusions from the most relevant literature on this topic and some of the outcomes of recent explorative research involving a group of Italian social workers.

#### **Author 4: The Problematic of Reification of Shame and Blaming in Social Work Research**

This contribution deals with the problematic of reification in the context of social work research. It shows how specific circumstances – that the researcher intends to analyse – may be produced and strengthened by or through the research process itself. This phenomenon will be made plausible with reference to an ethnographic study that was conducted in a youth centre for girls aged 10 to 16. This institution emphasized the relevance of practising democratic participation in the form of girl-parliament-meetings. At the same time, these were the settings in which conflicts were negotiated and possibilities for shame and blaming were opened up. Such shameful situations may be subtly enhanced by the method of participant observation, if the researcher is not well known to the girls or simply through his/her presence and gaze. This paper will discuss the possibilities of how to handle the problematic of reification related to shameful situations. How could such challenges be treated in a sensitive way? Furthermore, it will ask, what kind of social function the phenomenon of shame can have in and on pedagogical settings. Referring to John Braithwaite (1989), the concepts of



'reintegrative shaming' and 'stigmatization' will be discussed. Against this backdrop, and by following the discourses of shame in sociological and philosophical literature, shame will be developed in a systematic way.

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## SYMPOSIUM 9

### 342 | Another one bites the dust

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 6.8 - Nordkraft

*Emilio Jose Gomez Ciriano, (Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Spain)*

*Hugh McLaughlin (Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom)*

*Esther Mercado (Universidad Complutense, Spain)*

*Jose Maria Herranz de La Casa (Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Spain)*

*Sofia Dedotsi (Athens university, Greece)*

*Lucy Mort (Manchest metropolitan university, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** social work, stereotypes, resistance

At a time of uncertainties when essentialism is coming back and racist attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are being legitimized social workers face increasing challenges to promote social justice and inclusive practices.

In this symposium we explore on an european wide perspective how social work research can resist and challenge the emergent acceptance by media and civil society of xenophobic messages that are more and more predominant in a context of fear and insecurity.

Our presentations would seek to explore how these challenges are impacting upon refugees , asylum seekers and migrants. We are inspired on the guidelines deployed by DG Research of the European Commission and developed in the two day conference : "Understanding and tackling the migration challenge: the role of research" which was celebrated in Brussels from 4 to 6th februsry

In the symposium the North- South and east- West perspectives are present as authors come from Spain, Greece and the United Kingdom. Also most the presenters of this symposium are the SIG on migrations convenors. Also there are other researchers who are included among the authors as Lucy Mort and José María Herranz de la casa

Four papers are part of this symposium

#### **Paper 1: Britain post Brexit? By Professor Hugh McLaughlin from Manchester Metropolitan University**

In this paper it will be discussed how the british post Brexit reality is it is influencing social policies and shaping the





relations of institutions and NGO's with Migrants and refugees with particular attention to be put in the role of social workers.

**Paper 2 : Now I realise I just have to keep strong”: Migrant family narratives in a time of austerity. By Lucy Mort . PH Candidate. Manchester Metropolitan University**

Beneath the surface of recent discourse on austerity and on the refugee crisis, lies the Victorian dichotomy of the deserving and the undeserving. Who is entitled to benefits? Who is deserving of our stretched public services? Who is allowed to live here, work here, belong here? While the welfare rights of migrants have always been contested and precarious - particularly in terms of statutory provision - cuts to the voluntary sector since 2008 have seen a widening gap in the provision of support to migrant communities.

I will discuss my PhD project, which has sought to understand the experience of austerity from the perspective of migrant families who had received support from a voluntary sector organisation in Manchester. Ethnographic research and narrative interviews with migrant families have painted a complex picture. Families contend with marginalisation, precarity and loss, but rarely name austerity as a key factor in their lives. Migrant mothers in particular stand on a site of double disadvantage as their gendered and racialised identities bear the brunt of austerity policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric. In this paper I will address three main aspects of my thesis: The everyday precariousness of migrant family lives; the difficulty of narrating austerity in family stories; and the gendered negotiations of making a liveable life in austerity Britain.

**Paper 3: “It is your fault, go back to your countries!”: Scapegoating refugees and migrants and the rise of racism at times of crisis in Greece’. By Sofia Dedotsi Ph.D (Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece)**

Since 2015, unprecedented numbers of men, women and children arrive daily in Greece, fleeing war and conflict affected countries. Refugees and migrants who survive their traumatic journey face not only challenges related to their basic needs but also a wider context of austerity, lack of services and the rise of racism, all of which make them more vulnerable. Woefully inadequate state responses to migration –even well before the refugee crisis- along with the blaming game of austerity/poverty causes towards ‘illegal’ immigrants by the media and politicians, have led to the rise of racism and neo-Nazism in Greece. This presentation's discussion will focus on the construction of the racist ideology in Greece as well as the





paradigm of the solidarity response and resilience, reflecting on the urgent need for an anti-racist social work practice and research.

**Paper 4: “From refugees welcome to refugees go home?” By Emilio José Gómez Ciriano ph.d (Universidad de Castilla-la Mancha) José María Herranz de la Casa (Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha) and Esther Mercado (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)**

In this paper the authors will reflect on how the reality of integration policies in Spain are changing and how social workers are being affected by a growing feeling of fear and uneasiness caused by austerity measures. The need to re-implement structures of integration previously dismantled by austerity measures, the need to cultivate a friendly welcoming discourse towards immigrants and refugees is increasingly difficult when people feel insecure and media fuel that insecurity by highlighting only negative aspects of immigration. The role of social workers when dealing with stereotypes and prejudices and its intervention in intercultural mediation contexts is more and more important

At the end of the presentations there will be a time for debating with participants. Members of the SIG on immigration and asylum are particularly welcomed

lastly Lucy Mort from MMU will discuss how austerity measures are affecting migrant organisations and experience of loss in the UK



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### WORKSHOP 3

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## 269 | What Works And For Whom: Realist Evaluation Utilizing Big Data From Management Information Systems: Demonstration With Real Human Services & School Big Data from Manchester City Council (UK), Chautauqua & Rockland Counties (NY), and Finland

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
Room: 10.14 - Nordkraft

*Mansoor Kazi, (Realist Evaluation Inc., USA)*  
*Marie McLaughlin, (Manchester City Council, United Kingdom)*  
*Yeongbin Kim (University at Albany, United Kingdom)*  
*Minna Kivipelto (National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland)*

**Keywords:** realist evaluation, big data, what works and for whom, epidemiology, effectiveness research, data mining, continuous quality improvement

This is a workshop demonstration of award-winning realist evaluation with live data analysis of real big data from Manchester (UK), Chautauqua County and Rockland County (NY), and Finland. Research methods drawn from both epidemiology and effectiveness research traditions are demonstrated in a realist evaluation in partnership with human service agencies and the schools to investigate what programs of intervention work and for whom. Real live data from management information systems (schools, social services, mental health, youth justice) is used to investigate the effectiveness of the human service interventions. As the emphasis is on data naturally drawn from practice, quasi-experimental designs will be demonstrated using demographic variables to match intervention and non-intervention groups. Binary logistic and linear regression will be demonstrated as part of epidemiologic evidence based on association, environmental equivalence, and population equivalence. Evaluators and agencies can make the best use of the available data to inform practice. Realist evaluation essentially involves the systematic analysis of data on 1) the service users' circumstances; 2) the dosage, duration and frequency of each intervention in relation to each user; and 3) the repeated use of



reliable outcome measures with each service user. The workshop will show how evaluators work in partnership with these agencies, to clean the data, undertake data analysis with them at regular intervals and not just at the end of the year. In this way, the evaluators and the human service agencies can work together to evaluate the impact of interventions on the desired outcomes utilizing innovative methods and addressing issues relevant for practice including diversity, investigating where and with whom the interventions are more or less effective in real time. Establishing cause and effect is a particular theme of this demonstration. As the data mining includes all service users (e.g. all school children in school districts), it is possible to investigate the differences in outcomes between intervention and nonintervention groups, and these groups can be matched using the demographic and contextual data. The innovative methods demonstrated using the same data would include those that are part of the family of methods used to determine epidemiologic evidence based on association, environmental equivalence, and population equivalence. For example, the presenters will use datasets from their completed evaluations from Manchester and New York State, and discuss real-world applications of the analyses. The didactic approach will be interactive, guiding the workshop participants through the requirements and limitations of each method. Binary logistic regression will be used to investigate what interventions work and in what circumstances. In each example, the variables that may be influencing the outcome will be identified through bivariate analysis and then entered in a forward-conditional model. The variables that are actually influencing the outcome are retained in the equation, and those that are significant provide an exponential beta indicating the odds of the intervention achieving the outcome where the significant factor(s) may be present. The interactive live demonstration will investigate where an intervention is more or less likely to be effective, and how to utilize findings and inform practice on demand.



## WORKSHOP 4

### 383 | Ethical consideration in social work research

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 4.105 - Rendsburggade

*Ana Marija Sobočan, (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work, Slovenia)*

*Kim Strom-Gottfried (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA)*

*Teresa Bertotti (University of Milano Bicocca, Italy)*

**Keywords:** research ethics, research integrity, ethical dilemmas in research

#### **Background**

Too often, discussions of research ethics center on the steps needed to avoid fraud or protect human subjects. These topics, while important, are necessary but insufficient elements of ethical research. Ethical dilemmas are inherent in the whole research process, from the decision about what to study and how to study it, through analysis and dissemination of findings.

This workshop is built on a successful workshop at the ECSWR 2014 conference, where the issue of giving voice to participants involved in social work research was addressed. In a stimulating interactive event, further ethical dilemmas was raised and interest in developing such debates was demonstrated.

Organized by a network of researchers with previous collaboration on this topic this workshop aims at discussing and illustrating the ethical dilemmas embedded in the research process and simultaneously present research practices and specific contexts of ethical considerations in two European countries and the US. We will aim to offer recommendations for strengthening research integrity.

We will address various dilemmas present in research, articulated as embedded dilemmas in:

- Research design
- Data collection
- Analysis and dissemination
- Roles of the researchers



For example, we will initiate a discussion on:

- What are the ethical implications in the decision to focus research on certain problems, populations and interventions, and in the choice of research methods.
- What is the responsibility of researchers in the selection of participants, especially between respecting persons' unwillingness to involve, and the need to obtain their perspectives?
- How can / do we (ethically) deal with issues of empathy with our research subjects?
- What is the responsibility of the researcher when research participants transform and 'use' the context of the research for other purposes?
- Do researchers (in social work) have a 'responsibility' to use their research findings and position as researcher to aid in solving practical problems and bettering life situations? What issues – in terms of knowledge dissemination and use – are of interest to the researchers after the research and writing up of the research are completed?

We are interested in sharing knowledge and experience on how these dilemmas have been addressed, how they are related to methodological problems and to conflicting values, and if it is possible (and useful) to indicate general responses to them..

### **Methods**

We will first give an introduction related to indicated dilemmas, supported with examples from our research.

We will encourage responses from the audience and foster a debate: participants will also be invited to shortly work in small groups to develop responses to specific issues. We will conclude with a plenary discussion.

The workshop is linked to conference themes 3 and 5.

### **Aims**

The aim, besides a fruitful exchange of knowledge and experience as well as igniting interest for these issues, is also to build a common ground for establishing an ESWRA SIG: to understand the needs for it, and identify the main directions for its development. We aim to identify researchers, practitioners and service-users interested in involving in developing recommendations for strengthening research integrity.



## PARALLEL SESSIONS 4

THURSDAY | APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>

TIME | 4:25 P.M. TO 5:55 P.M.





## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 4.1

### **Theme 1: Political, administrative and economic influences and challenges for social work research**

*Research on migrants, refugees and transnational challenges in social work*

(Chair: Kirsten Mejlvig)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.

Room: Body and mind - Nordkraft

### **17 | Local press representation of immigrants: between conflict and social integration**

*Micol Bronzini (Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy)*

*Carla Moretti (Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy)*

**Keywords:** immigration, local press, neighbourhood, conflict, integration

Immigration remains an important issue in the pages of daily newspapers, with increasing press attention having a significant role in the construction of the public's image of immigrants. As the press provides a reference framework that heavily influences the public's perception of the immigrant, it is of great importance to look at the different elements representing the phenomenon in order to better understand the processes of integration within the neighbourhoods. At a local level, it is essential to pay closer attention to the study of the relationship between the press and inter-ethnic relations to analyse and question the information that the press provides on the theme of immigration (Charter of Rome, 2010; Sbalchiero, 2015).

To this end, a study was undertaken in one of the municipalities of the Region of Marche - Italy, in which it was possible to work continuously on social integration processes within the neighbourhood through social housing mediation run by social workers, thanks to a project financed by the European Fund for Integration. Specifically, a study was finalized to investigate the local press representation of immigrants, in order to analyse the interactive and conflictual dynamics that develop within the neighbourhood.

The study undertaken under the FEI (European Fund for Integration) project "IN.MEDIAs.RES (Integration, Mediation, Responsibility)" was coordinated by a researcher in social work



from the Polytechnic University of Marche. The study made use of quantitative and qualitative methodology. The first phase focussed on a literature review of the theme of immigration and the press. The following eight months from September 2014 to April 2015, were dedicated to an analysis of the articles in three local newspapers, chosen on the basis of their local distribution. A total of 128 articles were analysed. The articles were selected on the basis of their dealing with news related to foreigners, with some analysis parameters identified (conflict, cooperation, repressive and integratory interventions), these having relevance to the integration processes within the living context and more generally with the construction of the public's opinion of immigrants.

In addition, in-depth interviews were undertaken with the journalists from the newspapers selected. Attention was paid to the typology of the themes and to the sources of the articles, as well as the aspects that may have influenced the reporter in dealing with the complexities of the phenomenon of immigration.

The result of the study highlighted important elements, from which it emerged that almost all the news made reference to events in which the immigrants were involved in conflictual situations with either other foreigners or with Italian citizens. Heavy focus was given to political and safety interventions. In the phase reporting the results to the different subjects in the municipality (social workers, association representatives, social service coordinators and politicians) through focus groups, important aspects requiring attention emerged. These highlighted the need to actuate discussions between the abovementioned subjects and journalists in order to share new means of representing the immigrant in the local press.

## 127 | Recent Media Representation of refugees and migrants in Greek newspapers: Consequences for social work practice

*Theano Kallinikaki (Democritus University Thrace, Greece)*

**Keywords:** refugees, migrants, Greek perspective

This paper provides insights into Greek press culture and discourse on refugees and immigrants in the years 2015 and 2016, when the country had seen mass of 'boat people' refugees and migrants enter and stay/pass through its territory,



and played a key role in the search and rescue operations in the Aegean sea.

It combed through articles written between September 2015 and September 2016, revealing the language journalists employed, the focus on rescue operations, sources they used, the reasons they gave for the rise in refugee flows, and the solutions they suggested. All kind of media had focused on humanistic reporting, including the expressions of the Greek citizens huge solidarity, and on reposting again and again pictures and stories that cheer people up. Prevalence of negative frames can be seen in the greater tendency for the right-wing media, which was most polarized and uniquely aggressive in its campaigns against refugees and migrants, underling risks for culture threat, and worsening of austerity and criminality.

Drawing on a social work perspective, the paper traces the absence of reflections on the traffickers' market, causes behind the desperation of the people who come, and on the consequences of press discourse for social work practice in the field. It discusses the lack of reporting frontline interventions in crisis situations, or initiatives taken in hot-spots and camps to support women and young adolescent and encourage of the creativeness of children and youth.

We will demonstrate in our presentations the current impact of press coverage of refugee and unaccompanied children's school inclusion, family reunification and the life and events in the camps, in affecting social worker practice in NGOs and state social and health services.

We will also look at issues in making sense of media representation.

### 315 | Child Trafficking in Europe; where next?

*Emma Palmer (Lancaster University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** child trafficking, child protection, Europe

This paper focuses on the systemic challenges in protecting child victims of trafficking in Europe. It draws on a funded project, which analysed all anti-trafficking work commissioned by the European Union between 2004 and 2015 (n= 328). The projects were evaluated against the five strategic priorities of the EU Strategy towards the eradication of Human Beings 2012-



2016, and the Directive 2011/36/EU.

Of the 328 projects, 78 were commissioned on child trafficking, with a total awarded funding of \$30.5 million. As per the strategy, primary project focus was on Guardianship systems for children, National Referral Mechanisms and national and multi-lateral child protection systems. There was also a specific focus on Roma children. The projects were broad in conception and coverage, with many having a multi-country focus, involving up to eight EU countries. Some facilitated understandings of flow and the process of return and reintegration. Many of the projects were united in acknowledging that despite international and national statutes, significant funding streams and social awareness of trafficking, child victim numbers are on the increase and protective and support mechanisms continue to fall short.

The projects focusing specifically on the role of child protection systems indicate limited success in preventing and protecting children from trafficking. Child protection systems are explored in country of origin as a method of prevention, in transit and destination countries and in preparation for return. The findings cut across geographical borders. First, is the concern that national child protection policies are not always fully implemented as a result of lack of coordination and/or decentralised nation states. It is acknowledged that all of the EU-28 have a form of national child protection system but is either dysfunctional, overloaded or public authorities are not held accountable for the implementation of the policies and measures. A further complication is when cross-border and trans-national protection is required with assumptions being made that the child protection systems of the country of origin are effective and applied equally to all social groups. In addition, despite protective state systems, many countries continue to detain, deport or ignore child victims of trafficking. Finally there was some evidence that state structures intended to protect children can facilitate trafficking and as such become a part of the trafficking chain: residential care, migrant camps and detention centres were being targeted by human traffickers and increasing the situational vulnerability of migrant children.

Systemic reform of child protection systems is required to meet the challenges posed by child trafficking. A pre-condition of any protective work is the upholding of the child's best interests, irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, disability and ethnicity. Political commitment is required to lead on developing systems which endorse the best interest principle, which itself relies on acknowledging and promoting the inherent value of all children.



Finally, all this work must be done in partnership with children and young people.

### 63 | Women Palestinian Community Social Workers - Israeli Citizenship: Between the Personal and the Political

*Hozam Hardal (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel)*

*Edith Blit-Cohen (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel)*

**Keywords:** community social work, political conflict, challenges in social work, social work research, Palestinian women in social work

This research brings forth the voices of the women Palestinian community social workers - citizens of Israel – who are engaged in community social work, and presents it in their personal, social and political context. In the current study, an attempt was made to describe the perception and experience of the Palestinian community social workers, as it emerges out of their experience in this field, and of being women belonging to a national minority within the state majority. Simultaneously, the study describes the challenges they face, the methods of coping with these challenges and tools that help them. The study is a qualitative research that allows to record the perceptions and experiences of women Palestinian community social workers within the field of social work. Questions posed for the interviewees produced a great deal of information about their perceptions, experiences, coping and tools that help them to do so. There is an importance of the information in context - in a region of social, class, political and economic tensions. In order to collect the information, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen community social workers who defined themselves as "Palestinian women", citizens of Israel, who possess a seniority of at least three years of community social work.

The findings show that the experience of the Palestinian community social worker in community work in Israel is a complex one. The choice of Palestinian women in Israel of the community social work profession was personal and political concurrently. The findings reveal that community social workers see their work as a safe haven where they try to escape the complex reality in which they live. As Arab women who chose to dually define themselves as "Palestine" and to practice community social work, they are given a special opportunity and



an important platform to make their voices heard and to work for a change in the status quo.

Within the findings, it is possible to specify three different challenges facing the female Palestinian community social workers: The first challenge breaks down to gender aspects related to the way Arab Palestinian society perceives academic, leaders and community active women, who compete with the male establishment for the public sphere. The second challenge relates to the professional-political loyalty of Palestinian community social workers to the establishment on the one hand, and on the other hand, relates to the community's fear and lack of trust as well as to the ambivalent relationship that exists between community social work in Arab Palestinian society and the establishment. The third professional challenge relates to discrepancy between the theory taught in Israeli academia and the community social work practice in Arab Palestinian society. The diversity of interests and different voices of women community social workers raises a range of challenges related to social work research.

The findings of the study reflect the controversies, barriers and dilemmas that relate political issues and research, especially when talking about minority groups in a state majority. However, this kind of research provide new possibilities in the field of community social work and new ways of dealing with social work education in a framework of political conflict.





## 232 | 'We are all struggling' Barriers and complexities in social work practice with unaccompanied asylum seeking minors in Greece

*Vasiliki Theocharidou (University of Edinburgh, Greece)*

**Keywords:** migration, displacement, unaccompanied minors, policies, social work, equality, human rights

### **Background and Purpose:**

In the context of the global refugee crisis, the situation in Greece regarding the needs and rights of unaccompanied asylum seeking minors (UASM) remains particularly problematic. Social workers witness major challenges about the reception, protection and care of displaced young people. For them engaging with (UASM) is troubled with complexities given their duty to adhere to asylum policies and to promote and safeguard young people's rights. Despite the growing interest in northern Europe in how social workers respond to these challenges (Cemlyn & Briskman, 2003; Dunkerley et al., 2006; Kohli, 2006; Kohli & Mather, 2003) limited research has been carried out about the barriers and opportunities for humanitarian social work with UASM in Greece. This gap is negatively impactful on the services unaccompanied minors receive and on the ways welfare is structured and delivered to this particular group of people.

### **Study Objectives**

This paper aims to address this gap and report findings from a qualitative case study aiming to explore unaccompanied minors' experiences. By mapping the themes that emerged, this paper will focus on the professionals' responses regarding the challenges and barriers they meet when working with UASM, thus it will identify the possibilities of social work profession within this field and opportunities for improvement.

### **Research Questions:**

- 1) What are the views of professionals involved in the process of providing care and protection to UASM in Greece?
- 2) How do Greek professionals contribute to the promotion of unaccompanied minors' well-being?
- 3) What are the challenges when dealing with UASM inside and outside of the reception centres and how do they respond to these challenges?

### **Methodology:**

The research presented here is rooted in a case study which was conducted in five reception centers in Greece within six months in 2012 and involved: semi-structured interviews, focus



groups and participatory activities with 30 Afghan (UASM), semi-structured interviews with 12 professionals (including social workers) and semi-structured interviews with 9 public figures. Based on the exploratory nature of my research I adopted an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the most appropriate because it seeks to reach as much as possible an insider's perspective (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

### **Findings**

The findings indicated the existence of a Kafkaesque welfare and asylum system that aims to provide reception and care for the minors. A spectrum of attitudes was presented within a system that doesn't work, both for the young people and the professionals. The obligations posed by the International and national resolutions and legislations were very rarely met whereas the problematic daily practice of the social workers mirrored the ongoing struggle of the minors to cope within the rough and ambiguous system that didn't seem to offer much to them. Significant variations were also identified as to the type of care and support provided by the reception centres. As the situation in Greece regarding the needs and rights of UASM remains particularly problematic, there is the pressing need to engage with policy and rights issues with a strong commitment to children's rights and to develop anti-racist and progressive policies with the aim to promote equality and justice.

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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 4.2

### Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users

Dynamics in social work and social work research

(Chair: Kristel Driessens)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.

Room: 6.1 - Nordkraft

#### 388 | Motivation and agency in hoarding: how social work research casts light on 'the meaning of the mess'

*Susan Braye, (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)*

*David Orr (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)*

*Michael Preston-Shoot (University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** hoarding, self-neglect, mental health

Hoarding describes circumstances in which an individual experiences difficulty disposing of possessions, regardless of their value. This results in living areas becoming cluttered, restricting the individual's use of their domestic environment, and causing distress or risk to health and safety. In England, the attention of the social professions has been increasingly directed to hoarding since the Care Act 2014 and its statutory guidance included it within the circumstances that constitute abuse and neglect, thus placing it on the adult safeguarding agenda. At around the same time, the 5th Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) saw the creation of 'hoarding disorder' as a diagnostic category in its own right, and popular culture reality television shows have brought hoarding to public attention, often sensationalising it in the process. Clinical research and policy developments in this period have opened up new avenues of intervention with hoarding, presenting possibilities for social workers and allied practitioners to mitigate significant risk and improve well-being through work with people who hoard, but also potentially giving rise to conflicts and placing barriers in the way of effective practice.

Critical responses in the social sciences have attacked the 'hoarding disorder' diagnosis and the assumptions that underpin it, and expressed fears that its potential to generate stigma may outweigh its benefits. However, few of these studies



have engaged directly with people who hoard. This paper reports on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with ten individuals living in England, who received assessment and intervention for hoarding from Social Services, carried out as part of a larger study of self-neglect in which service users, professionals and managers identified the practice approaches that led to positive outcomes. The interviews were subject to qualitative analysis using the framework method, yielding four major themes that characterized the interviewees' narratives: notions of value and waste; connections with sociality, relationships and/or loss; the practical difficulties that lead to accumulation; and the role of mental health.

The analysis highlights the profound influence that material things have on individuals' sense of themselves and their world, and, by taking account of the personal and sociocultural factors that shape hoarding, reveals rich life-worlds of meaning. Dominant models of hoarding, such as the DSM-5 and Cognitive-Behavioural paradigms, potentially lend themselves to reductionist understandings that efface the meaning 'hoarding' may have and thereby deny agency to the person labelled as 'hoarder'. More culturally informed analysis, by contrast, affords insights into the complex landscape of value, waste, social critique, emotion, interpersonal relationships and practical difficulties that may underlie hoarding cases, and points the way to a more person-centred understanding.

The paper concludes by drawing out implications for practice with people who hoard. 'Finding the person' behind the 'hoard' means according due respect to their motivations and agency, exploring the 'meaning of the mess,' and understanding it within its social context. Such an approach challenges the clinical diagnostic paradigm and accords more fully with social work values and with the spirit of current adult safeguarding policy.

## 142 | Vulnerable women or vulnerable life situations? Developing the concept of vulnerability for social work research

*Marjo Kuronen, (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

*Suvi Krok, (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

*Suvi Liuski, (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

*Ulla Salovaara (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*

*Eliina Virokannas (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)*



**Keywords:** vulnerability, conceptualization, literature review, women

Social work is working with individuals and groups that are often defined as vulnerable. The concept of vulnerability is also widely used in social work research. However, vulnerability is rarely defined in a definite way in social work practice and research. Vulnerability is also a contested concept and has been criticized by many authors. It is often used in a stigmatizing way referring to individuals or groups associated with victimhood, deprivation, dependency or pathology. The aim of our ongoing research project is to use vulnerability as a critical concept. We argue that research should focus on vulnerable life situations instead of vulnerable individuals or groups. We want to turn the attention towards society, social conditions and institutions, including the welfare service system and even social work that are generating vulnerability, instead of seeing individuals as vulnerable. Thus, we argue that there is a need to reconsider and reformulate the way in which vulnerability is defined and used in social work practice and, in this case, especially in social work research.

In our paper, in order to search for an alternative, critical conceptualization, we will present a systematic literature review on how vulnerability as a concept has been used and defined in academic articles published in the international social work research journals and in journals of other relevant disciplines since the year 2000. We will ask 1.) What are the themes and topics studied that are related to vulnerability, 2.) What are the service user groups that are seen as vulnerable, 3.) How gender is related to vulnerability, and 4.) How the concept of vulnerability is defined in these academic articles. We find it important that social work researchers choose and use their concepts and theoretical approaches in a way that is not stigmatizing or victimizing service users, but instead, are empowering for them and helping them to see how social relations, structures and institutions are working and organizing their everyday world. Our paper addresses the conference theme Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users.

The paper is part of the research project "Transforming welfare service system from the standpoint of women in vulnerable life situations" (Academy of Finland, project no 294407, 2016-20).





## 382 | SOLIDDUS. Acts of Solidarity and Reducing Inequalities in Europe. Perspectives from Social Work

*Patricia Melgar, (Universitat de Girona, Spain)*

*Ariadna Munté (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)*

*Teresa Plaja (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)*

*Miguel Ángel Pulido-Rodríguez (Ramon Llull University - School of Social Education and Social Work Pere Tarres, Spain)*

**Keywords:** solidarity, empowerment, social justice, citizenship

Social work considers into its definition the reciprocity within the communities as a basic principle for achieving individual human rights. In that way, the H2020 Project SOLIDUS (2015-2018) "Solidarity in European societies: empowerment, social justice and citizenship" (Grant Number 649489) researches about how acts of solidarity produce changes in a structural level, for example, in social policies. SOLIDUS permits us to extract elements that guide the practice of social workers independently from their field of action.

Specifically, this project analyses in depth what successful acts of solidarity are being developed across Europe, combating the current economic crisis through active citizens as involved actors and constructing more inclusive and prosperous societies.

To cover this objective, effects of these actions in five social areas are being studied in depth: housing, education, employment, health and civic engagement. Particularly, this paper aims to explore the contributions of three cases developed in Spain that focus on the field of social work, which constitute successful examples of how social policies can increase solidarity, active participation and empowerment among different territories and social groups. The case studies were analysed using communicative methodology. Specifically, we have analysed the barriers and drivers of the key elements identified from literature review on solidarity (e.g. pluralism, democracy or social and political impact).

**The three success case studies are:**

1) the 'PAH', the Platform of Affected by Mortgage, which had succeed in its process to change laws that affected people that cannot pay their mortgage. Among other remarkable actions and outcomes, their ILP (Popular Legislative Initiative) was approved.

2) The Integrated Plan for the Roma in Catalonia 2014-2016 (Spain), that has been promoted by the Department of Social





Welfare of the Government of Catalonia, different policy initiatives in education are being carried out which has contributed to improve the living conditions of the Roma in Catalonia. The results show that absenteeism has been drastically reduced (from more than 35% to less than 3% in one of the schools involved). Furthermore, the participation of Roma families in the schools has increased more than a 30%.

3) 'Mind your eye' action, a social response that emerged from the union in solidarity of friends and family of Ester Quintana, an innocent women injured by a rubber bullet shoot by Catalan police. Before her, four other people were injured losing their eyes, like Mrs Quintana, but none of them had succeeded in their legal allegations against the use of rubber bullets by Catalan police. Thanks to the actions implemented from 'mind your eye' movement, Catalan police was banned from using rubber bullets. We will present some evidences about why the 'mind your eye' movement was able to develop successful actions with political impact.

These three initiatives (among other 60 experiences of different countries that the Solididus' consortium is analysing) will be presented and justified as examples of how social policies can stimulate forms of solidarity and empowerment within social workers and communities, which are successful and potentially scalable in the European context.

## 294 | The exercise of co-responsible participation in prisons as a positive element for reinsertion

*Txus Morata (Ramon Llull University - School of Social Education and Social Work Pere Tarres, Spain)*

*Miguel Ángel Pulido-Rodríguez, (Ramon Llull University - School of Social Education and Social Work Pere Tarres, Spain)*

*Jordi Enjuanes (Catalan Department of Justice, Spain)*

*Xavier Escribano (Pere Tarres Foundation, Spain)*

**Keywords:** participation, citizenship, prison, pro-social competencies, empowerment, social development, co-responsibility, reinsertion, social inclusion

Social capabilities are a key factor in the success of social rehabilitation processes for prison inmates. Still, most of prison models don't promote or have inner structures capable of transmitting to their inmates the necessary social abilities to



cope with the numerous demands of life in freedom. This study, conducted in Therapeutic and Educational Unit (UTE) of Villabona prison, Spain, presents a model of participation which improves the empowerment of inmates and their prosocial competencies with a view to promoting a greater degree of involvement in outside society.

The research methodology employed to carry out the study was a participatory evaluation, using the next qualitative research techniques: 4 discussion groups with six inmates participating in each, 31 in-depth interviews and 27 life histories. Atlas.ti was the codification tool used for analysis and evaluation. The results disclosed that the application of structures and methods that favour learning and the exercise of co-responsible participation in prisons is beneficial in for the creation of citizens committed to social development, thus enhancing dynamics that contribute to the success of inmates' reintegration into society.

To this end, the UTE proposes a social organisation in which all of the stakeholders (prison professionals, inmates, families and tertiary sector organisations) participate in the construction and direct experience of a micro-society. This participation process is carried out by means of operational learning of co-responsibility, dialogue and conflict resolution which, through structures and mechanisms of promotion and activation (mutual support groups, support figures, cooperative working), contribute to the development of active and committed citizenship possible upon release from prison. Although this proposal can be controversial given the change of the relationship within inmates and surveillance professionals, it has proven a greater success in social reinsertion of exiting inmates.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 4.3

### **Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users**

#### *Service user perspectives*

(Chair: Maja Lundemark Andersen)  
Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.  
Room: 6.2 - Nordkraft

### **83 | A failure of recognition? Birth parents and adoption in England**

*Brid Featherstone (University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom)*  
*Anna Gupta (Royal Holloway, London University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** adoption, loss, ethics

The current government in England has promoted the adoption of children from out of home care as a key means of improving their life chances. Adoption involves the permanent severance of all legal ties between birth parents and their children through a series of court processes that are normally contested by parents. While most other countries in Europe do allow for the adoption of children without parental consent, few promote this as a favoured disposal for children from care and developments in England have become the subject of concern across Europe.

The British Association of Social Workers is the largest membership body for social workers in the UK. Its code of ethics commits members to promoting social justice and ethical standards of practice. As a result of both national and international debates about adoption, it has commissioned an enquiry into the role of the social worker in this area with a focus on ethics and human rights. The authors of this abstract are leading this enquiry. It commenced in May 2016 and will last for one year and is collecting written and verbal evidence from a wide range of stakeholders including birth parents, adoptive parents, adoptees, social workers and lawyers. One of the methods being used involve all parts of the adoptive process coming together in dialogue.

In this presentation we focus on the themes in relation to loss and silence emerging from the analysis of evidence from birth



parents which complicates their ability to 'speak' in such forums as well as more generally.

Fraser (2008) analyses the three dimensions of social injustice as institutionalised obstacles in the areas of distributive injustice; status inequality or misrecognition, and misrepresentation. Thus, people lack material resources, voice and parity of representation. Accounts from birth parents often contain examples of all three obstacles. Poverty is an overriding issue and frames the contexts in which they seek to do and display family and in how their practices are judged. Lack of voice is a vital issue throughout the process, and especially where cuts in legal aid have impacted and there are few organisational means by which they can seek representation.

However we are finding a further element of the societal context within which these obstacles operate that impacts very profoundly on such parents. They are simply unable to 'speak their loss' because they are not seen as legitimate inhabitants of a grieving position. As one mother noted: 'once you are named as a child abuser and your child is removed, no one wants to know you'. Judith Butler has argued that the terms by which we are recognised as human are socially articulated and changeable and asks us to interrogate: who can be heard, whose suffering can be grieved for in specific social contexts. We will draw from her analysis to suggest possibilities for an ethically invigorated project for social work research in this most complex area of social work.

### 151 | Investigating Dignified and Inclusive Health and Social Care for Older Trans\* People in Wales through the TrAC Project

*Paul Willis, (Bristol University, United Kingdom)*

*Michele Raithby (Swansea University, United Kingdom)*

*Dobbs Christine (Swansea University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** Trans\*, older people, social care, participatory research, Wales

A recent equalities Parliamentary report in the UK (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016) identified pervasive transphobia in public services, including health services. The TrAC Project (Trans\* Ageing and Care), based at Swansea and Bristol Universities, is a mixed-methods study that examines the extent to which current health and social



care provision for older trans\* people in Wales is inclusive and anti-discriminatory, in order to identify good practice and make wider recommendations for change. Most current trans\* research focuses on younger people or medical interventions (Baker & Maegusuku-Hewett, 2011). Here we report on the current state of knowledge about trans\* people in later life, the participatory values of the research, and the project's findings and impacts to date.

A fundamental principle of the research is working in partnership with trans\* and older LGBT community organisations to honour the centrality of trans\* people's voices at all levels and stages of the project. This includes a critical reference group, recruitment of trans\* community members as peer life history interviewers with older trans\* people, and specialist therapeutic support from a trans\* counsellor. The interviews are based on older trans\* participants' life histories, focussing on their experiences of contact with health and social care services at key transition points, sources of support and concerns, and hopes for the future. The interviews also incorporate a convoy model to examine social relations and their significance across the life course (Antonucci et al., 2014). The perspectives of health and social care practitioners and their understanding of trans\* issues are also surveyed, with the objective of disseminating findings through digital stories, social media and workshops with older trans\* people and practitioners to promote better future practice.

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## 208 | Safeguarding service users within a female forensic mental health secure inpatient service

*Jane Shears (St Andrew's Healthcare, United Kingdom)*

*Sam Smith (St Andrew's Healthcare, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** forensic mental health, management of violence, safeguarding vulnerable adults

The focus of this paper is the management of safe practice within a secure inpatient environment. Social workers have a critical and pivotal role in the management of complex safeguarding incidents. Organisations in the UK providing care and treatment have a statutory obligation to ensure that people in their care are appropriately protected either from harm to self or harm from others. The administrative requirements around safeguarding incidents are also statutorily defined.

The study is set in a specialist psychiatric hospital in the female mental health care pathway. This includes both secure care as well as open wards, and the majority of service users have forensic as well as mental health issues. There is therefore, a complex range of safeguarding issues.

### **Methodology**

Social workers in the service collected data over a 2 year period (April 2014 – March 2016). Each record of a safeguarding incident was reviewed, including the circumstances around the incident itself and the subsequent management plan developed to keep the service user safe. The information was recorded on a bespoke data base developed by social workers to collect accurate data, and in the data collection period, 592 incidents were recorded.

The database was analysed using quantitative systems of interrogation.

### **Findings**

Around half of all incidents involved physical violence or aggressive acts by perpetrators on victims. Women admitted from prison were more likely to be perpetrators. The majority of perpetrators were also more likely to have a diagnosis of Personality Disorder or a Severe Mental Illness. 88% had two or more diagnoses. There were a significantly small number of women who were responsible for repeated acts of violence and aggression towards others. 75% of incidents involved service users with other service users. Relational security was a cross cutting theme, that is problematic interpersonal relationships





seemed to trigger incidents. There were more incidents when women were in a medium secure environment than on a low secure or open ward.

Management plans were developed which took into account the service users involved, the nature of the incident, and identification of patterns of incidents. A clear focus developed on the positive and safe management of relationships between service users taking into account risk and human rights.

### **Implications for practice**

The presentation ends with a review of the innovative and creative safeguarding practices being implemented within a female mental health setting, to minimise the harm to others. Profiling 'hot spots', building positive relationships and contingency planning between service users to managing more effectively managing violent and repeat offenders.

## **229 | Everyday struggle: Parents' perspective on services for autistic children**

*Sofiya An (Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan)*

*Chee Kai Chan (Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan)*

**Keywords:** social services, autism, children, post- Soviet social policy

The detection and professional care for children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in Kazakhstan, a post-Soviet Central Asia state, are still lagging behind the developed countries. Autism was not included in the Soviet classification of psychiatric disorders; instead cases of ASD were registered (and treated) under other names (e.g., oligophrenia, schizophrenia). Next, in the Soviet welfare system the main approach to the provision of care for children with special needs was children's residential institutions, as opposed to home and community-based care (UNICEF, 2004). Parents of children with disabilities were encouraged or pressured to place children in residential institutions. Community-based social services and social work were absent as a result of the Soviet official discourse of the denial of social problems (Iarskaia-Smirnova & Romanov, 2009).

Since becoming independent, Kazakhstan has been implementing multiple social welfare reforms, and since the



2000s, community-based social services have got recognition as a publicly funded welfare institution. While the detection of children with special needs has increased, the development of quality care for children with special needs has been slow (An, 2014). This study is driven by the following research question: What are the perspectives of parents of children with ASD on the healthcare, educational and social services available them in the community? The study utilizes a person-centered approach to the planning and designing of healthcare and social services (Hodgetts et al, 2013; Picker Institute, 2016).

We employ an exploratory qualitative research design. Data have been collected via focus groups with family caregivers. Qualitative data have been analyzed using open coding, axial coding, and selective coding procedures (Charmaz, 2000; Creswell, 2007).

The preliminary thematic analysis points to the following gaps in existing programs:

- (1) the lack of early detection and interventions for children with ASD and their families;
- (2) the lack of capacity of health care providers and educators;
- (3) stigma attached to disability among the general public.

To conclude, this project addresses an important area of health, social and educational policy in Kazakhstan. The focus on parents' perspective on services is new in the context of post-Soviet social policy. By identifying gaps in social policy and service provision, the project findings will assist the government's effort to strengthen health care, social service provision and special education for children with ASD.

### 238 | Uncovering Older adults attitudes towards discussing sexual health issues/concerns with Social Workers

*Margaret Salisu (Silberman School of Social Welfare at Hunter College, NY Graduate Center, USA)*

**Keywords:** attitudes, social work, older adults, sexuality

As the older population in the U.S is increasing, so does their sexual activity (Goodson 2010). Increased sexual activity is associated with successful ageing (Gott&Hunchliff, 2003), as evidenced by positive physical, social, and emotional health indicators (Bash, Mortimer, VandeWeerd, & Corvin, 2013).



However, available studies are showing that this population does not discuss their sexuality with anyone. (Bradway & Beard, 2015).

The non expression of older adult's sexuality has been linked to the ageist culture of our society which often equates sexuality to the behavior of the youth. This produces a social construction that reduces old age to asexual (Bradway & Beard, 2015). As such those that internalize this stereotype view their sexuality as private and the ones that are expressive are stigmatized. Another challenge discussed in the literature, is that the older adults face discrimination from providers who hold on to asexual misconception (Marcus, 2002). Such experiences of stigmatization and discrimination create crisis for the older population with regard to their sexual health. Evidence is building that older adults are becoming increasingly receptive to discussing their sexual health with health professionals. Many healthcare professionals are involved with the care of older persons, yet little is known about with whom this older population is most comfortable discussing their sexual needs and concerns.

Possibly, far more than most professional groups, social workers have had the highest level of comfort with discussing sexuality and behaviors with older adults (Farrell & Belza, 2012). Nonetheless, there is dearth of research available to assess whether older adults are comfortable discussing their sexual health concerns with social workers.

The aim of the study was to uncover older adults' attitudes towards discussing sexual health issues with social workers.  
Project Methodology:

We used the instrument of multidimensional sexuality questionnaires to measure older adults' perceptions toward discussing sexual health issues with social workers in senior centers in NYC. We collected 110 surveys and only 75 were completed and used for the data analysis. Logistic regression was used to model the likelihood of being sexually active, of having frequent sexual problems and discussing sexual concerns with social workers. To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine older adult's attitudes towards discussing their sexual needs and concerns with social workers.

**Findings:**

Our survey uncovered significant perceptions of older adults with regards to the role and competence of social workers in meeting their sexual health needs. Though the older adults are more open to discussing their sexual needs with professionals, eighty percent of the respondents do not think that Social workers are best trained and knowledgeable about sexual health. Of health care professionals, social workers are the least likely to be approached for sexual issues and concerns.

**Implications:**

Older adults are becoming increasingly receptive to discussing their sexual health with health professionals. Social work is uniquely positioned to promote this communication and to play an active role in enhancing the quality of conversations about sexual health concerns between older adults and their providers in the healthcare continuum.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 4.4

### Theme 4: Social work research as a framework for social work education

(Chair: Maria Inês Amaro)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.

Room: 6.3 - Nordkraft

#### 48 | A Case Study of Applied Scholarship: The British Journal of Social Work 1971-2013

*Hannah Jobling (University of York, United Kingdom)*

*Ian Shaw (University of York, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** journals, history, scholarship

A case study of British Journal of Social Work 1971-2013. The BJSW is the most continuous instance of applied social work scholarship stemming from the UK. Our methods included archive and documentary research, oral histories and analysis of journal content for the final year of the eleven editorial regimes. We here focus on journal content and examine four questions. Who has written for the journal? How can we describe and profile the journal content? How far is it possible to differentiate within this general picture? Are trends discernible over the history of the journal?

Articles under the eleven regime sample years totalled 483. 257 (53.9%) were first authored by men and 220 (46.1%) by women. There is evidence that the gender balance in published social work scholarship shifts over time, and that the proportion of women as first authors is higher now than at some previous periods.

The BJSW is largely a record of UK social work scholarship, but the BJSW is far from being only a UK journal. More than one in four articles have been first authored by those outside the UK. Almost half of the articles dealt with either 'understanding, developing, assessing or evaluating social work practices', or attempting to 'understand or explain issues related to risk.' It remains an open question how far the problems and questions that preoccupy social work researchers shift over time, or are distinctive to the field.

60% of the articles drew directly on empirical work. Of these a little under sixty percent were wholly qualitative, and just over thirty percent wholly quantitative. About one in ten were mixed



methods. Quantitative methods had a period of relative ascendancy in the middle years of the journal, but fell off rather dramatically after the turn of the century. However, the actual number of quantitative social work studies has risen steadily, as the size of the journal has grown, though the rise in absolute numbers is even more striking for qualitative studies.

Women were significantly over-represented among first authors of qualitative articles, and men similarly over-represented among authors of quantitative articles.

There were marked developments in writing styles comparing later BJSW with predecessor journal (Social Work) and early BJSW.

- Style and volume of citation
- There was a stronger USA-directed gaze in early articles.
- Few early empirical articles made reference to research literature or indeed any literature.
- The treatment of others with formal respect comes through occasionally in early writing. This was carried through to how men and women were referred to in the journal.
- Some language categories are strikingly different from what later would be acceptable or appropriate.
- Immediacy: e.g. correspondence. There is a sense of exchange and a small scholarly community in early articles that is rarely found later.

The implications regarding change, tensions and continuity are drawn out, and light shed on whether social work is a discipline, has discipline-like qualities, or is a field with boundaries enclosing diverse borrowings, applications and adaptations.

## 116 | Living labs as spaces for knowledge production, education, and practice innovation

*Judith Metz (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** practice research, education, stakeholders, innovation, collaboration

### **Background and purpose**

In Amsterdam, the Netherlands, five youth work providers, three youth work education programs and youth work research started





the living lab portfolio Youth Work with the aim to strengthen the professionalization of youth work practice. A living lab is a space where students, teachers, youth workers and researchers work together in education, knowledge production and practice development. Aim of the paper is to reflect on six years experience of collaboration with students, teachers, youth workers, and researchers in education, knowledge production and practice innovation. Central question is: how to address the specific interests of youth work education, youth work practice and youth work research and contribute to the professionalization of youth work?

### **Method**

Single case study. The design of the living lab is based on literature of social work practice research and research methods. The evaluation is based on the annually verbal evaluation with all participants, annually student questionnaires and eight group interviews with management and youth workers/teachers (one for each organisation). The group interviews were held in Amsterdam and Utrecht, the Netherlands spring 2016.

### **Results**

The paper consists of two parts. It starts with the presentation of living lab as model for education, knowledge production and practice innovation. Then, six years of experience with the collaboration from the perspective of youth work education (teachers and students), youth work practice and youth work research will be shared. The outcomes will make visible that the expectations concerning knowledge production and youth work education are met, while the contribution to practice development stays behind.

### **Conclusions and implications**

The single case study shows that the living lab is a possible way for collaboration with different stakeholders on the professionalization of youth work. Strength of this approach is the use of the specific interests and roles of individual stakeholders. Because the collaboration is not part of the primary process of all participants, it takes much effort to keep the stakeholders to their agreements. Only the aims that are integral part of the lab are achieved.



## 312 | Practice Development: a relevant professionalization strategy for social work(ers)?

*Mariël Van Pelt (HAN University of Applied Sciences, HMP, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** practice development, professionalization, masters programme in Social Work

The Netherlands lacked a Masters Programme in Social Work until 2008. In that year a new Masters Programme started at HAN University of Applied Sciences. It was a result of a joint effort of stakeholders in Dutch social work to stimulate professionalization of social work(ers). This raised the question what the contribution of the programme is to professionalization of social work(ers) and it was the starting point of a PhD project. The empirical research project consists of four different studies. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used. In this presentation we focus on the second and third study, their results and the implications for, bottom-up, professionalization of social work(ers) and the content of Master education for social workers.

In the first study, a retrospective plan evaluation, the implicit notions and expectations stakeholders have about the purpose of the programme are explored by a concept-mapping procedure, in which 39 stakeholders participated. The most remarkable finding is a shift from development of the profession to practice development.

Practice development (PD), however, is a rather ill-defined strategy in nursing for developing effective and patient-centered care. Hence, the second study focuses on the following question: what is PD in nursing and is it relevant for social work? The first part of the question is investigated by a narrative literature review (N=43). For the second part a 3 round Delphi study is conducted in which 17 experts participate. The results show that PD is a multidimensional construct, which is relevant for social work if adjusted to the normative, situational and constructive nature of social work and a distinction is made between PD as systematic activity and the PD-er: a highly skilled professional that initiates and facilitates PD. PD in social work consists of three core elements: Evidence Based Practice (EBP), cooperation and accommodation. The latter two elements are considered conditional for EBP. For the Masters Programme it means that much attention should be paid to multiperspectivism, collaborative leadership and constructive social work.



In study 3, the concept of PD in social work is validated for one population. The research question is: do social workers conduct PD and if so which activities do they conduct? A digital questionnaire is developed in which the main activities (see study 2) are operationalised in 50 statements. Respondents (N=169) are social workers with a bachelor degree. Factor-analyses shows that these social worker hardly conduct PD. Activities regarding knowledge use (EBP) have the lowest scores. This raises the question if educational level or position have consequences for the extent in which social workers conduct PD.

This is investigated in study 4. The concept of PD is validated for another population consisting of both bachelor and master educated social workers . Our hypothesis is that master educated social workers perform better on PD than bachelor educated professionals and work from positions which enable them to do so. Data is collected by a digital questionnaire (N= 193). Factor-analysis and regression analysis will be conducted next winter.

### 236 | The challenge of inhabiting uncertainty in professional judgement – the voices of social work students

*Joanna Rawles (London South Bank University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** professional judgement, uncertainty, social work students, social work education, professional confidence, doubt

Uncertainty is often cited as a characteristic of social work practice e.g. Taylor & White 2006; van de Luitgaarden 2009, but little is known of how students experience it, what they understand by it and what part it plays in their learning and development.

In this paper I will present some of the findings of a Doctoral research project into how social work students develop skills of professional judgement. In this phenomenological study I used practice-based research, with a critical incident approach, to explore the “authentic professional learning” (Webster-Wright 2009) of students at the point of qualification. My intention was to move away from a focus on research that assesses the adequacies of students’ professional judgement to a position of engaging them as stakeholders in generating knowledge about learning and expertise development.



The complexities of grappling with uncertainty and doubt loomed large for the students as they took on increasing responsibility during their social work placements. The expectation to formulate, communicate and justify their professional judgement manoeuvred them into a position of having to confront this uncertainty and to understand and acknowledge their role in finding a path through it. The uncertainty and doubt in the circumstances of the families with whom the students' worked was often mirrored by self-doubt for the students about their own abilities and in whether the judgements they were making were "right". As one participant said "it made me realise that social work can be really scary because what if I wasn't right?" This had the potential to undermine their professional confidence and block further expertise development. Yet it also created an opportunity as it was through this reflection on the role of the social worker that the students began to appreciate that uncertainty was not a reflection of their inadequacies and inexperience but was an expected component of social work practice and professional judgement. It was then that they began to more comfortably inhabit that uncertain space rather than perceiving it as an indication of their inability to know the "right answer".

This transformation of the students' learning was often skilfully facilitated by the practice educator (field supervisor) within the placement setting as their responses to the students' self-doubt often appeared pivotal to the students' accounts of the development of their professional judgement skills. I would argue that in social work education we need to be more alert to the role of uncertainty, not just as an inevitable facet of social work practice but as a possible vehicle for change in students, particularly as it appears to have the potential for either negative or positive change.

Webster-Wright, A. (2009). Reframing professional development through understanding authentic professional learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 702–739.

van De Luitgaarden, G. (2007). Evidence-based practice in social work: Lessons from judgment and decision-making theory. *British Journal of Social Work*, 39, 243–260

Taylor, C., & White, S. (2006). Knowledge and reasoning in social work: Educating for humane judgment. *British Journal of Social Work*, 36, 937–954



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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 4.5

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### **Theme 6: Research on different forms of partnerships/cooperation – including power and conflicts in social work**

(Chair: Maria Irene Carvalho)

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.

Room: 10.15 – Nordkraft

#### **272 | On categorization and symbolic power in social work - the myth of the resourceful parents to children with neuro-psychiatric diagnoses**

*Cecilie Kolonda Moesby-Jensen (Metropolitan University College, Denmark)*

*Tommy Moesby-Jensen (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark)*

**Keywords:** categorization, conflictual collaboration, neuro-psychiatric diagnoses, social workers practice, vulnerable children

Social workers often use the term resourceful about a certain group of parents to children with neuro-psychiatric diagnoses, e.g. autism spectrum disorder and ADHD. This paper discusses the consequences of this sort of categorization with particular regard to the collaboration between these parents and the social workers as they meet in the social system, when the parents apply for help for their children. Thus, the paper investigate:

1. How can Danish authority social workers' experience with collaboration with resourceful parents be characterized?
2. How do Danish resourceful parents experience contacts and collaboration with authority social workers in a social welfare department for family and children and what problems can in this respect be identified?

The study is based upon a six months long sociological field-work study which includes participant observation in a social welfare department for family and children in a large Danish municipality, as well as eight individual semi-structured interviews with authority social workers, working exclusively with cases where the children has a neuro-psychiatric diagnoses, e.g. autism spectrum disorder and ADHD. In addition, two individual semi-structured interviews with special



educational consultants (home tutors) from the department were conducted. Also three focus group discussions with authority social workers (handicap consultants) were conducted. A total of 20 authority social workers participated in interviews and focus group discussions. There were also conducted individual semi-structured interviews with 9 parents of children with a neuro-psychiatric diagnosis - primarily autism. All interviewed parents had a child with a case in a social welfare department for family and children. Furthermore, all the parents had a higher education, and most were in work - they all belonged to the category that social workers described as resourceful.

A qualitative content analysis with an emphasis on meaning condensation of informants' statements including identification of natural meaning units was conducted.

Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu, it is suggested that the categorization resourceful is not only overly simplistic and a myth, but is straight out misleading and complicates the interaction – in fact it represents an act of symbolic power. It is shown, that even though social workers seem to acknowledge the difficult and grueling life-situation of the parents, they are first and foremost perceived as resourceful and knowledgeable but hence also as annoying, insufferable, demanding and basically unjustified, even though they have obvious legal rights. Parents and social workers alike described the collaboration as being conflictual and a struggle and the complex power-relations are discussed in the light of Bourdieu.

The myth - and thus the idea of a special parent group - causes the social workers to focus too much on the parents instead of the child, as the Danish legislation (Act on Social Services) try to accommodate. When one is obliged to use categorizations it must be done reflective, critical and with willingness to constantly ask about the categorization and allow a sufficient nuance. It requires a reflexive attitude, where we are constantly willing to challenge the doxa, which is part of one's own field.





## 162 | “We’ve all got our different stories”: mothers and project workers speaking about group support for parents who have lost children to care

*Linda Bell (Middlesex University, United Kingdom)*

*Rachel Herring (Middlesex University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** family support, child removal, parents, partnership

Debates about supporting birth parents whose children are removed due to child protection concerns are increasingly reported internationally. These issues are particularly difficult to resolve where families experience successive removals of children from home into care (e.g. Broadhurst and Mason, 2013). Research suggests these complex, highly contested situations reveal potential for conflict between child welfare and the welfare of their parents (Gilbert, Parton and Skivenes, 2011); furthermore, support for birth parents experiencing removal of their children can be lacking. In the UK, several initiatives have been set up to support parents (particularly mothers) who have experienced removal of their children, including successive removals; similar initiatives endeavouring to empower parents whose children experience out of home care are reported elsewhere (for example in Norway, by Slettebø , 2013).

One UK initiative was set up to offer peer group support and professional intervention to mothers whose children have been successively removed. This initiative is in its early stages and was set up as a pilot study involving group meetings, activities and professional support to a small group of women. The current researchers were firstly involved in obtaining the perspectives of mothers about their experiences of losing children to care, which then contributed to the development of this local initiative.

We are reporting here a follow up stage in our research where, after the first pilot cycle of group support in 2016, we interviewed staff working in the initiative in depth, and held a focus group with five women who had participated in the group. The project data reveal what staff and participants believe the initiative is meant to achieve and explores their experiences of participating. We identified some similar issues revealed by Slettebø and colleagues (2013), for example: issues of power and control in the support group; differing perspectives of participating mothers and workers; deep feelings of loss experienced by parents; and the significance of professional intervention as well as peer support. Our study also suggests



other important factors particularly relevant to the UK context; these include funding issues and the significance of successive removals of children and of adoption without parental consent occurring in the UK (which is less common elsewhere in Europe).

We intend this paper to encourage further discussion about these complex issues and the implications for professional practice.

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Broadhurst, K and Mason, C (2013) Maternal outcasts: raising the profile of women who are vulnerable to successive, compulsory removals of their children – a plea for preventative action *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 35 (3) : 291 – 304

Gilbert, N., Parton, N and Skivenes, M (eds.) (2011) *Child protection systems: international trends and orientations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Slettebø, T (2013) Partnership with Parents of Children in Care: A Study of Collective User Participation in Child Protection Services. *British Journal Of Social Work* 43: 579–595 doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcr188

### 366 | “Interviewing” Juvenile Court’s case files: a quantitative research on Italian foster care

*Camilla Landi (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)*

**Keywords:** foster care, documentary analysis, juvenile court, case files

#### Background and purpose

Foster care is a complex intervention in child protection and for social workers and Juvenile Courts it’s difficult to identify exactly the outcomes of this care experience. Although his thirty-year history, in the Italian context, foster care represents a challenge, not only for social workers, but also for the Court that decide it, for children and their families and for foster families. This contribute presents a PhD research on foster care projects decided by the Juvenile Court of Milan, in Italy. The research is firstly based on an international literature review of researches on foster care with the aim to identify factors for a good foster care project and to create a scheme of success indicators. Starting from the indications emerged from the literature review, the aim of the research was to realize a



description of foster care projects decided by the Juvenile Court of Milan from 2010 to 2014. The data collected are analyzed considering the factors for a good foster care placement identified through the literature review.

### **Methods**

Following a quantitative method, the main part of the research focused on Juvenile Court's case files analysis. Reports written by social workers, Juvenile Court's documents, Court hearings reports (reports of the meetings between the judge and people involved) are of researcher's interest. The information about foster care project contained in the documents are collected by a questionnaire, that consists of more 90 items. The sample consisted of 308 children for whom the Juvenile Court decided foster care placement. The documentary analysis aimed to recognize and to describe the foster care projects, considering key aspects arisen from the literature review, such as the matching and planning the foster placement, the work with birth families, foster families and foster children, the contacts between the child and his family, the relationship between the two families, the support to foster placement, the project's conclusion and the possible reunification.

### **Results**

An overview about the children's placement before and after foster care is offered by the research. The case files analysis highlighted that the contacts between the child and his family and the support to birth family during the foster care are well documented. Little information about matching between child and foster family and about children's hearing in the planning phase can be found in most of the case files. In a few cases, information about foster care are found in the documents. Furthermore, the participation of birth families in decision-making processes and in their son's daily life is poorly documented in the case files.

### **Conclusions and implications**

This study offers an overview on social work practice in foster care placement in Italy, highlighting also the partnership among different welfare services and the Juvenile Court. The results encourage a reflection on aspects considered important in foster care by social workers in the child protection and the other protagonists of this important care experience.



## 216 | Social work relationships with parents of older children in early adoptive family life

*Claire Palmer (Cardiff University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** adoption, parenting, children and families, transitions to parenthood, power dynamics, partnership working, support

Families who adopt older children have been found to experience additional challenges compared to those who adopt younger children (Selwyn and Meakings, 2015; Selwyn et al., 2014). In this paper, adoptive parents' experiences of early post-placement support are discussed, including the ways in which professional advice is used or disregarded by new adoptive parents and the extent to which professional support is considered a help or hindrance.

Qualitative narrative analysis was carried out on in-depth interviews with parents from fourteen adoptive families to consider social work relationships from the perspective of adoptive parents. All families within the sample were interviewed approximately nine months after having an older child (aged four or over) placed with them. The sample includes, 11 sets of heterosexual couple adopters, 1 set of same-sex couple adopters and two single adopters. The families are a sub-sample of families interviewed as part of a larger study of early adoptive family life, conducted in Wales, UK.

Interactions with social workers were mixed in how helpful they were considered. Families experienced some difficulties eliciting support from social workers as they were aware that they were being assessed. The impact of mixed messages from social work advice on adoptive family life is considered. Some social workers were reported to react defensively when working with families in need of support and this caused barriers to building effective working relationships. A common experience amongst families was that changes in social worker caused challenges in the maintenance of a trusting relationship. Several families noted that their child became agitated when the social worker visited as they were concerned that they would be removed from the family home, and parents needed to 'pick up the pieces' after the social worker had left.

This paper explores the challenges of working effectively with newly formed adoptive families and explores power dynamics within working relationships. Examples of good practice are highlighted and recommendations are made for improving



working relationships.

### References

Selwyn, J., and S. Meakings, 2015, *Beyond the Adoption Order (Wales): Discord and disruption in adoptive families*, Bristol, University of Bristol: School for Policy Studies.

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## 423 | Children's Participation in the Family from a Cross-Culture Perspective

*Nina Tryggvason (University West, Sweden)*

**Keywords:** children, participation, family, cross-culture

Children's Participation is generally expected to promote well-being and ultimately lead to children developing skills that endorse civic activity and democratic society. In spite of this, limited knowledge of how to create a democratic family climate, is one of the problems with the realization of children's and young people's rights in everyday life. In recent years, there has also been criticism that the Children's Rights Convention (CRC), with its focus on the child's individual rights and participation mostly interpreted as influence in decision-making have universalistic claims and want to set a global standard on how a childhood should be. Critics argue that participation is not just about influence in decision-making, but also to participate in common activities in the family, for example doing things together, taking care of each other and helping out in the household. The purpose of my study, of which this presentation is part, is to investigate how 10-year old children in different parts of the world perceive their participation in decision-making processes and activities in their families and to find out how these opportunities and expectations vary depending on contextual factors at different levels.

My presentation has its base in an international research project Parenting Across Cultures (PAC) that started 2007 and continues until 2017. The overall purpose of the PAC project is to advance our understanding of parenting and children in a diverse set of countries and cultures. 1300 families from 13 cultural groups in 9 countries participate.



The presentation will focus on different ways to understand the concept of participation in different parts of the world and which contextual factors that can contribute to our understanding of children's participation in their families. The children answered questions about their participation in decision-making processes; how often they were expected to be involved in activities in the family and how safe they felt in their neighbourhood. In addition, background data on gender, family status, and religious affiliation were used in the analysis. Preliminary analysis shows that the children's perceptions are connected to the levels of realization of children's rights and gender equality on a country level. There also seem to be a positive connection between feeling safe in the neighbourhood and participation. On a family level having more siblings seems to reduce possibilities to participate. The importance of religion for the parents also seems to contribute to children's perceptions. If their parents find religion important, children seem to feel more listened to and are expected to participate in activities in the family, but there are no connections between religion and feeling supported and encouraged to have influence in decision-making processes. These (preliminary) results have significance for social work with children and families in different ways. It shows which contextual factors on different levels that can influence children's possibilities to participate. It also shows that these factors may influence children in different ways depending on where in the world they live and how participation is interpreted.





## SYMPOSIUM 10

### 145 | Spatial Approaches to Social Work – Research on conflicts, barriers and possibilities in socio-spatial contexts

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.  
Room: 3.3.17 - Nordkraft

*Christian Spatscheck, (Hochschule Bremen, City University of Applied Sciences / and DGSA – German Association of Social Work (board member), Germany)*

*Claudia Steckelberg (Hochschule Neubrandenburg – University of Applied Sciences Neubrandenburg/ as well as DGSA – German Association of Social Work (board member), Germany) and Michaela Köttig (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences/ as well as DGSA – German Association of Social Work (chair), Germany)*

**Keywords:** spatial approach to social work, empirical research, theory, action research, participatory research, methodology, social work, social pedagogy, youth, homelessness, ageing

This symposium argues for a conceptual and empirical consideration of spatial approaches in social work. Spatial approaches follow a relational and multi-level understanding of human subjects and social spaces. Social spaces are regarded as interactive relations: They are created by the social actions and mental models of human subjects but also influence subjects through spatial structures that are shaped by discourses on power and norms and the material factors of local infrastructures, institutions, buildings, environment, etc. Hence, this approach takes a view beyond individualistic, clinical, and single-case oriented concepts of social work, and also rejects the idea of fixed social entities that cannot be altered and changed. Instead it argues for relational and multi-level approaches in social work that are aimed to foster the development of human subjects and social environments. And, on an empirical level, this paradigm enables interesting collaborations between social work practitioners and researchers and supports a research based practice.

In the German debate of social work (which always included approaches of social work and social pedagogy) the idea of social spaces (Sozialräume) became a significant conceptual reference especially since the early 1990s. Since then, a broader discussion on the concept of social spaces and their relevance for theory and practice of social work emerged.



Through these debates the approach of a “socio-spatial orientation” (Sozialraumorientierung) can now be regarded an own paradigm in the social work debate.

Although this paradigm is, except some examples, so far predominantly discussed in German contexts, there are many theoretical similarities to ecological and systemic approaches to social work, to approaches of community care and to community development as well as, here on a research perspective, to approaches of social geography. The big difference to the discussion in other countries and contexts is that socio-spatial approaches to social work are regarded to be a guiding model for all fields of intervention of social work, be it child and youth welfare, social work in contexts of health and disability, case management, etc., and not just in fields with explicit tasks of community development or youth and community work. And, more generally, a “spatial turn” cannot only be found in social work. Social theories around space found their recognition in very different academic disciplines, especially in the social sciences, humanities and cultural studies.

On empirical level, socio-spatial analyses (Sozialraumanalysen) are often carried out in social work research and practice development. Here, approaches of practice research and participatory action research are often applied in spatial contexts. A main focus of socio-spatial research is directed to the concepts and processes of the acquirement and collaborative design of spaces through subjects, and how subjects find and shape their individual and social development in such processes. Hence, many research projects in the field are following qualitative and reconstructive approaches. They are often connected to hermeneutic and lifeworld-oriented theories that argue the need to discover, understand and reconstruct the relation between subject and system. Some approaches of socio-spatial approaches are also including quantitative data on socio-structural features of spaces and develop mixed-methods approaches for a more integrative perspective.

On a practical level, socio-spatial analyses are also often applied to gain knowledge on needs, interests and potentials of service users and for participatory approaches of the development of concepts of social work organisations and institutions. Here, socio-spatial approaches are intended to support the modernisation of public and private welfare institutions and the integration of aspects of citizen participation, improved co-operation and democratic creation of



social services.

Abstracts of 300 words or less for each symposium paper.

### **1. Spatial Approaches to Social Work – An Introduction**

Christian Spatscheck/Michaela Köttig/Claudia Steckelberg

This short introducing presentation provides a main overview on the main concepts of the spatial paradigm to social work and its relevance for social work theory, research and practice development. It highlights the main concepts of the paradigm and the relevance of a relational and multi-level approach for social work theory, research and practice. And it introduces the main empirical and methodological aspects for the development of research projects with socio-spatial analyses as well as the conceptual framework for the then following presentation of the symposium papers 1-3.

### **2. Symposium paper 1 - Conflicts: Mental-maps of neighbourhoods – learning through research-oriented approaches**

Neighbourhoods have their own particular history of development and have developed their own unique dynamics of communal life. The balance of power among all those who live in a neighbourhood is the result of a process of development of the established and the outsiders, like described by Elias/Scotson in 1965. In order to understand the history as well as the current situation of a neighbourhood, the perspectives of the present day residents, as well as staff members in local agencies, volunteer organisations and businesses (such as youth centres, police, local companies) should be considered. In this way, spaces in the community become visible – places where people meet, but also spaces that exclude others and even spaces that cause fear. In this lecture a research project will be presented in which a neighbourhood in a medium-sized German city was the subject of research using interviews and the creation of a mental map of the history and current situation of the area. The results were exhibited and discussed in the neighbourhood. In this way, research could be combined with a social work approach.

### **3. Symposium paper 2: Barriers: Apart from and a part of the users' lifeworlds: low threshold services for homeless young people**

Claudia Steckelberg

Low threshold services offer support for young homeless people in a reliable open setting with an accepting and non-judgemental attitude. Day centres or night shelters are a social space within the users' lifeworlds, as they are not expected to



change their daily routines or to leave their peers and their everyday life in the street. Opening hours, location, rules and the methods and aims of professional help are adjusted to the lifeworlds of the young homeless. At the same time, there is a need to create a social space apart from the lifeworld in the street that offers an alternative and opens perspectives beyond homelessness and the rules and habits in the street. How are these contradictory requirements being met by both users and social workers in low threshold organizations? What conflicts arise from these situations and how are they being dealt with? The presentation is based on the results of a current research project that aims to analyse the methods, principles and qualities of low threshold services for young homeless people from the social worker's perspective as well as from that of the user. Using methods of qualitative social research, group discussions with social workers and with users of those low threshold organisations (who have lengthy experience of this concept) were conducted.

#### **4. Symposium paper 3 - Possibilities: Ageing populations and spatial potentials for integration and participation in the community – A systematic synopsis of six research projects**

Christian Spatscheck

This presentation focusses on six research projects in the field of ageing populations and their spatial integration and participation in local neighbourhoods. It is based on research projects that were funded by the German Federal funding series SILQUA – Social Quality of Life in Higher Age (Soziale Lebensqualität im Alter) which is focussed on identifying relevant aspects for the improvement of quality of life in societies with increasing ageing populations. The projects are situated in the cities of Cologne, Dortmund, Darmstadt, Leipzig, Dresden, and Düsseldorf and all of them are following a spatial approach to address their research questions. The presentation will focus on the main approaches and common spatial elements of the projects and their key results. On this basis the presentation will provide a systematic synopsis on the projects and their common focus on spatial settings as well as their approaches for finding social approaches to gerontology, activation, quality of life, acquirement of spaces and participation.



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## SYMPOSIUM 11

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### 260 | The contribution of social work research to the transdisciplinary research of sustainable society

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.  
Room: 6.7 - Nordkraft

*Aila-Leena Matthies, (University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, Finland)*

*Tuula Helne, (KELA- The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, Research Unit, Finland)*

*Susan P Kemp (University of Washington School of Social Work, USA)*

*Kati Närhi (University of Jyväskylä, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Finland)*

**Keywords:** transdisciplinary research, sustainability, concept of wellbeing, urbanization, environmental justice, ecosocial transition, person-in-environment

Today, the complex major global challenge concerns the question of how a radical and tangible transition towards a more sustainable society can be achieved. This question needs urgent attention due to the alarming environmental problems of the planet, the untenable direction of the global, national and local economy, as well as the persistence of social inequality and human suffering. Since the concept of sustainable development was made widely known by the Brundlandt report (1987), a wide range of scientific communities have been involved in setting an agenda to accomplish it. This has called for transdisciplinary, multi-professional and cross-sectoral efforts as well as multilevel political participation processes. They aim at balancing economic and social development with the limited resources of natural environment.

The symposium will challenge social work and social policy research by asking how they can contribute to the transdisciplinary debate on transition of societies towards sustainability. The debate on sustainable development and ecosocial, ecological, green or environmental social work has become a global topic also in social work. It is mainly focussing on the practical implications of taking the natural environment into consideration in social work, its meaning for professional awareness and social work education. Research on this topic is, however, yet in its early stages. In addition, until now the focus has remained mostly within the field of social work. In the proposed symposium our aim is to enlarge this discussion by





asking what could be the contribution of social work to the transdisciplinary research on sustainable societies. Based on recent studies, we will discuss what kind of special knowledge of social work and its research could be relevant for searching practical solutions and theoretical approaches to sustainability in a holistic perspective across disciplines and sectors. What is required from social work and social policy research for paving the way for a better future for our societies?

The symposium consists out of four presentations. First, Author 1 gives an overview of the current, still quite fragmented field of transdisciplinary research on sustainable societies, its different schools, concepts and main lines of debate. Author 2 reflects upon how a sustainable conceptualization of wellbeing based on a relational paradigm can contribute to the ecosocial transition and social work. In addition, 'the HDLB model', a relational, needs-based and multidimensional conceptualization of wellbeing is presented. Author 3's presentation examines the various models of organizing social work practice that shape the practitioners' understanding of the person in environment. Further, she analyzes how the organizational setting of social work practice prohibits and advances social workers' input on the ecosocial transition of society. Finally, drawing on leadership experiences in a broadly transdisciplinary initiative at a major US university focused on challenges and opportunities in contemporary cities, Author 4 details both significant opportunities for greater social work involvement in urban sustainability science and practice, and the challenges entailed in bringing social work knowledge and expertise to the heart of scientific and policy arenas customarily dominated by the natural sciences, technology, and engineering.

**Author 1: Transdisciplinary research of sustainable society – the controversy promising and challenging for the contribution of social work research**

This presentation will give an overview of the current fragmented field of transdisciplinary research on sustainable societies, its different schools, concepts and main lines of debate. This will identify the gaps of knowledge where social work has potentials to fill in. The different scientific traditions and cultures regarding methodology and concepts between social work research and the variety of schools in transdisciplinary research may be challenge. Another challenge comes from the still quite weak status of social work as an academic research-oriented discipline. However, we argue that social work has huge potentials for contributing to transdisciplinary research on sustainability. The contribution of social work research is not limited to the conventional 'social





issues' only but specifically to the interlinkages between the environment and the social as well as the economic and the social. Social work represents the core profession and discipline modern societies aim to use to fight against - or help to survive - any type of inequality in society. Social work agencies deal daily with the fatal consequences of unsustainability and are involved in creating practical solutions at the everyday level of citizens and communities. Emerging literature provides examples of how social work may be able to enable sustainable ecological living of communities and support a new sustainable economic base for income and well-being. Social work as a discipline is already conceptualised on a multidisciplinary scientific basis. Most of its practical fields are inherently multi-professional and cross-sectoral. These potentials have neither been explored by social work itself nor the existing transdisciplinary communities. The concept of social work itself may need a critical revision and enlargement. The research of social work may need experiences in entering to the transdisciplinary discussions.

**Author 2:** The relational conception of wellbeing as a catalyst for the ecosocial transition and as the bedrock of social work Exposed to mounting ecological havoc and social insecurity, our societies face a paradox of progress: the harder unlimited progress has been pursued, the more destruction has followed. An important explanation for this quandary lies in the confusion between economic prosperity and wellbeing. This befuddlement has legitimized relentless economic growth which has, however, proved to be both unjust and ecologically disastrous. To change the situation, a more sustainable conception of wellbeing is necessary. The need to elaborate the conception of wellbeing concerns social work, too. Even though the concept is ubiquitous, its meaning remains blurry. Social work thus requires a robust conceptualization of wellbeing that could be incorporated into its practices. A sustainable understanding of wellbeing could then become an integral tool in social work's mission to promote social change and development. In this presentation, I reflect upon how a sustainable conceptualization of wellbeing based on a relational paradigm could contribute to the ecosocial transition and social work. I begin by describing the relational paradigm. Second, I explain why a sustainable conceptualization of wellbeing should be needs-based. Third, I present 'the HDLB model': a relational, needs-based and multidimensional conceptualization of wellbeing. The model is founded on a conception of man not seen as 'homo economicus' but as 'homo iunctus', a relational being connected to his social and natural environment. The model involves setting limits to wealth and unsustainable consumption, and shifts the focus



away from mere 'Having' towards placing value on 'Loving', 'Being' and responsible and meaningful 'Doing'. The model could consequently function as a catalyst for the ecosocial transition and as the bedrock of social work. To conclude, I summarize the advantages of the proposed conceptualization and briefly discuss the role of social workers in the ecosocial transition.

#### **Author 4: Bringing Social Work Research and Practice to the Center of Urban Sustainability Efforts: The Urban@UW Initiative**

By 2050 an estimated 66% of the world's population will live in cities. Urbanization compounds the environmental risks associated with climate change and adds additional concerns, including rising social and economic inequality and strains on infrastructure, service systems, and urban ecologies. These closely coupled environmental and social challenges threaten human health and well-being, destabilizing assets, coping capacities, and response infrastructures, and further jeopardizing socially, economically, and psychologically vulnerable individuals and communities. Poor and marginalized communities are particularly at risk of further harms. Increasingly, researchers and policy makers recognize that interlocking social and environmental hazards require approaches to urban sustainability that closely connect social, physical, and technological responses, are grounded in a fundamental commitment to social equity, and fully engage, in all phases of the work, community residents and grassroots coalitions. Although in the United States social work has largely been on the periphery of urban sustainability efforts, growing awareness of the need for social-ecological approaches to urban sustainability is opening new doors for social work researchers and professionals as key partners in emerging transdisciplinary, cross-sector initiatives. This presentation draws on leadership experiences in Urban@UW, a recently launched, broadly transdisciplinary initiative at a major US university focused on challenges and opportunities in contemporary cities. In addition to key roles in launching and shaping the broader initiative, social work faculty and professionals are co-leading, in partnership with climate change scientists and community stakeholders, a major thematic focus on urban environmental justice in a time of climate change. Experiences in these roles highlight both significant opportunities for greater social work involvement in transdisciplinary sustainability science and practice, and the challenges entailed in bringing social work knowledge and expertise to the heart of scientific and policy arenas



customarily dominated by the natural sciences, technology, and engineering.

### **Author 3: The changing understanding of the person-in-environment and social work's input on ecosocial transition**

The constellation of the person-in-environment can be claimed to form one of the most important principles in social work practice and theory. The presentation examines how this understanding has changed since social work practices have been organised differently during the last 20 years in Finland. The organisation of social work practices in Finland has been reformed from using community based models into using specialised and centralised models. The research is based on a hypothesis that the relationship between local living environment and human wellbeing is still a relevant factor in social work practice and theory. The presentation analyses the following: Firstly, how has the relationship between human wellbeing and living environment been understood and how has it changed in different models of organising social work practice in Finland during different decades? And, secondly, how can organising social work practice prohibit and advance social workers' input in the ecosocial transition of society? The study is based on the thematic analysis of social workers' group interviews and it was done by using and mixing the data from different decades. The first study (1995-2000) focused on ecosocial social work practice constructed by community based social workers. The second part (2006) focused on the specialised models of social work practice, and the third study (2015) concentrated on centralised models of organising social work practice. Based on the data, it can be argued that the community-based model gives a better starting point for a social worker to work towards ecosocial transition of society. In addition, a broader understanding of the 'person in environment' is needed in order to understand how human and nature are interconnected and what this means in social work practice.




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 SYMPOSIUM 12
 

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## 268 | Maintaining or changing identities and lifestyles in old age? A challenge for gerontological social work

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.  
Room: 6.8 - Nordkraft

*Tove Harnett, (Lund University, School of Social Work, Sweden)*  
*Håkan Jönson, (Lund University, School of Social Work, Sweden)*  
*Annika Taghizadeh Larsson, (Linköping University, National Institute for the Study of Ageing and Later Life, Sweden)*  
*Anna Olaison, (Linköping University, Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Sweden)*  
*Magdalena Bergström (Umeå University, Department of Social Work, Sweden)*  
*Johannes Österholm (Linköping University, Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Sweden)*

**Keywords:** gerontological social work, eldercare, alcohol abuse, social problems, disability ideology, theory development

This symposium addresses a theoretical and professional challenge embedded in social work with older people, a field at the nexus of two, sometimes contradictory, aims: on the one hand, the ambition to treat social problems and provide support to break with destructive life patterns, on the other hand, the ambition to enable older persons to maintain capabilities and social identities. The latter aim unfolds both in theoretical approaches on successful ageing, such as the coping oriented SOC-model and continuity theory, and in eldercare policies stating that older people should be able to live like before and continue with previous habits.

Theoretically, the different aims relates to a division of social work into a hierarchical order with different characteristics for different groups of people, described by Norwegian sociologist Kari Waerness. Social work with children is typically characterized by growth, adults with disabilities with preservation and older people with decline. This division also reflects different ambitions for various fields of social work practice.

The overall aim of the symposia is to analyze how representatives of social work practices and older people themselves reason and act in relation to maintenance and change concerning identities, lifestyles and problems.



Departing from Waerness theoretical division, we first analyze challenges and obstacles in enabling older maintain capabilities and social identities. Secondly we analyze cases where social problems may affect the quality of life of older individuals. We will also question prevailing ideas that social work with older people should not aim for development and change.

The symposium consists of four presentations that highlights different, yet interrelated tensions between maintenance and change in later life. The first presentation examines challenges in enabling nursing home residents to continue to “live like before”. The second presentation discuss the potential of adopting frameworks from disability ideology in social work for older people, by illustrating how people with late stage dementia are able to live at home and maintain previous lifestyles by support from personal assistants. The third presentation analyzes how older persons with long-term alcohol problems reflect on continuity and change on attempts to overcome their drinking problems. The last presentation analyzes a case in between two legislations: eldercare and disability services. The symposium illustrates challenges and possibilities in applying a biographical approach in care/services for older people. It also shows how the strict distinction between the category of adults and older people unfolds in social work practice. Even though old age have concrete consequences for people’s lives, this symposium demonstrates that lower ambitions regarding change and treatment also is a matter of how society is organized.

During the symposium we will bring the four presentation together in a discussion about challenges and possibilities for gerontological work. The symposium is of relevance for the development of theory in social work and has great implications for the organization of care, services and treatment for older people as well as the social work education.

### **PAPER 1 - “They are different now”. Framing continuity in nursing home settings**

In nursing homes worldwide, new models and policies are put in place in order to combat institutionalization and the erosion of residents’ social identities. The aim of this presentation is to analyse the practical application of a Swedish policy with the explicit goal to enable residents to “live like before”. But what does this mean for old, disabled persons living in nursing homes?

The study was based on interviews with 24 interviewees (need





assessors, managers, staff and residents) at five nursing homes. Guided by Goffman's notion of frames, the analysis demonstrated that while actors expressed a consensus that residents should be able to live like before, they also reframed the issue of continuity in order to comply with this ideal. Continuity was framed according to two logics: 1) an external logic, based on comparisons with residents' lives before nursing home care and 2) an internal logic, based on comparisons to whom the person was within the care context. According to the internal logic, residents' frailty made them too different from whom they used to be, so that comparisons to their previous life were considered irrelevant.

These findings are particularly relevant since eldercare policy, in contrast to disability policy, lacks a tradition of establishing older persons' rights based on comparisons to other citizens. Even though the aim to live like before have gained grounds in eldercare, this study reveals that the practical application can be easily challenged by references to frailty. This is also a theoretical contribution to the field of gerontological social work, as it demonstrates how older persons' impairments are viewed as an inevitable result of the aging process. Consequently, it is the older people themselves, not the society, who become the source of the problem and the reason for not maintaining capabilities and social identities in old age.

## **PAPER 2 - Maintaining identities and life styles: Personal assistance, biographical work and late(st) stage dementia**

Residential care is often considered as the appropriate way to meet the needs of older people with extensive care needs. However, relocation to residential care inevitably entails disruptions for the individual, not only in terms of housing, but also in terms of relationships and the content of everyday life. Is residential care then really the optimal way to care for older people with extensive care needs?

The aim of this presentation is to discuss the possibilities of maintaining – and developing - identities and life styles in later life despite extensive care needs by learning from disability activism and ideology and the support system of personal assistance. Ideologically, this support, and the related system of direct payment, is based on the idea within disability activism that the right to live like others, included to be self-determinant and autonomous, for (younger) people with extensive disabilities can be realized through personal assistants that serve as the so called assistance users "arms and legs".





Drawing on two case studies the presentation will show how some people living with dementia in today's Sweden may pursue active lives at – and out-side – their (ordinary) home, also in the late(st) stages of the disease, supported by family members and personal assistants. The case studies comprise a variety of empirical materials (participant observations, video recordings and audio-recorded interviews with spouses and assistants) and seem to be the first to explore the phenomenon of living with dementia supported by personal assistants.

Building on a conceptual framework originally developed by Corbin and Strauss (1985) the presentation will illustrate a variety of work in which the assistants, the individuals with dementia and their spouses engage. Focus will be on the biographical work carried out by the assistant and on how models of thought in disability ideology are embedded in their efforts.

### **PAPER 3 - Reflections on continuity and change among middle-aged and older people with long-term alcohol problems**

Alcohol problems are increasing among people aged 50 and older, but treatment to this category is still often a neglected issue in practical social work. The aim of this presentation is to discuss how middle-aged and older people with ongoing and long-term alcohol problems reflect on continuity and change in later life.

The paper is based on interviews with a narrative approach with six women and 13 men, between 56 – 69 years of age. Their drinking fulfilled the ICD 10 criteria for alcohol dependence syndrome and the alcohol problems had lasted between 20 – 40 years. The analysis was inspired by thematical narrative methods.

The way the participants make sense of their drinking is interwoven with their experiences from everyday life. Drinking is portrayed as a way of dealing with health problems, strained financial situations, lack of social networks and structure as well as with withdrawal symptoms. Knowing that continued drinking might lead to death, several participants are, however, reflecting over how they want to live and some are making attempts to overcome their drinking problems.

The participants illustrates that the past and the present connects to their futures as their fear of death raises existential reflections and prompts attempts to quit drinking. The presence of the past does not necessary mean continuity



over life time and older people wish to overcome their problems, even after decades of drinking, hold potentials for changing the life trajectory. The findings challenge prevailing ideas about social work with older people and illustrate how an ambition to change and treat may improve the quality of life of older individuals with social problems.

#### **PAPER 4 - Case conferences as an arena for assessments-arguments used by social workers in order to maintain social problems.**

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 two informal backstage meetings amongst social workers in one Swedish social work agency. The 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 where cultural, 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.



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## WORKSHOP 6

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### 225 | Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) Workshop: A New Framework for Research that Values and Enhances Existing Approaches to Social Work Research

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:25 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.  
Room: 4.105 - Rendsburggade

*Ruth Hally, (Univeristy College Cork, Ireland)*  
*Kenneth Burns (Univeristy College Cork, Ireland)*  
*Andrea Vargiu (UNISS, Italy)*

**Keywords:** responsible research and innovation, community engagement, stakeholder participation in research, research ethics and social justice, research funding applications for H2020

#### **Background and purpose of the proposed presentation**

Responsible research and innovation (RRI) is an approach that anticipates and assesses potential implications and societal expectations with regard to research and innovation, with the aim of fostering the design of inclusive and sustainable research and innovation with a particular emphasis on stakeholder participation (The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation). Von Schomberg (2013, p. 1), states that 'RRI should be understood as a strategy of stakeholders to become mutual responsive to each other and anticipate research and innovation outcomes underpinning the "grand challenges" of our time for which they share responsibility'.

The workshop presenters are members and work packages leaders in the EnRRICH project, whose aim is to raise awareness of RRI within higher education and to assist academics, students, and researchers to become RRI proficient. This workshop will equip social work researchers with the skills and knowledge to become RRI proficient. This will make a contribution to enhancing capacity within the social work profession to participate in European Commission Horizon 2020 studies and research.

A summary of the main points of the presentation

1. A critical examination of the main tenets of the European Commission's Horizon 2020 responsible research and innovation framework;



2. Training to understand and employ RRI in the innovative design and implementation of social work research, with a particular focus on power, social justice and stakeholder partnerships;
3. Practical training on the use and application of RRI tools and concepts by participants in the workshop to critically reflect on research design in social work;
4. RRI places a particular focus on the participation of stakeholders, particularly civil society organisations, in research.

How the proposed presentation addresses one or more of the conference aims and themes

The workshop is connected to the main conference theme as it concerns a specific challenge raised by the diversity of interests and stakeholders involved in the complex field of social work practice and research: the responsibility challenge.

Different stakeholders concur to determine the outcomes and impacts of social work. That poses the responsibility issue at the very core of social workers' professional mandate. Similarly, research - and, notably, applied research (such as community-based research, action research, evaluation research) - must reserve specific attention for the responsibility issue. Which is a complex one, since responsibility cannot be regarded just as a research object, as it concerns method, ethics, outcomes and impacts for both social workers and researchers. Thus, the workshop specifically connects to subthemes 3 and 6.

#### **Conclusions from and implications of your presentation for practice, policy or subsequent research**

RRI has a particular resonance with social work as it shares a focus on social justice issues, on partnership relationships, and the recognition of situated, experiential knowledge. This workshop also serves to highlight the linkages for social work research with broader Horizon 2020 initiatives and the attendant avenues for affecting policies and practice in areas relating to central RRI tenets such as open access, research integrity and gender.



FRIDAY | APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>  
3<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF THE CONFERENCE





## PARALLEL SESSIONS 5

FRIDAY | APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>

TIME | 10:30 A.M. TO 12:00 NOON





## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 5.1

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### Theme 1: Political, administrative and economic influences and challenges for social work research

(Chair: Marjo Kuronen)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Room: Body and mind - Nordkraft

#### 448 | Context of Policy Reform in the Study of Health and Social Service Integration in the US

*Jeanne Marsh (University of Chicago/SSA, USA)*

**Keywords:** policy reform, political and administrative context, comprehensive care, integration of health and social services, social work research

Passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the US has made it possible for 20 million previously uninsured Americans to receive health care coverage. This major social policy reform, sometimes referred to as ObamaCare, has created an important set of political, administrative and economic influences and challenges for social work research. In particular, the focus on integrated models of service delivery in the ACA offers unprecedented opportunities for social workers to understand and improve the integration of health, behavioral health and social services at both the system- and service- levels. Social workers have been actively engaged in the study of comprehensive, integrated care models – specifically, models that bring together health, mental health and social services to coordinate care and improve outcomes -- typically under rubrics of integrated services, comprehensive services, wrap around services, and intensive case management.

This paper is designed to articulate distinctions among models and to identify “active ingredients” of models that may have greatest impact on client outcomes. It will describe a program of research that analyzes service delivery models that have been implemented across specialty and non-specialty substance abuse treatment (SAT) settings and examine (1) their prevalence, (2) their organizational and service characteristics and (3) their impact on client outcomes. It will draw on research on integrated services and substance abuse treatment outcome that used two data sets: Data from an experimental analysis of the Illinois Title IV-E Alcohol and other Drug Waiver



Demonstration; and data from the National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Study, a prospective study of comprehensive care in substance abuse treatment programs across the U.S.

Overall, study findings indicate the integration of physical and mental health services in SAT programs is limited, despite evidence demonstrating that individuals with substance use disorders achieve better health outcomes when co-occurring health problems are treated in tandem. SAT programs that offered integrated services are more likely to be public and non-profit programs that possess the technological and administrative sophistication to bill insurance providers—not surprisingly, since this is the way in which most physical and mental health services are financed in the US. Studies analyzing components or “active ingredients” of integrated service models show that (a) careful assessment and targeting of services, as well as (b) positive client-provider relationship are related to positive client outcomes. Implications of study findings will be analyzed within the political, administrative and economic context created by passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the US.

## 16 | Housing policies and integration processes: the social mix

*Carla Moretti (Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy)*

**Keywords:** social mix, housing policy, integration, public housing, social mediation

The housing policy debate over the last decade has brought to light an increasing interest in the theme of spatial concentration in those groups that are often subjected to social exclusion. Attention has been given to the identification of housing policies that help contrast the exacerbation of residential segregation, in particular regarding the public housing areas. The general approach of European policies responding to the effects of residential segregation (Musterd and Andersson, 2005; Bolt et al.) is based on interventions aimed at reducing or preventing spatial segregation by identifying the ‘quota’ of particular social groups (immigrants, the disabled, low income families) within the neighborhoods. Certain regions in Italy have also started to insert a social mix within the housing policy. A research project undertaken by the Region of Marche between 2015 and 2016, in a neighbourhood



of Ancona, aimed at introducing a social mix within a new public housing complex, fell within this context. The complex consists of eight buildings, each with seven apartments, thus providing a total of 56 lodgings. Coordinated by researchers in Social work at the Polytechnic University of Marche, the project was actuated thanks to the long-term collaboration between the University and Regional Authority for Public Housing (ERAP), which enabled social housing mediation by mediators with training in social work to be introduced at the ERAP. These social mediators actuated the different actions in the project. The research project paid particular attention to collaboration processes, between the institutional partners (ERAP, the municipality, and the university), the different actors in the public sector, and associations present in the neighbourhoods, where the social mix was experimented.

The project was articulated in different phases. A technical table, consisting of an ERAP official, social mediators, social and housing services municipal officials, university researchers, was set up with the function of planning and monitoring. Various focus groups with the different subjects present in the neighborhood (associations, neighborhood committees, scholastic institutions, and social and healthcare services) were undertaken in order to favour the welcome of new families and facilitate the process of integration in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the mediators undertook interviews with each family in order to obtain information about the components of the family nucleus: features and needs relative to age, the presence of disabilities, their nationality, cultural and religious customs. After analyzing the various situations of the new housing beneficiaries, apartments in the single buildings were allocated. The social mediators also accompanied the family during the initial phase of settling in, helping them face any eventual difficulties.

Regarding the results of the project, and considering the phases actuated, some important aspects came to light: among these were the initiatives involving the residents of the neighbourhood and the new tenants, and the path in which the social mediator accompanies the family into their new accommodation. This path will also facilitate project monitoring over time in order to evaluate the efficacy of the actions actuated and to identify the best means to introduce a social mix within housing policy.



## 414 | The Troubled Families Programme: Research, Politics and Success in Social Work

*Keith Davies (Kingston University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** troubled families, success, social work practice, payment by results

The 'Troubled Families Programme' was a highly publicised, flagship social policy of the government of the government led, until recently, by David Cameron in the England. Involving intense, assertive, whole-family and multi-professional social work with families with multiple challenges, it was recently claimed by government to succeed in 'turning around' almost every family worked with. Independent, small scale evaluative research studies produced more complex findings and a larger scale government report (seemingly suppressed) is said to have found no evidence of effectiveness.

Using the example of the 'Troubled Families Programme', this paper traces the relationship between the development of social work knowledge and political rhetoric, pointing out the potential synergies and distortions. It examines a political and rhetorical discourse of success and the part played in the definition of success by the dynamics of the 'payment by results' mechanism used by government in its relationship with providers of 'Troubled Families' interventions. It considers the role of independent and critical small and large scale research studies into the effectiveness of social work practice in politicised contexts, drawing on the methodologies and findings of studies associated with the 'Troubled Families Programme.' Finally, arising from the foregoing discussion, consideration is given to what is meant by success in social work practice and which research methodologies are most likely reflect types and degrees of success.

Focusing on the 'Troubled Families Programme,' and differing notions of evidence of success, this paper strongly explores 'political, administrative and economic influences and challenges for social work research' (conference sub-theme 1). Although taking an example from England in which political actors and political imperatives entered directly into the production of knowledge for social work it will echo and evoke other such instances across Europe. The paper discusses 'controversies between social work research and policy makers' and the impact these controversies can have on 'practitioners and service users' (conference sub-theme 2).



Whilst highlighting challenges and conflicts in social work research, this paper works towards possibilities. It notes the potential for social work in politicised incursions into practice whilst, at the same time, clearly defining the potential distortions of knowledge and practice. In particular, it seeks to contribute towards the identification of success in social work practice and to contribute to the identification of research methods which might reflect the complexities and subtleties of 'success'.

### 39 | What is Different about the Policy Engagement of Social Work Academics?

*John Gal (Hebrew University, Israel)*

*Idit Weiss-Gal (School of Social Work Tel Aviv University, Israel)*

**Keywords:** policy practice, social work academics, Israel

Social work academics educate professionals who provide social welfare services, they engage in research on how to alleviate the personal and public problems faced by the members of their societies, and they are expected to use their knowledge and status so as to affect social change. The last of these roles is the focus of this study.

Only very limited research has examined the actual role that social work academics play in the policy arena. In particular, a comparative perspective is sorely lacking. Seeking to adopt this perspective, this study compares the policy engagement and perceptions of social work academics in Israel with those of faculty members in professional schools with strong ties to social policy, namely education and healthcare.

Two different answers are hypothesized in response to the question of the differences and/or similarities in the policy engagement of academics in social work, healthcare, and education. One is that there are substantial similarities among faculty members in these three fields due the fact that all of them have close ties to the professions in which they train their students and that they identify with the values of these professions, which typically include a commitment to contributing to the well-being of clients by affecting social policies.



On the other hand, these academics may diverge in their policy engagement. More specifically, social work academics can be expected to demonstrate greater policy involvement and a stronger identification with the social role of academia as the ethos of social involvement is more highly evident in social work.

The study employed questionnaires to compare the three academic groups in relation to three main aspects of policy involvement. The first of these is levels of policy engagement, its perceived impact and the perceived policy competencies of the group members. The second is perceptions regarding academia's societal role and academics' personal role. The third is institutional support for policy engagement. The sample consisted of 331 faculty members: 143 in social work (57% response rate), 117 in education (26%), and 71 in two health professions, nursing and occupational therapy (45%).

While the findings of the study show some similarities between the three groups of academics, they also underscore marked differences between academics in social work and the other professions. In particular, social work academics are more involved in, and more committed to, social policy engagement than faculty members of other professional schools are. These divergences are attributed to the greater focus upon policy practice in social work and its prevalence in teaching programs, as well as to the profession's focus on disenfranchised clients, who are especially impacted by social policies. This study has implications for both research and practice. It offers a comparative approach that provides a unique perspective for better understanding the policy engagement of social work academics. It also provides us with indicators as to the ways by which this type of engagement can be enhanced.

## 172 | Revaluing the right to human flourishing of senior citizens: social capital or dead capital?

*Valerie Bauters (Ghent University, Belgium)*  
*Griet Roets (Ghent University, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** senior citizens, welfare dependency, citizenship, welfare rights





Over the last decades, European welfare states are facing social as well as economic challenges in realising the welfare rights of the ever-growing number of citizens in situations of welfare dependency (Gordon & Fraser, 1994; Hieda, 2011; 2015; Morel, 2007; Richards et al., 2013; Taylor-Gooby & Lawson, 1993; Williams, 1999; Dean, 2015). However, the idea that the welfare state can no longer continue to be the principal provider of welfare services and resources gains ground (Dean, 2015), which is reflected in the current climate of austerity measures, the restructuring of public spending and the continuous and painstakingly rationing of resources (Lymbery, 2010; Ray et al., 2014).

In this paper presentation, we focus more in particular on the consequences of these developments for the situation of senior citizens. We argue that care and social services for the elderly are increasingly organised in a cost-effective manner, with reference to the consumer-oriented (Clarke, 2007; Eichler & Pfau-Effinger, 2009) and managerial culture in public services, in an increasing privatisation and marketisation of services (Dean, 2015), and in tendencies towards the (re)turn of the family and the community (Grootegoed & Van Dijk, 2012). In that vein, welfare states rebalance their public responsibility for the realisation of welfare rights towards the private sphere, and tend to undermine the right to human flourishing of senior citizens as a social right or an entitlement of citizenship (Grootegoed & Van Dijk, 2012).

In this presentation, we reinvigorate the way 'welfare dependency' is viewed in contemporary European societies and discuss several shifts in the semantics of 'welfare dependency' (Fraser & Gordon, 1994). Our analysis reveals a rather reticent stance towards the conceptualisation of welfare dependency as a universal part of life or care as a public good. More specifically, we tease out how the welfare dependency of children is currently considered as a justified investment in future social and economic capital (Heckman et al., 2003; Vandebroeck, Roose & De Bie, 2011), whereas welfare dependency in old age is perceived as mere 'dead capital'. We make a plea for revaluing the right to human flourishing of senior citizens, based on revisiting the meaning of solidarity and an exploration of intergenerational dimensions of citizenship practices.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 5.2

### **Theme2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users**

*Dynamics, creativity and improvisation in social work*

(Chair: Mie Engen)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Room: 6.1 - Nordkraft

#### **296 | Improvisation in social work practice**

*Helle Schjellerup Nielsen (Metropolitan University College, Denmark)*

**Keywords:** organizational improvisation, social work practice, ethnographic case study

Because of several cases of severe child neglect, a new social policy and law was introduced in Denmark to act as early as possible upon violence against children. The so-called "Abuse package" was implemented during an ethnographic case study of social workers practice at a department of children and family services in Copenhagen. The package and the unprepared way it was implemented caused disruption in everyday work practice, as known processes of decision-making and set ways of work practices no longer applied.

The research question was: How do social workers manage their work practice, and which conditions influence this practice? Thus, the research focus was everyday work practice and in particular, how the social workers managed their practice under the actual very changed work conditions.

The fieldwork consisted of participant observation and focus group discussions with social workers at a department of children and family services. Participant observation entailed observing eight social worker's work practices at close quarters on a daily basis over four months. We often followed a social worker for one to three days, during which we observed every element of their work practice, in terms of office work, internal meetings, meetings with service users, courses, home visits, lunch breaks etc. This proximity to the children and family services' working practices, including the insights on social workers' formal and informal meetings with colleagues and management internally as well as externally made it apparent



that the social workers operated in a confusing and emotionally charged work practice.

This presentation focus on partial research results using the concept organizational improvisation (Kamoche, Pina e Cunha & Vieira da Cunha, 2002), which addresses the management of organizational changes and challenges. The presentation shows how the social workers alternate between frustration and a feeling of insufficiency in relation to e.g. ethics, professional knowledge and a sense of getting their job done, and finding resources to improvise their work practice in order to manage the new pressures of work. Thus, rediscovering a collective professional standpoint and (re)create meaning in their work practice.

### 273 | Consent as a dynamic process in researching emotions in social work: reflections from an ethnographic approach

*Louise O'Connor (Royal Holloway University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** emotions in social work, ethical consent, ethnographic

Ethical and informed consent underpin research integrity and ethical research principles. However, both the methodology and the nature of the topic studied have implications for how the researcher facilitates meaningful consent in the field. This paper draws on the researcher's experience of undertaking an ethnographically informed study of social work practice. The study aims to explore practitioners' experience and use of emotions in day-to-day practice and the individual and organisational factors which impact on this. Fieldwork was undertaken over a six-month period in an English Local Authority Children's Service. Data collection included observations of day-to-day practice, informal conversations, semi-structured interviews and the use of practitioner diaries. Access was granted by the organisation's governance and ethics process. Consent was then negotiated with individual practitioners and managers within one team. Factors which impacted on the process of consent for participants across the timespan of the project included: membership of a heavily scrutinised profession and area of practice, concerns about misinterpretation and exposé, the physical organisation of the work environment and the complexities of experiencing and articulating emotions in a practice setting. Each of these factors created ethical and methodological barriers and



dilemmas for the researcher.

Revisiting and actively discussing consent throughout the six-month period enabled meaningful and ethical consent to be negotiated. This included particular instances where participants expressed concern about the inclusion of an interaction or conversation observed - 'please don't use that'. The relational processes developed through the researcher being alongside practitioners in their day-to-day practice facilitated conversations which acknowledged and explored concerns about exposure, misinterpretation and the complexity of emotions occurring in real-time practice. Through these discussions participants maintained control and agency. Consent operated both as a form of gatekeeping and risk aversion, and an invitation to fully explore the complexities of emotions in everyday practice. Traditional ethical review processes have limited application when using an ethnographic approach (Murphy & Dingwall, 2007). Transparency and trust in how consent is negotiated in the field may lead to a genuinely ethical form of consent (Atkinson, 2015) but raises challenges for both researcher and participants.

This paper will demonstrate the barriers, dilemmas and possibilities consent negotiation offers within an ethnographic approach to social work research. The implications for different methodological and theoretical approaches in researching social work will be explored.

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Miller, T. & Boulton, M. (2007) Changing constructions of informed consent: Qualitative research and complex social worlds *Social Science & Medicine* 65: 2199–2211

## 161 | Social Work Connecting with and Learning from Inclusive Arts Practice

*Susan Levy (University of Dundee, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** inclusive arts, disability, inclusion

The arts allow for bridging communication, cultural and other socially-constructed barriers experienced by a range of social groups, including disabled children and adults. Involvement in inclusive music, dance or other art forms develops individuals' confidence, social connections and overall wellbeing.

Methodologically the arts are a means to create understanding of the inner worlds of disabled people and empower them to



creatively express who they are, their needs, desires and aspirations through the use of alternative non-verbal forms of communication. The arts can give a voice to those who are marginalised and silenced.

Inclusive arts practice is expanding and developing opportunities for a growing number of disabled people. Yet the connections to social work theory, practice and research remain underdeveloped. This paper will address the peripheral nature of the arts within social work through discussing ways that social work can integrate and learn from inclusive arts practice. The paper is situated and contextualised within inclusive arts activity and prevailing social care policy and practice in Scotland, with a focus on a project on the impact of participating in inclusive music classes on the lives of disabled children. Qualitative data were collected for the study through observations of music classes and performances and talking to the participants, a parent/carer questionnaire and a focus group with the music tutors and volunteers. Involvement in the inclusive music classes was found to impact on the confidence, motivation and sense of agency amongst the participants. The findings suggest good practice around supportive, democratic relationships as a template for social work with other marginalised groups.

It will be argued that there is scope for social workers to be working more creatively with service users and to revisit their understanding of what service users can do and what they want to do. Personalisation, co-production and outcomes approaches are key policy drivers that are re-shaping social work practice in Scotland as new ways are sought to address the isolation and alienation experienced by disabled people. The arts open up new spaces and new opportunities to fully engage with these policy concepts to listen to, understand and co-produce outcomes with disabled people that can support them in imagining, communicating and achieving a future that is not circumscribed nor curtailed by disability.

### 134 | Researching the dynamics of social work

*Lilian Linder (Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** social change, social reflexivity, social work research, social ties, social support, social interaction





In the light of recent legislation, municipalities in the Netherlands have new responsibilities in the domains of youth care, long-term care and income support. This development comes with profound consequences for the nature and future of social work, that is changing dramatically in its priorities, organization and day-to-day practices. Nearly all Western countries have less financial means available for health care expenditure and at the same time make an ideological shift. In the Netherlands this ideological change means that people should claim formal care only when their resources of informal care are exhausted. The targets of social work are formulated in terms of participation, empowerment, self-reliance and active citizenship. Addressing social ties and volunteers as a source of social support is becoming a core business of social work. This transformation means that social workers need to cooperate with citizens (citizens in their role as family carer, client, volunteer...) to realize social support and care for those who are in need of it.

Social interaction is dynamic and taking place in rapidly changing neighborhoods, institutions and demands. What we observe in our research, is that performing social work is more and more based on what presents itself in the current and changing moment. The interaction between client, professionals and social network becomes increasingly important, and fixed methodologies lose relevance. This requires new skills and knowledge related to the new roles expected of social professionals and citizens, aimed on sharing responsibilities between municipalities, social workers and citizens. What we found is that social workers find it difficult to make decisions in social work: when is it time to share or even transfer responsibilities? When is my work done? How do I collaborate with volunteers and citizens and other professionals? What is my new role, now that I'm not supposed to take over support and care from people, but rather facilitate so that they can help themselves or each other?

To address these issues, social professionals need new competences that should be learned in practice. These competences need to address the changes in society as well as the changes in the institutions and the government. In other words, social workers need to become more social reflexive (Lichterman, 2005). Social reflexivity means a collective practice of dialogue: it requires talking about differences and similarities straightforwardly, while creating relationships beyond the group. It means a permanent critical reflection on the (ever) changing ways people relate to each other in modern





society. It means a different approach in social work research as well.

In this paper presentation I will present reflexive approach to social work research by presenting a model on the dynamics of social work. This model is based on empirical research in several social work practices in The Netherlands. I will also elaborate on how we research social reflexivity in our 'reflexivity laboratory' in a diversity of social work practices.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 5.3

### Theme 3: Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research

*Methodological considerations in social work research*

(Chair: Monica Kjørstad)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Room: 6.2 – Nordkraft

#### 364 | On parallel fieldwork as a methodology for studying agency in social psychiatry

*Birgitta Frello, (UCC, Denmark)*

*Anne Mia Steno (UCC, Denmark)*

*Hanne Meyer-Johansen (UCC, Denmark)*

**Keywords:** fieldwork, social psychiatry, agency

In this paper, we focus on the methodological challenges and possibilities in working simultaneously with the perspectives of both practitioners and residents in a recovery-oriented community housing for young adults with mental illness in Denmark.

The research project focuses on how the pedagogical practice and agency interact with the practice and agency of the residents, asking the following questions:

How do the practitioners (the social pedagogues) understand their role and their practice in relation to the residents and how do the residents become in/visible and ir/relevant to the practitioners as legitimate agents in – and contributors to – the recovery work?

How do the initiatives and practices of the practitioners become in/visible and ir/relevant to the residents, and how do they become legitimate or illegitimate agents in the lives of the residents?

In order to capture this double perspective, we have conducted parallel field studies among practitioners and residents. The principal aim of this methodological design is to address the problems that are associated with the ambivalence of the usual position of the researcher, who is doing fieldwork in pedagogical institutions: The researcher falls between



categories and is easily 'read' by the practitioners as a suspicious outsider, while the social clients tend to see the researcher as part of the staff. By making a clear distinction between on the one hand, the researcher who is conducting fieldwork among the practitioners and on the other hand, the researcher who is doing fieldwork among the residents, part of this ambivalence – and the credibility problems that are associated with it – can be overcome.

It would, however, be naïve to assume that all methodological problems thus disappear. Rather, new ambivalences and new potential conflicts appear – making room for different types of engagement and insights into the logics of the particular field. While the presence of two researchers, who are doing parallel fieldwork in the same institution, opens the possibility of each researcher engaging with the field in different ways, it also creates new types of ambivalence that are partly due to with the social dynamics that this presence spurs.

## 29 | Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a methodology for social work research

*Sarah Vicary (Open University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** interpretative phenomenological analysis, mental health social work, idiographic hermeneutic

This paper will explore the possibilities of the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in social work research using a current study to illustrate.

The study upon which this paper is based set out to understand the impact, if any, that professional background might have on a legally determined role, referred to generically as approved mental health practice and using as participants currently practising Approved Mental Health Professionals, one embodiment in the United Kingdom that has opened up eligibility to other, non-medical, mental health professionals. It has also explored the emotional aspects this work as experienced by participants.

Drawn from each of the eligible professions, participants were each asked to draw a picture of their role and to describe this during a semi-structured interview which followed. Both were then imported into a computer software package to allow management of the data. Underpinned by Interpretative



Phenomenological Analysis, a little used methodology in social work research, the data were analysed by the researcher interpreting the meaning of the participants, an idiographic double hermeneutic.

It was found;

- That approved mental health practice, as accomplished in this study, is not synonymous with one profession.
- The attributes required to achieve it are present in these examples of approved mental health practice, regardless of background
- Approved mental health practice is an important statutory function and is undertaken instrumentally but what also happens during its accomplishment is a cognitive and affective appraisal of the processes involved requiring its practitioners to simultaneously manage being determined and undetermined.
- This is fundamental aspect of approved mental health practice and of its practitioners; the capacity irrespective of professional background to simultaneously balance both cognitively and affectively all aspects of the processes which arise, including how it is experienced.

This is an important issue for future practice; approved mental health practitioners are active moral agents but not just as an antidote to the legal or medical. Instead they embrace and are able to hold and use disparate elements that are present in order to undertake and defend the significance of the role. Moreover, the use of IPA fits well with exploring the experiential and it is suggested can be more actively used as a methodology in social work research.

## 157 | Children and social inequality: Methodological challenges

*Nina Helene Andersen (Oslo and Akershus university college of applied sciences, Norway)*

**Keywords:** children, social inequality, participation, narrative design, prospective narratives, life mode interview, methodological challenges

How can the use of narrative research methodology with children from different socioeconomic groups and in different social positions, be fruitful to explore social participation in



children's imagined futures and everyday life? In this paper I will discuss the opportunities and challenges in a narrative research design, by reflecting on two methods, both invited narratives from 12-year old children. The first method is based on written prospective narratives about "One day in my life when I am 30 years old". The second method is life mode interviews about "Yesterday: one day in my life now". I will also compare these methods and discuss what kind of knowledge a temporal comparative analysis can provide when researching social inequality and participation.

Knowledge about social inequality and its consequences for various groups of citizens is required for social work practice and social policy. We know that social inequality is affecting children's opportunities for social participation (see for instance Bakken, Frøyland & Sletten 2016, Gulbrandsen et al. 2014, Kjørholdt 2010, Seim & Larsen 2011). My project is based on the need for further exploration on how opportunities for social participation might look like for different groups of children and from their perspective. This can be done by inviting children to give their accounts on their movements and activities at various venues in their daily life in the present and imagined future (Hedegaard & Fler 2008, Hedegaard, Aronsson, Højholt & Ulvik 2012).

The extent to which we can access the informant's perspective, and in this case children's perspective, is contested in the methodology literature (Greene & Hogan 2005). The purpose of this study is, however, exploring children's subjective meaning making as social participants, as it appears in their stories, and in light of their social reality as participants in a complex cultural and discursive landscape (Andersen 2016). Through children's stories on a personal level, we can also gain access to knowledge on how structural factors can have an impact in various children's lives.

Narrative theory and method is not a unified field, but characterized by pluralism in ontological and epistemological backdrop, research questions and methods (Gubrium & Holstein 2009, Holstein & Gubrium 2012, Jansen 2013). I will discuss how the social constructionist and socio-cultural tradition can be linked to the specific narrative methods in my project. In line with a constructionist view, narratives are not understood as a mere reflection of reality, but as a creative force (Hydén 1997 14-15) People tell stories they believe to be expected and appreciated by others, and to narrate a story is in such a social action, whether it be in writing or face to face (Gergen 1997, 190).



My research design itself makes for a special context, characterized by a snap-shot methodology that could invite some forms of narratives and exclude others. The question of validity and knowledge potential in my study, will therefore be launched as a general framework for the reflections on challenges and possibilities of the narrative methods applied.

### 100 | Examining the realities of employing a randomised control trial at the interface of social work, law and medicine

*Mary Baginsky, (King's College London, United Kingdom)*

*Jo Moriarty (King's College London, United Kingdom)*

*Jill Manthorpe (King's College London, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** randomised controlled trial (RCT), interdisciplinary, conflicting priorities

The New Orleans Model (NIM) is a service approach that provides intensive assessment and treatment for families of children in foster care aged 0 to 5, which informs recommendations to the court about adoption or permanent return to birth families. It was developed by Professor Charles Zeanah of Tulane University, Louisiana, United States, in the late 1990s and consists of a multidisciplinary team undertaking attachment-based assessment and intervention work using structured clinical tools (Zeanah et al., 2001). In the USA any evaluations have been confined to longitudinal data collections.

NIM has been part of NSPCC's services in Scotland since 2011. The intervention is undergoing a randomised controlled trial (RCT) (Minnis et al., 2010). In 2014/15 the NSPCC applied to the English Innovation Programme for funding both to introduce the model into England and to assess the possibility of replicating the RCT. The service was developed in the London Borough of Croydon where it is known as the London Infant and Family Team (LIFT).

While randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are widely considered to be the best method of advancing knowledge about the effectiveness of medical treatments, a medical or pharmacological RCT should be at least double-blind. Participation in an RCT depends on participants accepting that they will be allocated randomly to treatment arms and that there is no existing evidence that someone would be





advantaged or disadvantaged if allocated to one treatment arm rather than another. Indeed a traditional rationale for using random allocation in trials is to achieve genuine uncertainty or equipoise as to the impact of the intervention(s) under test, such that a rational informed person would have no preference between the 'treatments' (Lilford and Jackson, 1995).

Over the years there have been calls for social work and social care researchers to make more use of RCTs in order to assess the effectiveness of interventions (see Dixon et al., 2014). There is no example of an RCT being conducted in the English family law area, although some have been undertaken in the criminology and sentencing arenas (see Farrington and Walsh, 2005 and Greiner and Matthews, 2016). Most of those that have been conducted in child welfare have been quasi-experimental designs. As Scriven (2008) observes, the applications in public health, education, social services, law enforcements that are currently advocated as RCTs are neither double-blind nor even single blind, but 'zero-blind' (p12).

This paper explores the facilitators and challenges of conducting an RCT that has received ethical approval through health research ethics committee (NRES) but which strides the boundaries of law in two different legal jurisdictions (England and Scotland), social work and medicine (see Baginsky et al., in press). It is based on interviews with over 50 professionals from those three disciplines. The matters that will be explored specifically relate to:

- the definition of equipoise
- established legal processes
- professional norms and ethics
- the 'no inferior treatment' principle.

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### 53 | What can the humanities offer social work research?

*Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås (Nord University, Norway)*

**Keywords:** humanities vs. social science, protection of humanity, professional practice

The exercise of discretion by the use of some kind of abstract knowledge on particular cases is one of the main characteristics of a profession (Abbot, 1988). Social work practice occurs at the intersection of man and society. This requires that the professional have abilities to make judgement and handle dilemmas that arise when she will protect humanity and balance considerations and conflicts in the individual meeting with culture and society. It has in recent years been increased attention on how the professions autonomy, scope for discretion and ability to meet individual needs are threatened, in an era of new public management and under the idea of evidence based knowledge.

In this tension, it is crucial that the research on social work practice must draw on both social science and human scientific thinking and methodology. The distinction between these is sliding and partly overlapping, but with different centers of gravity (Nordenstam, 2000). Social science methods are more concerned with explanations, models, regularities, generalizations, laws and theories of social relations and conditions, while the humanities are more concerned with understanding the individual events as unique phenomenon, and of understanding the human being and human actions and institutions that intention and meaning.

Where social sciences are most keen to examine society's patterns as structure, human sciences concerned to examine



patterns that culture, and of understanding human variation in culture. Humanities takes up fundamental questions about existence, consciousness, experience, meaning and values. It is about the fundamental ethical and value-based issues positions in culture, and the human existence: What is true? What is good? What is right? Through this preoccupation with the human has the humanities often the individual subject in focus, where there is a critical potential related to conflicts in the meeting between the individual, culture and society.

Marta Nussbaum (2010) claims that the essence of the humanities disciplines is about the critical thought, the ability to see beyond personal or local considerations, the daring imagination and ability of empathic understanding of the human experience in all its variations, within a complex world. In Norway social work as education and research field, often is a part of the faculties of social science. One could ask if this means that we got a bias of social science in social work research.

In my paper, I would like to explore what the humanities can offer social work research. My conclusion is that a stronger awareness about humanities will strengthen social works ability to address, describe, understand and balance conflicts and considerations in the individual meeting with culture and society, and to protect humanity in a complex world.

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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 5.4

### Theme 3: Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research

*Conceptualization in social work research*

(Chair: Teresa Bertotti)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Room: 6.3 - Nordkraft

#### 27 | 'Let us go then, you and I' - journeying with Ada Eliot Sheffield

*Ian Shaw (University of York, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** sociological social work, Ada Eliot Sheffield, archival research

The purpose of this paper is to understand the relationship between the intellectual and practice commitments of Ada Eliot Sheffield and her personal identity. Should she not be known, Ada Sheffield (1869-1943) was Boston-based. She worked in the Boston charities field and was Director of a new Mother's Aid Program. Her tenure was short-lived when in 1914 the city's first Catholic mayor did not reappoint her. She was Director of the Research Bureau on Social Case Work. Embedded in fascinating professional and intellectual networks, she authored three significant books – *The Social Case History: Its Construction and Content* (1920), *Case Study Possibilities: A Forecast* (1922) and *Social Insight in Case Situations* (1937). Her 1922 brief but remarkable text drew appreciative comments from Ernest Burgess. She was sister of the poet T. S. Eliot. Her brother regarded her as 'a very exceptional woman' (Letters Vol 4). Her contribution was forcefully rubbished by next-generation social work leaders such as Virginia Robinson. Speaking of 'the sociological phase' in social work's development Robinson concluded in 1930 that 'Happily there was no crystallization at this level of development in social case work'.

The sources for this presentation are her books, her publications in sociology and social work journals; her presentations to annual meetings of the National Conference of Social Work; newspaper reports in St Louis and New York; surviving correspondence mainly in the 1930s between her and her brother (in T S Eliot Kensington archives). I will draw out



the nature and significance of the following emphases in her work:

- Personality is 'a web-like creation of self, interacting with other selves in a succession of situations.' Social work practice as focused on 'the individual's biographical endowment, and the relationships which show the interplay between this native endowment and his social milieu.'
- Her aspiration that 'case-work agencies...will gradually become what may be described as social laboratories' where 'study of ... cases would go on simultaneously with treatment.'
- Anticipates a constructionist stance - 'the traditions and training of the observer more or less condition the nature of the fact-items that make their appearance... In this sense the subject-matter of much social study is unstable. Not only do two students perceive different facts, they actually in a measure make different facts to be perceived'
- The importance of language.  
Her letters to 'Dear Tom' in the later years of her life how her intellectual and practice commitments were the outworking of her personal position. In 1938 she wrote 'Am working away on the distinction between "inter-personal" and "social" thinking... Have you ever noticed? So much loose thinking, so much mere conventionality of thought, hiding lack of discrimination behind some familiar term.'

Her long forgotten presence in social work's history challenges: how we think of practice; possible relationships between social work and sociology; the possibilities of a sociological social work; and as a case study of the outworkings of the life of a person and her social work. All of which have potent interest.

### 123 | Ecosocial innovations as models for a transition towards a sustainable future - social work research and sustainability

*Ingo Stamm (Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, Finland)*

*Tuuli Hirvilammi (Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, Finland)*



**Keywords:** ecosocial innovations, transition, sustainability, social work research

This paper is based on a 4-year-long Finnish research project funded by the Academy of Finland that studies the contribution of social work for the transition towards sustainability. One of our general questions at the beginning was, how can the quest for a transition be bound together with the socio-economic crisis that is mainly visible in the high unemployment rates of young people in Europe? We argue that in European countries there are ecosocial innovations emerging which can serve as models in a transition towards a more sustainable society – ecologically, socially and economically. We widen the understanding of social innovations by using the notion of ‘ecosocial’. The ecosocial innovations we are interested in should be potential models for a transition. They are organizations, projects or self-organized groups of grassroots level actors that are developing new practices of sustainable work and participation, especially for young people – unemployed or living in precarious situations. Furthermore, the innovations should offer new ideas for more sustainable unemployment policies and social security systems.

This paper presents first results of our second work package, which consists of two steps: Firstly, a map of existing ecosocial innovations in European countries (Finland, Germany, Belgium and Italy) was created to illustrate predominating trends. We ask, what kind of ecosocial innovations can be identified in the respective countries? Secondly, based on these findings, a selection of ecosocial innovations was made in order to conduct comprehensive empirical case studies in all four countries. We used semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field visits. The case studies also try to illuminate what role social workers are playing in the selected ecosocial innovations or what part they could play. We will present the outcome of the mapping process as well as preliminary results from the case studies and analysis of interview data. We discuss what structural obstacles do ecosocial innovations face and what should be changed in local communities and national policies in order to develop them further. The questions of what role social work research can play in sustainable sciences and how ecological social Work challenges social work research will finally be raised.





## 49 | The need for a clearer positioning of social work as a discipline; redefining 'the social' in social work

*Jorid Krane Hanssen, (Nord University, Norway)*

*Øystein Henriksen (Nord University, Norway)*

*Hanne Thommesen (Nord University, Norway)*

**Keywords:** redefining 'the social', practices, welfare state

The need for a clearer positioning of social work as a discipline; redefining 'the social' in social work.

Social work is currently under pressure. This can be attributed to the dominant trends in the modern welfare states' welfare services such as the evidence-based practice (EBP), standardization of services (New Public Management) and an individual-focused understanding of problems people face. These trends manifest themselves both across the service systems and in different parts of the practice field.

Social work as a discipline and a profession was established partly as a demand for specific expertise in services such as residential care, services for people with intellectual disabilities and social welfare. Lorentz (2016) claims that the origins of social work was a response to the emergence of 'the social question' that was raised during the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. This indicates that 'the social' seems to have a particular position or be a specific point of departure to analyze and solve problems such as poverty, crime or drug-addiction. Thus, 'the social' was considered and still is considered, to be a specific domain of reality within modern welfare states.

However, this traditional notion of 'the social' as a specific domain is questioned and can no longer be taken for granted (Hanssen et al. 2015). 'The social' exists only through practice, and because practice is constantly shifting and never stable, so is 'the social'. Therefore, questioning 'the social' would also give an opportunity to redefine perceptions of the concept (Latour 2005).

In our paper, we will discuss how a redefinition of 'the social' can contribute to a clearer positioning of social work as a discipline within modern welfare states. By using concrete examples (from our study with the preliminary title; «What's 'the social' in social work? A study of 'the social' and its relevance for social work within the welfare systems»), we will trace associations and practices between actors working in the welfare systems, and thereby redefine 'the social' in social work. Hopefully, this will contribute to make social work more visible.



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### 367 | Case studies and early research practice in social work. The contribution of Ada Sheffield (1869-1943) to the development of interpretative research approaches and a discipline of social work. (Working title)

*Dayana Lau (Martin-Luther-University, Germany)*

**Keywords:** history of research in social work, interpretative social research, case analysis, situational approach, Ada Sheffield

#### 1. Background and purpose of the proposed presentation

Social work looks back on an early stage in the first third of the 20th century, when several key steps on the way to a profession and a discipline have been taken. In the United States of America 'social case work' arises during this period as a significant line of tradition. The paper envisaged focuses on a tradition of research which has its historical roots in this context. It is assumed that the case records of the welfare agencies were destined not only to document the treatment given to the client, but to serve as well as a source of knowledge for research purposes. Especially Ada Sheffield (1869-1943), a widely forgotten pioneer of social case work, develops a concept of a social terminology, which bases on interpretative case studies and lays the foundation of a discipline of social work.

#### 2. Summary of the main points of the presentation

Ada Sheffield ties on the work of Mary Richmond (1861-1928), who develops a model of reconstructive case analysis, but does not elaborate its implications for scientific research. In contrast to Richmond, Sheffield is interested in refining the descriptive vocabulary of social work. In her words: "As one case history follows another, all analyzed and interpreted on the same general plan, these [interpretative] terms will begin to take on an explicitness of meaning which at present they lack".



(Sheffield 1922, p. 19)

The paper is in a first step going to outline the concept of the 'social situation' by Ada Sheffield, which forms the methodological basis of her research approach. Second, I am going to reconstruct Sheffield's contribution with some examples of her case studies to illustrate her techniques of interpretation. Third, I will focus on her idea of generalizing her findings and investigate how she conceptualizes a 'social terminology' by comparative study analysis.

### **3. Reference to the conference theme**

The scientific standing of social work is fragile to this day. It is assumed that it is not least because of the specific professional development of social work why some important traditions of social work research got lost. Meanwhile, interpretative social research methods hold a great amount on the research occurrence in social work as a total. The paper is going to recall a widely lost tradition in order to exemplify, that social work generated own interpretative research approaches and early attempts to develop an independent scientific discipline. Consequently, the paper matches in my view subtheme no. 3 and no. 5 in a historical perspective.

### **4. Expected conclusions/implications for further research**

The paper intends to reconstruct a forgotten, but path-breaking approach in social work research. Beside this historical concern, it seems to be instructive to integrate a situational view of social case histories, which consciously takes an opposing stance to individualizing concepts, into actual discourses on social work research.

### **5. Primary Sources**

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## 406 | Epistemology and social work – integrating theory, research and practice through philosophical Pragmatism

*Steve Hothersall (Edge Hill University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** epistemology, pragmatism, social research, social Inquiry

A perennial debate in the history of social work (Soydan 1999; Payne 2005) is that of the relationship between theory and practice and by what means and in what ways these domains do, do not, should, or should not influence each other (Witkin 2011; Salisbury Forum Group 2011; Wiley 2012; Julkunen, Austin, Fisher and Uggerhøj 2014). This debate is essentially about the issue of knowledge of and for social work and similar professions, but there is little evidence of sustained and critical discussion regarding the epistemological basis of and for such knowledge: what knowledge actually is and how it is created or sustained critical commentary on the relationship between epistemology and the nature of social life - the connection between epistemology and ontology.

In this presentation I will draw on the cognate discipline of philosophy and the sub-disciplines of epistemology and (social) ontology to present an illustrative account of the development and use of knowledge within social work, drawing on a range of materials from the UK, the USA, Central Europe, Australasia and the Scandinavian countries. The aim is to illustrate how these issues might now benefit from being viewed through a different philosophical 'lens' – that of (philosophical) Pragmatism (Peirce 1905; James 1977; Dewey 1929), which could provide a framework to allow for the fullest use of the broadest range of knowledge so as to equip the profession more readily with 'functioning practices' (Julkunen and Karvinen-Niinikoski 2014: 1). A number of writers from the Scandinavian countries are now focused on 'practice research' through more contextually and ontologically-engaged methodologies (Kivinen and Piironen 2004; Mäntysaari, 2005; Alexanderson et al 2009; Bailey 2014; Harrikari, Rauhaka and Virokannas 2014; Høgsbro 2015), reflecting the ongoing development of the importance of practice-based research at an international level (Epstein et al 2015; Julkunen, Austin, Fisher and Uggerhøj 2014; Julkunen and Karvinen-Niinikoski 2014; Salisbury Forum Group 2011). These approaches are broadly pragmatic in their orientation and underpinning theoretical assumptions, and add to the claim that such approaches have real potential for future inquiry into social work and its practices.



Such an approach as the potential to refocus the knowledge debate and integrate disparate approaches regarding which forms and types of knowledge are 'best' for the profession (Ulrich 2007; Goldenberg 2009). In this way, the perceived 'theory and practice' dichotomy could be narrowed (Witkin 2011) and the confidence of practitioners in relation to their understanding, use and development of theory of, for and from practice significantly enhanced, particularly if practice is conceived more dynamically as praxis (Flyveberg 2001; Kinsella and Pitman 2012; Petersén and Olson 2014).

This paper addresses itself to the main conference theme and sub-themes 3 and 5, and will provides opportunities for delegates to consider the usefulness of a practical tool to introduce and integrate the pragmatic principle into their organisation and their day-to-day practice(s).



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 5.5

### Theme 6: Research on different forms of partnerships/cooperation – including power and conflicts in social work

(Chair: Rudy van den Hoven)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Room: 10.15 - Nordkraft

#### 26 | Partnership between Social Educators with Different Levels of Education (SEA, SEH, SEU) Working in Institutions for Persons with Disabilities in Switzerland: Current Status and Future Issues

*Alida Gulfi (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland)*

*Valérie Perriard (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland)*

**Keywords:** partnership, social educators with different levels of education, institutions for people with disabilities

#### **Background and purpose:**

The Swiss social work education system has undergone profound transformations within the last 15 years, including the multiplication of education levels. In the field of social education in particular, where there used to be one level, there are now three different levels of diplomas: (1) socio-educational assistant with a diploma of vocational education and training (SEA), (2) social educator with a diploma of higher vocational education and training (SEH) and (3) social educator with a Bachelor of Arts (SEU). This study investigated the relationship between social educators with different levels of education (SEA, SEH, SEU) working in institutions for persons with disabilities in French-speaking Switzerland. How do the three professional profiles work together as a team? What forms of partnership emerge in these “mixed teams” (cooperative, competitive, complementary or conflicting)? What are the conditions for a smooth functioning of the partnership between professionals from different educational backgrounds and what are the weak points? What are the issues that may be expected in the future?



**Methods:**

Our study (2014-2016) adopted a qualitative approach: 46 semi-structured interviews were conducted with employers and social education professionals (SEAs, social educators SEH, social educators SEU) working in 18 different institutions for persons with disabilities in two French-speaking cantons (FR/VD) in Switzerland. Particularly, the interviews assessed their representations and experiences regarding the partnership between social educators with different levels of education.

**Results:**

The findings highlighted a good collaboration between SEAs, social educators SEH and social educators SEU. According to participants, three elements may promote or hamper partnership between the three professional profiles. Firstly, the diversity and complementarity of their skills (knowledge, know-how and know-how-to-be), professional practices and postures enhance cooperation. However, the diversity of professional cultures and ways of working may also be a limit in the absence of clarification and coordination of responsibilities and activities between the three professional profiles. Secondly, the transversality of responsibilities and activities, as well as the horizontality of professional relationships between social educators with different levels of education are beneficial. Conversely, the delegation of less “valued” activities to SEA’s by social educators SEH/SEU together with a vertical relationship are considered as damaging elements. Finally, a well-balanced distribution between SEAs, social educators SEH and social educators SEU within teams and institutions is important, as opposed to an overrepresentation of less qualified social education professionals (SEAs), which prevents professionals from providing quality daily caretaking to residents.

**Conclusions and implications:**

The uncertainty concerning the financial resources of social institutions and a possible implementation, by public authorities, of employment quotas for the three professional profiles raise a major issue for the future of their partnership. Would the current and well-balanced distribution between SEAs, social educators SEH and social educators SEU, which appears necessary for a smooth functioning of their collaboration and high quality accompaniment of the residents, be maintained?



## 55 | Social Inclusion: illusion or reality?

*Jean Pierre Wilken (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

*Jeroen Knevel (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** social inclusion, social work, learning disability

This paper presents results from a study in which in seven pilot projects in the Netherlands social workers and persons with a learning disability have experimented with 'social inclusion'. First, the concept of social inclusion will be discussed. Then, some findings from the study, working on social inclusion in daily practice, will be highlighted.

Social Inclusion is a contested notion. It breathes the idea of an ideal world, in which all human beings live together in peace. The reality is that human interaction is characterised by movements of pulling and pushing. It is a concept which is pretty much driven by emotions. On one end of this scale people are attracted to each other on the basis of feelings of intimate love and the other end of the scale is dominated by hatred. In between are many different factors which contribute to either inclusion or exclusion. In the middle there might be a point of neutrality. Here, there is neither sympathy or antipathy, but a form of 'tolerance'. Inclusion and exclusion are not only influenced by the reactions of people towards each other, but also by the way individuals perceive themselves, and normative ideas about 'social' behaviour.

An essential feature of being human is the dependency on the recognition of other human beings, and the need of belonging to a social community. Recognition and belonging contribute to social inclusion, a lack to exclusion.

For persons with a disability, social exclusion can be caused by both physical and psychological segregation, related to the disability and/or because of a history of exclusion due to institutionalisation.

For social workers it is a challenge to contribute to social inclusion. In our project, called 'Expedition Inclusion', at seven places in the Netherlands, social workers have worked on the notion of social inclusion and have set examples how to put this into practice, together with people with a learning disability and the local community. Some results of the research on these pilots will be shared. One of the findings is that working on



social inclusion requires an 'inclusive' mind-set. This mind-set is based on values of equality and human rights. A second important finding is that inclusion is not something 'big' and unattainable, but that it can be concretised through different kinds of actions and activities. A third finding is that these activities take place in partnership and contribute to empowerment and mutual gain. The challenge is to create win-win situations, and thereby it is important for social workers to use the notion of reciprocity, while working on social inclusion.

### 198 | Partnership and risk: a search for Parrhèsia in social work

*Rudi Roose (Ghent University, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** power, participation, diagnosis, parrhèsia, risk

The rhetoric of risk has become a prominent issue in the field of child and family social work. In different countries, the focus on risk in social work is rooted in political and cultural responses to tragedies. This development towards thinking about risk has also influenced child and family social work in Flanders (the Dutch speaking part of Belgium). In a current reform in child and family social work, the concept of 'situations of concern' became central. Social workers are asked to take more responsibility in situations of concern and to deal with these more adequately, so that on the one hand, more intrusive (and expensive) interventions can be prevented, but also tragedies can be prevented. As such, we discuss how two different perspectives in child and family social work intertwine. On the one hand, a central focus lies on 'partnership' with parents and children. Social workers are urged to take children and their parents seriously and to construct partnerships with them. On the other hand, social workers must also diagnose, control and prevent situations of risk in their daily work. However, these two perspectives are not only intertwined, but are also at odds, as the logic of 'partnership' refers to sharing power, while the diagnostic logic refers to applying power. Hence, we need to discuss the meaning of a focus on risk in relation to a focus on partnership. In this presentation, we discuss this based on a research project in which 350 situations were analysed, which were formally considered as a concern/risk by child and family social workers in Flanders. The research data includes 350 reports of calls from social workers to a consult team, that is created in



the system of child welfare and protection in Flanders (the Dutch speaking part of Belgium) to support social workers in dealing with concerns.

A qualitative content analysis of these documents shows that  
1) the notion of 'situations of concern' is a 'thick' concept that covers a diversity of meanings, that can refer to the problem of children and families, but also often refer to problems of the social worker or the organisations (for instance, the concern is that there is a waiting list, and so the situation we become worse),  
2) in a lot of situations, concerns are not communicated with parents and children and as such, partnerships become instrumental and power becomes intransparent.

Following from this, we argue for Parrhèsia in social work. The concept of Parrhèsia refers to speaking up to truth, even if this is a risk for the one who speaks. We argue that the tension between building a partnership with parents and children and dealing with risk can only be handled if social workers are willing and supported to communicate transparently and to share their concerns with children, parents and other social workers and their organisations.

## 209 | Social Work Research, Challenges and Possibilities: the inclusivity of adults with intellectual disabilities within research

*Julie Lawrence (University of Salford, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** social work, multi-disciplinary working, intellectual disabilities, narrative inquiry, partnership

### **Overall Aim and Objectives of the research**

This presentation will discuss the outcomes from an (empirical) qualitative research study, which explored one central theme: the contribution of social work (adults) located within a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) in England.

The aim and objectives identified a number of related concepts about the nature of social work, and in so doing, invited social workers (n=9), allied health professionals (n=8) and a number of local citizens (n=9) to share their 'lived experiences' about the overall value and effectiveness, of a multi-disciplinary approach towards health and social work integration of services.

**Research Design:**

active involvement of members of the public

The methodology had a phenomenological focus, in terms of seeking out the 'essence' of individual experiences. A component of the research design was the inclusiveness of 'storytelling' from local citizens. The focus of their involvement was to discover whether multi-disciplinary working could in effect, have positive outcomes for them. A narrative inquiry approach was adopted to capture the storied nature of their data. As Baldwin states 'it offers something unique in its concentration on the structures that shape stories and storytelling practices' (Baldwin, 2013 p.3).

**Recruitment of Participants:**

the challenges and possibilities

The challenges consisted of attempting to reach citizens who had intellectual disabilities and being able to inform them about the research study. This was facilitated through a connection with a social worker, (a participant) who had on-going relationships with local citizens via support groups within the locality. Another challenge was that a knowledgeable insight about the citizens' specific intellectual disabilities was unknown to the researcher, a factor which could have affected their contributions.

The possibilities consisted of the potential to 'hear their voices' a notion enshrined within relevant legislation (Mental Capacity Act, 2005) in England. Although most of the citizens could not understand the written word, pictorial images were presented by the researcher which encouraged cooperation, none hierarchical relationships and informed consent addressing the 'power' imbalance between both parties.

**Results**

The research addressed the experiences, perceptions and outcomes from people who needed and used multi-disciplinary services. All the citizens had worked alongside a member of the MDT at some point in their lives. The results indicated that all the citizens shared their 'lived experiences' openly, and, whilst attempting to live independent lifestyles, it was important to include regular contact with familiar people in their lives. Personal experiences of loneliness were prevailing factors, alongside mixed responses (positive & negative) towards MDT services and its value and effectiveness from their perspectives.

**Conclusion and Implications for further research and practice**

To conclude, all the individuals viewed themselves as citizens within their own communities, despite both intellectual and



resource limitations surrounding their lifestyles. They had aspirations to live fulfilling lives supported by family members, and professionals alike. The implications for further research and practice within a European context entail working in partnership with individuals to ensure that important 'voices' are represented, despite complexities and barriers with which the label 'disabilities' can present to social work researchers and practitioners.

## 248 | Shifting perceptions: Participatory research with unaccompanied asylum seeking young people living in foster care in the United Kingdom

*Justin Rogers, (The University of Bath, United Kingdom)*

*Caroline Hickman (The University of Bath, United Kingdom)*

*Sam Carr (The University of Bath, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** unaccompanied asylum seeking children, participatory, action research, foster care

This paper presents the process and the outcomes of a participatory action research project with a group of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people living in foster care. The research took place in the south west of England with young people who attended a peer support group, facilitated by a charitable fostering agency.

The agency were experiencing difficulties in recruiting enough new foster carers who were willing to look after increased numbers of young people seeking asylum. There was also some reluctance from their existing carers to foster this group too. Practitioners in the agency felt that some of the carers held negative perceptions and stereotypes about refugee and asylum seekers, which prevented them from offering placements. The aim of this project was to help shift these perceptions through participatory action research. To achieve this, the research team participated with the group in a range of activities, from art workshops to climbing. This allowed us to develop a rapport and build trust with young people, which was vital as the young people had experienced trauma in their countries of origin and some of the participants had been trafficked and exploited during their journeys to the UK.

Alongside these activities, we undertook a photo-voice project where the young people took photographs to show aspects of the day-to-day lives that were important to them. The





photographs were then used to promote the young peoples' voices in an attempt to de-mystify the labels of refugees and asylum seekers. This project had an impact in two key ways; Firstly, the images were presented to a focus group of existing foster carers in order to better inform their understanding of the young peoples' day to day experiences in foster care; Secondly, the photographs were developed into posters, which were shown at community events and exhibited in community spaces during refugee week, in order to generate interest in fostering unaccompanied asylum seeking children.


 SYMPOSIUM 13
 

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## 137 | Counter radicalization, counter effects? The impact of the politics of (counter) radicalization on social work for vulnerable youth

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
Room: 3.3.17 - Nordkraft

*Bart Van Bouchaute, (Artevelde University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Tim Vanhove, (Artevelde University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Pascal Debruyne, (UGent - Middle Eastern and North African research Group (MENARG), Belgium)*

*Nina Henkens, (Uit de marge (vzw), Belgium)*

*Hans Vermeersch (VIVES University College, Belgium)*

*Ellen Vandenbogaerde (VIVES University College, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** radicalization and youth work, stigmatization of Muslim youth, policy impact on social work, discourse and policy analysis

In the aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001, the concept of 'radicalization' was developed by security experts and scholars as a way to grasp the root causes of terrorism. Successive waves of attacks in Madrid, London, Paris, Brussels... between 2004 and 2016 by European home-grown terrorists lead to ongoing attempts to better understand this concept. The same academic questions were researched over and over again: what is radicalization and how is it linked to violent extremism and/or terrorism, how can the process of radicalization be understood, what are individual, group or societal factors and dynamics of radicalization, how can degrees of radicalization be measured...? Paradoxically, while the academic concept of radicalization was generalized as a complex and multi-layered process leading to violent extremism, at the same time it became specifically connected with Muslim beliefs and activism.

Despite its academic omnipresence, 'radicalization' remains an ill-defined, ambiguous and controversial concept. In contrast to this academic uncertainty, caused by both theoretical controversy and lack of empirical evidence, the paradigm of 'radicalization' primarily became a political issue. In its apparent simplicity the concept was very attractive for policy makers in their attempts to deal with the growing fear in Europe. Prevention policies on radicalization were developed and mainly targeted towards the 'vulnerable youth' and Muslim communities, with considerable involvement of local authorities,



social work and civil society organizations.

Through the entanglement of intelligence experts, academic scholars and policy makers, some intellectual and at the same time political assumptions of the concept became common sense. The strong emphasis on individual determinants, the focus on Islamic ideology and the underexposure of societal dynamics, the ontological break between Islamic and other forms of terrorism and the disregard of the relational character of political violence has serious consequences for academic research, policy making and social work interventions.

Rather than simply apply or dismiss the concept of (prevention of) radicalization, the researchers in this symposium therefore seek to understand what the 'language of radicalization' in counter radicalization policies 'does': what are the main assumptions in the Flemish politics of (counter) radicalization, how do counter radicalization strategies influence youth work organisations working with vulnerable youth and how do applied social science students relate to the discourse on radicalization?

Symposium chair: Bart Van Bouchaute

### Three abstracts:

1. Pascal Debruyne (University Ghent) & Nina Henkens (Uit de marge) - The Flemish 'politics of (counter) radicalization' as a challenge for youth work with vulnerable youth
2. Tim Vanhove & Bart Van Bouchaute (Artevelde University College) - Counter radicalization strategies in youth work with vulnerable youth in Flanders: countering or reinforcing stigmatization of Muslim youth?
3. Hans Vermeersch & Ellen Vandenbogaerde (VIVES University College) - The effects of applied social sciences educational trajectories on attitudes towards radicalization, terrorism and countermeasures

### **ABSTRACT 1: The Flemish 'politics of (counter)radicalization' as a challenge for youth work with vulnerable youth - Pascal Debruyne & Nina Henkens**

Context and research question. After the attacks by home-grown terrorists in Madrid and London (2004-05), concerns about 'radicalization' developed in the intertwined fields of security services, politics and academia. After the recent series of attacks in Paris and Brussels, this concern resulted in a series of anti-radicalization policies in response to the public commotion. Policy makers in different European countries launched counter radicalization programs – like 'Channel' in the UK – that no longer only include specialized services like



secret services and police, but also teachers and school staff, social workers and - last but not least - youth workers.

In Flanders, a series of similar broad policies aimed at several sectors have emerged. Especially those projects and policies aimed solely at Muslim youngsters to work on their identity formation to counter radicalization, show multiple layers of ideology at work. The research focuses on the ideological assumptions in the counter radicalization policies targeted towards youth work with vulnerable youth.

**Methods.** The Flemish 'politics of (counter) radicalization' is researched through a discourse analysis of policy documents on projects of prevention of radicalization in youth work: hearings in the Flemish Parliament, policy decisions and project plans of the Flemish government and their translation into guidelines, and policy advices of the Flemish Youth Council and several youth work organizations.

**Results and implications.** The results show that critical questions should be posed about the assumptions in the Flemish 'politics of (counter)radicalization'. These assumptions are highly problematic for the youth work with vulnerable youth. Youth work, more than anything, depends on trust and "taking sides". Social professionals working with vulnerable youth do not have a neutral positionality. Additionally, the politics of (de)radicalization risks to effect negative performative power on youngsters, especially Muslim youth, and on their relations with youth workers.

**ABSTRACT 2: Counter radicalization strategies in youth work with vulnerable youth in Flanders: countering or reinforcing stigmatisation of Muslim youth? - Tim Vanhove & Bart Van Bouchaute**

**Context and research question.** The departure of young Flemish fighters to Syria and the terrorist attacks in Brussels have made radicalization an important topic in Flanders (Belgium). Religious radicalization is often claimed to lie at the root of violent extremism. However, scientific debate shows social isolation and perceptions of injustice to be determinants. New Flemish policy on the prevention of radicalization claims to reject religion as a determinant and states to put emphasis on the enhancement of positive identity development of young people at risk in youth care. In this paper, we examine the performative impact of these new radicalization policies.

**Methods.** Desk research on social work methods on prevention of violent extremism and on identity development in youth work organisations with vulnerable youth was used as a basis for 3 exploratory case-studies in youth work organisations in Flanders and Brussels. Their goals and approaches, (good)



practises, difficulties and boundaries were examined by means of observations of meetings, interviews with youth workers and team leaders, and interviews with experts.

**Results.** Youth work organisations show an ambiguous reaction to the counter radicalization policies: the recognition of identity development is in line with their current practises with at risk youngsters. However, the discourse on radicalization is seen as a risk to their fragile work, when relations of trust between youth workers and Muslim youngsters are threatened because of further stigmatisation. In an atmosphere of distrust of Muslims and migrants, they become isolated even more.

**Implications.** As a reaction, these organisations apply a double perspective in their social work practises in order to counter or diminish the negative performative power of the radicalisation policies: (1) Specific approaches on the prevention of isolation that is built on keeping contact without directly confronting the youngsters; (2) General methods on participation and lobbying to enhance the societal position of vulnerable youngsters. By applying this focus, concerns about (counter) radicalization are turned upside down. More space is provided to develop an alternative praxis vis-à-vis the politics of (counters) radicalization, its assumptions and practices.

**ABSTRACT 3: The effects of applied social sciences educational trajectories on attitudes towards radicalisation, terrorism and countermeasures - Hans Vermeersch & Ellen Vandenbogaerde**

This paper presents the findings of a survey on attitudes towards terrorism, radicalisation and repressive or preventative countermeasures, among a sample of Belgian students in applied social sciences. These students are educated to work with and for society's most vulnerable and excluded groups, including currently often targeted Muslims. Among a prevailing social and political discourse on terror and repression, and frequent stigmatisation of Muslims at all levels (e.g. the Belgian interior minister's comments that a significant number of Muslims partied on the streets after the coordinated terror attacks on Brussels and that neighbourhoods where they did so should be 'cleaned up'), these students' traditionally preventative and inclusive focus is under increasing pressure. The study makes a comparison between different educational programmes (e.g. those focussed on psychological interventions, social-cultural work or societal security) and evaluates the effects of personal background variables (e.g. previous experience with vulnerable groups) on attitudes towards terrorism and the perceived effectiveness of different types of countermeasures. From previous surveys, we found



substantial effects of education (both these different programmes and progressive education) on support for different types of countermeasures, with students showing less support for repressive measures as they progress through their programmes. The findings are evaluated in light of what can be learned from this student population with regards to underlying social changes, the prevailing discourse on terrorism, and more general attitudes towards radicalisation and countermeasures.





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**SYMPOSIUM 14**

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**196 | Producing Reflexive Knowledge through Teaching Qualitative Research Approach for/from Social Workers**

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
Room: 6.7 - Nordkraft

*Yi-Shih Cheng, (Department of Social Work, Tunghai University, Taiwan)*

*Pei-Yuan Tsai, (Graduate Institute of Education, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan)*

*Frank T.Y. Wang (Graduate Institute of Social Work, National Chengchi University)*

*Fang-Pei Chen (Department of Social Welfare, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan)*

**Keywords:** reflexive knowledge, qualitative research methodologies, social work education

In the post-modern era, reflexivity has become an important capacity to develop for social workers in order to balance the growing emphasis on scientific and technological approaches in social work. This symposium aims to discuss how to use four qualitative research approaches – self-narrative, hermeneutic-phenomenology, institutional ethnography and grounded theory - to evolve pedagogies for cultivating reflexivity or to generate reflexive knowledge in social work. Social workers are change agents when working with people. Therefore, social work education should aim to build practitioners, students and teachers' capacity for self-awareness, analytical understanding of "persons in situation", and insights into the interconnectedness of self and others. However, the palpable desire to model after scientific medicine in the development of social work profession has led to the narrowing of social work education into predominantly the training of helping techniques, which is a gross disservice to the fulfillment of the social work mission.

Reflexivity – abilities to act upon self-awareness and clear understandings of the context – will help social workers to break through the confinement of prescribed practical approaches and return to humanity and social justice.



Accordingly, we argue that teaching, learning, and generating reflexive knowledge is essential in sharpening social workers' role as a change agent. This symposium showcases four papers using different approach to materializing this claim. The first paper will present the author's experiences of teaching hermeneutic-phenomenology methodology through situated learning for MSW students to obtain the embodied and reflexive knowledge. The author of the second paper will demonstrate how to use the self-narrative approach - especially focus on non-instructive and problem-posing dialogue process - to help students self-empower and to find the dialectical relationship between themselves and social contexts in order for cultivating the ability of reflexivity. The third paper reflects upon the authors' experiences of teaching and learning institutional ethnography and talk about how to use IE - notably to map out the power relations of everyday lives experiences and link to the macro power - to liberating and healing for social workers those who has been suffered and traumatized from work experiences and developing the capacity of reflexivity. The author of the fourth paper compares the conceptual frameworks of practices from the grounded theory studies examining direct practice in three community psychiatric rehabilitation programs to open the invisible or underexamined practical processes and consequences in the construction of a theoretical framework of the embodied practical and reflexive knowledge.

In sum, these papers will discuss (a) the relations between qualitative research approaches and reflexive knowledge, (b) how to generate reflexive knowledge using these qualitative approaches, and (c) the dialectical relationship in teaching, learning and using qualitative methodologies. With these discussions, we look for exchanges on how reflexive knowledge may inspire the future of social work education.

### **Paper 1: Teaching and Learning Hermeneutic-Phenomenology Methodology to Obtain Embodied and Reflexive Knowledge for Social Workers**

Hermeneutic-phenomenology methodology is aimed at clarifying situations experienced by people in everyday life. It attempts to capture as closely as possible the meaning underlying experiences, and analyzes participant experiences to derive the



implication of a phenomenon being investigated. Therefore, the finding of this approach always ground radically the foundations of knowledge, and is thus crucial to obtaining on-site practical knowledge for social workers. However, how to teach this approach for learners to grasp its true meanings and actually use it remains a question. This paper presents the authors' experiences of teaching hermeneutic-phenomenology methodology in master's social work qualitative research methods course. It is important learning a methodology involves interactive dialogue between "teaching" and "learning". Hence a dialectical relationship between teaching methodology and how learners will understand it could be of significance. It means that understanding a methodology within a learning process, and it is also embodied in the teaching practice. The observations indicated that situated learning, a process of embodied interaction where learners operate, teachers demonstrate, both share and discuss their understandings and insights, and finally attain reflexive thinking by writing about self experiences of analyzing and understanding the contents, can assist learners to obtain the knowledge in context of hermeneutic phenomenology as well as the ability to analyze texts. Accordingly, this study also explored how and what the learning path of obtaining embodied and reflexive knowledge through situated learning inspires and means to social work education.

## **Paper 2: Self-narrative as the self-empowered pedagogy for social workers**

Frontline social workers often encounter ethical dilemmas, overloaded work and self-questioning in practice. It may result in leaving the profession permanently. Therefore, social workers must find ways to solve those backlashes in order to survive and move on. "Tell one's own story" is an important self-empowered way for social workers to survive. "Non-instructive" is an important characteristic of self-narrative yet difficult to tell students how to do it. The more a student expects to be led by the instructor, the more difficult this student senses while telling her/his own story. Students must learn to believe that she/he is the subject of research. Teachers must believe that students are able to change, wait for the changes to happen patiently and facilitate the change process. It is a process to



learn how to build openness and trust in the teacher-student relationships. Given that each student has his/her own unique social relational position, self-narrative is a relational-oriented and individual-oriented teaching method. "Problem-posing" dialogue proposed by critical pedagogy is a way to teach self-narrative. Through the process of dialogue, teachers encourage the students to explore their own frameworks and issues, to be willing to talk to the important others in their lives, to listen to others, and to find the dialectical relationship between themselves and their social contexts. Students can re-tell their own stories and change their views as well as social positions accordingly. It empowers students to face the difficulties in this way. Therefore, self-narrative can be utilized as a self-empowered pedagogy for social workers.

### **Paper 3: Teaching Institutional Ethnography as Critical Pedagogy for Social Workers**

In traditional Marxist analysis, social work tends to be seen as a means of social control to pacify class conflicts and therefore social workers become barriers rather than catalyst for consciousness-raising among disadvantaged peoples. Such critique points out the fundamental paradox faced by social workers in capitalist societies but fails to provide the solution. Discrediting social workers as the accomplice of social control for capitalism is not sufficient enough to develop critical consciousness among social workers. This paper reflects upon the authors' experiences of teaching and learning institutional ethnography (IE), developed by the Canadian sociologist, Dorothy E. Smith, as a form of critical pedagogy for social workers. The strengths of institutional ethnography lie in its ability to capture the exercises of micro power relations and link to the macro power relations. The emphasis on starting the research question from the disjuncture experiences of everyday lives gives voices to students' work experiences which tend to be ignored. The difficult part of the teaching is to see beyond the experiences and map out the power relations. IE's emphasis on text as medium for ruling relations fills in the gap since paper work constitutes an increasing proportion of social workers' tasks. Implications for pedagogical practices include creating spaces for students to tell their stories, using peer from different social positions as resources to map out the



power relations, and encouraging students to explore ideology behind texts which organize social work practices. The move from personal experiences to social structure provides a new way of seeing for students which proved to be liberating and healing for social workers who has been suffered and traumatized from work experiences.

#### **Paper 4: Investigating Social Work Practices through the Lens of Grounded Theory**

In the era of evidence-based social work interventions, it is important to recognize that achieving intended outcomes depends on practitioners' interpretation of, and capacity to carry out the intervention. Yet, the practical processes of an intervention oftentimes remain invisible or underexamined. Grounded theory methodology (GT), rooted in the symbolic interactionism, is a suitable tool to open the "black box" of practice. GT attends to the relations among context, processes, conditions (factors that alter actions), and consequences in the construction of a theoretical framework of a social phenomenon. Therefore, it is useful for investigating the interconnections among practitioners' goals of practice, perceptions of the intervention and the environment, strategies in response to situations, and appraisals of their practice in a program. This paper compares the conceptual frameworks of practices from the GT studies examining direct practice in three evidence-based community psychiatric rehabilitation programs: Assertive Community Treatment, Critical Time Intervention, and the Clubhouse model, each representing distinct program features and philosophy. This analysis identifies lessons in practice across the programs, including: (a) how social values and cultural beliefs shaped the goals of practices; (b) how effective practices relied on practitioners' tailoring of practice strategies to service users' experiences with social marginalization to achieve desired outcomes; and (c) how practitioners from their first-hand experiences detected critical structural components for optimizing practices that have yet to be specified in the intervention guidelines. This paper also discusses implications of these findings on social work training, including helping students to (a) enhance self-awareness of one's own culture, values, and perspectives, and their influence on one's practices; (b) develop capacities to integrate professional



boundaries and humanistic approaches in practices with service users; (c) foster a desire to be an active participant in shaping social work interventions.






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 SYMPOSIUM 15
 

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### 301 | Reappraisal, apologies and compensation. Rewriting the history of residential child care

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
Room: 6.8 - Nordkraft

*Gisela Hauss, (University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Switzerland)*

*Markus Bossert, (University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Switzerland)*

*Ulrich Leitner, (University of Innsbruck, Department of Education, Austria)*

*Clara Bombach, (Zurich University of Applied Sciences, School of Social Work, Institute for Child, Youth & Family, Switzerland)*

*Thomas Gabriel (Zurich University of Applied Sciences, School of Social Work, Institute for Child, Youth & Family, Switzerland)*

*Samuel Keller (Zurich University of Applied Sciences, School of Social Work, Institute for Child, Youth & Family, Switzerland)*

**Keywords:** historical reappraisal, residential child care, history of social work, methodology, child welfare, welfare state history, professionalization, life trajectories, memory, biographical reconstructive analysis

In various European countries, the past twenty years have seen increased interest, both in the public and within the research community, in the issues surrounding the outplacement of children. The surge in interest emerged against the backdrop of criticism voiced by individuals who had been the victims of sexual harassment and abuse in residential care, initially while in religious and then also in connection with secular facilities. Results are detailed committee reports as well as comprehensive studies commissioned by the federal government, the federal states, the municipalities and various associations or responsible bodies. In Switzerland this could be observed quite recently; in April 2013, a round table forum was set up by the national government to work out the necessary steps in the process of reappraising the past of coercive welfare measures. In December 2014, an independent commission of experts was appointed, and in September 2016 the Swiss Parliament decided on a program to compensate former victims of coercive welfare measures. In Austria, the history of residential care has been investigated since 2010 in Vienna and Western Austria. The proposed symposium will examine ongoing historical and



interdisciplinary research in Switzerland and Austria focused on child welfare, outplacement and care homes.

The proposed papers will shed light on the results and theoretical reflections of research projects within the framework of the politics of reappraising the past. First, the papers will problematize the complex relationship between memory work and scientific research. Against the backdrop of theories of memory, (such as the work of Jan Assmann and Maurice Halbwachs), they will present findings pertaining to questions such as: in which “fixed points” and “figures of memory” are the concept and image of the history of residential child care currently merged? What formative and normative impulses derive from these “images” and how are they related to research design and the course of inquiry? Second, the proposed papers will shed light on methodological reflections and problematize research methods such as sampling, the conducting of interviews as well as the access to archives and source materials in the societal frame of reappraisal. The intersection between care home upbringing, social marginalization and abuse draws attention to the problem of restricted access to archives as well as to the challenges involved in interviewing older persons who had to come to terms with their painful experiences. Third, the proposed symposium will promote and deepen discussion about the position of social work research in the process of reappraisal. The papers will reflect on how to grapple with the problem of rewriting history of our own profession, revealing how the profession is criticized by victims and repeatedly placed in the position of a co-perpetrator. The proposed symposium will enhance analytical awareness of differences and changes in social work research in respect to differential contexts on the level of politics, social attention and memory.

**Author 1 Gisela Hauss - Engaging with the Past of Residential Child Care. Reflecting the Challenge of Scientific Analyses in the Context of Memory Work and Political Issues**

Over the last twenty years, the history of residential child care has become a major social issue, prompting extensive media coverage as well as various inquiries in child abuse and neglect particularly in institutional contexts. Switzerland has recently undertaken efforts to reappraise this past and make reparations. In this societal frame of reappraisal, our research project “Placing children in care. Child Welfare in Switzerland 1940 -1990” ([www.placing-children-in-care.ch](http://www.placing-children-in-care.ch)) was conducted and realized. The interdisciplinary project is composed of three



subprojects at four universities, emphasizing synopsis and comparison. Conducted as multidimensional analyses that reveal the variety of discourses, norms, actors and practices that guided behaviour, the project does not focus exclusively on past injustices. The goal is to understand the issues in a more comprehensive and analytically reflected way with respect to their diversity, context specificity, and trajectory.

The proposed paper will highlight the challenges in research in the societal frame of reappraising the past. Interest will therefore turn to the most disparate methods of human memory, particularly to the relationship between reappraisal politics and scientific historical research. The present appropriation of history of residential child care in Switzerland, fixed in various iconographic and narrative memory forms, enables biographically injured and violated individuals to find their voices and form an awareness of biography and identity, both on the personal and collective level. The presentation will outline selected iconographic and narrative memory figures appearing in the public, such as photos, events or even special commemorative postage stamps. The paper argues that social work research in this field has to be conscious about disparate methods and functions of human memory in order to be aware of the subtle distinctions between an identity-forming memory work and scientific historical research, supposed to engage in academic attentiveness amid the controversies and dilemmas of reappraisal politics.

### **Author 2 Markus Bossert - Referring to the Past in Residential Care. The Influence of History on the Self-perception of Social Work**

Professional associations in the field of residential care for children and adolescents show an ambivalent relationship to their own past. They went through several name changes due to internal or external struggles in their occupational field. In the aftermath of home scandals, transformed social values and rising influence of neighboring disciplines, they searched for their own professional identity as well as a new self-perception. This paper examines how in the field of residential care professionals and other stakeholders deal with their own history. Through the lens of the interrogatives "when, what and how," the paper explores three key questions: At what time and in which contexts do the stakeholders relate to their history? To which periods and what conceptions of history do the stakeholders relate? And how is history used by those stakeholders for their own interests? The paper will discuss the thesis that the demand for history in the field is closely associated with the professionalization of social work. Thereby



history varies in its function.

The paper builds on current research in Switzerland on the topics of child welfare, outplacement and care homes. In particular it draws on our ongoing research about discourses in journals of professional associations in Switzerland from 1940 to 1990. In those journals, stakeholders such as child care workers, home directors, special education teachers, remedial teachers, psychologists or psychiatrist were discussing professional issues and negotiating their professional identity. Finally the paper will lead to the question of how history is treated by different stakeholders in the face of the postmodern debate about reappraisal of residential care in Switzerland and other countries. In a broader sense, the paper sees itself as a contribution to the debate about professional identity in social work and the role history thereby takes.

**Author 3 Ulrich Leitner - Putting Educators in the Foreground: Personal Files and Interview-related Data as Methodological Challenges in Research on Residential Care**

Since 2010, a public debate about the correctional education of children and adolescents in reformatories in Tyrol and Vorarlberg in western Austria started with descriptions of multiple and massive violence experiences by individuals who had spent some of their childhood and youth in public youth reformatories. Subsequently, both Tyrol and Vorarlberg provided research funds and made available the files for scientific research on the condition of strict anonymity. From 2013-2015, the administrative files and records and personal files of the children and educators were investigated in a project at the Department of Education, University of Innsbruck. The research group also conducted 42 interviews with former care-home children. Furthermore, the research group implemented six interviews with persons who had served as educators or directors of one of the reformatories in Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

While in the public debate, attention is accorded primarily to the sad experiences of the children, interest rarely centers on the educators, and if so only to accuse them of misbehavior. However, the history of residential care can only be written if all people connected in the welfare system are treated with the same academic attention as subjects of in-depth research. In this paper, interest thus turns to the educators addressing the difficulties and benefits of focusing on the educational staff for rewriting the history of residential care. With regard to the question of the panel topic, I first concentrate on the personal files of the educators and explain the methodological challenges which consist in working with this sensitive data. Major problems comprise how to obtain access to this kind of



files in the archives and how to handle the requirement of anonymization. Second, I highlight methodological problems that arise when interviewing former educational staff, particularly in a time of increased attention concerning the history of residential care.

**Authors 4,5,6 Clara Bombach, Thomas Gabriel, Samuel Keller**  
**Understanding biographies after Residential Care in Switzerland – The gap between social sciences and historical sciences**

In Europe history of residential care has been more and more under critique. In Switzerland mainly historians address the historical reappraisal of residential care, different sources from archives are analysed. The method of oral history is often used as well in order to capture the individual experience of former children in care.

In our presentation we aim at outlining a social science perspective and our methodological approach and show our discussions with historians in our ongoing study. Our project investigates the life courses of care experienced children, placed between 1950 and 1990. The focus is on biographical-reconstructive analysis of specific cases in terms of the administration justifications given for placement decisions and their effects of individual life trajectories both during and after child care placement.

In order to capture the intersubjective meaning of residential care our theoretical framework includes the concept of turning points. The case studies we perform reconstruct the development of individual actors in narrative interview in order to discover the mostly implicit but decisive development paths and junctions which led to relevant turning points in their biographies. Thus scientific research might meet the requirements of contextual and structural dimensions of socialization processes and upbringing in care.

In order to be able to describe the conditional factors more precisely and, especially where interfering conditions are concerned, make a more exact analysis, a combination of case-reconstructive procedure and educational biography research is used as an interpretative tool. Different to the oral history method, we argue with references to social sciences, that reconstructive biographical research is able to capture the meaning, the self-(re)presentation, the construction and interpretation in a much more analytic way. Finally we also outline the benefits as well as challenges when collaborating with historians in a study on administrative decision making and life trajectories after care.





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**SYMPOSIUM 16**

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**351 | Theorising ordinary, everyday child care social work: Findings from the Talking and Listening to Children Research Project**

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
Room: 10.14 - Nordkraft

*Gillian Ruch, (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)*  
*Karen Winter, (Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom)*  
*Vivienne Cree, (University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom)*  
*Fiona Morrison, (University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom)*  
*Mark Hadfield (Cardiff University, United Kingdom)*  
*Sophie Hallett (Cardiff University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** child care social work, communication, theory

Despite the levels of attention that child care social work practice receives in the public domain, particularly when tragic situations arise, surprisingly little research to date has been conducted into the ordinary and everyday encounters that social workers have with children and their families. In response to this gap in knowledge researchers from the four countries of the UK- England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – came together and created the Talking and Listening to Children (TLC) Project with the primary aim of enhancing understanding of everyday child care social work. In the course of the project, conducted between 2013-16, the first phase involved researchers observing 82 ordinary, everyday social work encounters with children and their families in a range of settings - homes, schools, offices and public spaces. In the second phase of project the research involved video recordings of social workers routine meetings with children designed to capture and explore the intimate and nuanced nature of these encounters.

Drawing on data from the two phases of the TLC project the symposium will be comprised of three papers with distinctive theoretical perspectives that shine a light on the intricacies and intimacies of everyday, ordinary practice encounters. The opening paper will explore how working practices 'travel' from the office to the practice encounter and examine how psychoanalytic concepts and perspectives can inform our understanding of the office-encounter interface. An ecological theoretical framework underpins the second paper which draws on three inter-related conceptual devices - the child, the case





and the context – to make sense of the complexities of unique, but ordinary, everyday child care social work interactions. The third paper focuses on the importance of endings in practice encounters and considers how Hochschild's ideas of emotional labour can help us to understand and implement more nuanced, subtle and sensitive endings in complex circumstances.

Presented together it is anticipated that these distinctive papers will provide an engaging, coherent and complementary body of theoretical ideas that will inform and enhance our understanding of the challenges faced on a daily basis by social workers in the field.

### **Paper One: From the office to the encounter: Applying psychoanalytic understanding to child care social work practice**

Recent research into the everyday office-based experiences of child care workers has found that the impact of neoliberalism and the burgeoning of bureaucratic demands that accompany it has had a profound effect on how social workers conduct their everyday work. At the same time there has been a growing interest in researching the detail of everyday social work encounters with children and families. What is currently missing is research that explores the parallel processes between experiences in the office and those in the home. Drawing on extensive, detailed ethnographic data generated in the course of the TLC project this paper will examine through a psychoanalytic lens how experiences in the office, that are more or less 'containing', influence the ability of social workers to demonstrate equally containing behaviours towards children and families. Consideration will be paid to how positive working practices can be promoted in the interests of enhancements in practice encounters.

### **Paper Two: Child-case-context: An ecological perspective on ordinary everyday child care social work**

Communicating with children is at the heart of child and family social work. Through communication with the child, social workers learn about the child's situation, the child's views and are able to develop relationships that facilitate changes and improvements to the child's life. While this may be a routine part of everyday social work practice, it is also an area highlighted in reviews and research as an area where practice may falter. Using data from the ethnographic phase of the TLC study, this paper presents an ecological theoretical framework to help understand and elaborate on the complexity of communicative encounters that take place between children and social workers. The paper explores how three key concepts of



the framework – the child, the case and the context - interact and frame communication that takes place between children and social workers. The paper concludes by setting out how these concepts may be used to support social workers in developing critically reflective practice in this area.

### **Paper Three: Emotional labour and endings in social workers relationships with children**

The ending of a social worker relationship with a child can evoke in both a range of feelings from relief, satisfaction and happiness through to anxiety, loss and grief. It is an area that is little focused upon and yet the process of ending a relationship, either well or badly, can have profound implications for workers and children alike. Using data from the Talking and Listening to Children research project and theoretical ideas informed by sociological concepts associated with the work of Hochschild, this paper explores the organisational context of social work that gives rise to particular 'feeling rules' in the workplace and their influence and impact on social workers' endings with children. It is argued that there is a tension between the bureaucratic imperatives of the job that construct endings as 'professional, detached, formal and emotion free' and the influence of relational frameworks that are premised on the expression and exchange of emotion as part of the ending process. Both social workers and children tend to operate a number of surface strategies to create emotional distance and thus on one level making the process of ending easier to manage but these do not address the deeper level feelings evoked by endings. It is argued that social workers need to pay attention to deeper level feelings as this is a vital consideration in helping children develop the capacity to manage transitions in their relationships both in the short and longer term.



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## WORKSHOP 7

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### 159 | Team leaders and multi-disciplinary teams. Leadership developments in social work in The Netherlands

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
Room: 4.105 - Rendsburggade

*Vincent de Waal (University of Applied Sciences Utrecht,  
Netherlands)*

**Keywords: research and evaluation of social work practice, transformation of the social domain in The Netherlands, teamleaders and innovation, multi-disciplinary teams, active citizenship**

In The Netherlands we see a fast transformation of the social domain. Changes occur, among other things, the stimulation of active citizenship in the social field and initiatives to improve the provision of services (customization). These changes are taking place against the backdrop of further decentralization, operation of market mechanisms, and public funding cutbacks. The transformation of the social domain is accompanied by the rise of multi-disciplinary teams of social workers. Those teams work in a certain area (often a neighborhood of a town) and are working on new and more integral forms of social work methods. Expectations are high that a 'new social profession' is build in those teams. Is it possible to rebuild social work in those teams? What kind of knowledge processes are necessary? And is there a role for team leaders as an innovator? In a multi-method design research project we looked at the role and position of middle managers (often the team leaders) with respect to the changes currently affecting the social sector in The Netherlands. Part of our study were focus-groups held in 2014 and 2015 with team leaders.

The choice to focus on middle managers was motivated by a double objective from the very start: first, to focus on the positions and tasks of these middle managers, and second (through them), to examine the current changes taking place locally in this segment of the social sector. Throughout this study we found changes in the role of the middle manager in



this type of knowledge organization: more emphasis on innovation, team learning and the design of new social work services. We have also sought to determine how these middle managers, 'their' frontline professionals and directors/managers concur and/or diverge in how they manage or wish to manage the stimulation of active citizenship, and how they understand the role of middle managers in this process.

The theoretical explorations and the empirical part of the study together paint a picture of a double transition: (1) a transition towards an appeal to active citizenship that is partly driven by a stronger localization of the social domain, in connection with (2) a transition in how social organizations in the public domain organize their services, and of the manner in which the playing field of these organizations is organized. The two transitions are occurring simultaneously and mutually influence each other. In the session we present the outcomes of our study and the implications for the practice of the social work field in the Netherlands and the social work education.



## PARALLEL SESSIONS 6

FRIDAY | APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>

TIME | 12:10 P.M. TO 1:40 P.M.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 6.1

### Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users

*Research on social rights, advocacy and empowerment*

(Chair: Chu-Li Liu)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.

Room: Body and mind - Nordkraft

#### 316 | A rights-based approach in social work to combat child poverty: discussions and tensions

*Didier Reynaert, (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

*Nicole Formesyn, (Community Development Flanders, Belgium)*

*Wouter Hennion (Community Development Flanders, Belgium)*

*Siebren Nachtergaele (University College Ghent, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** child poverty, children's rights, rights-based approach, welfare rights, parents

Due to the increasing number of children growing up in poverty since the start of this century, child poverty received attention during the past years in industrialised welfare states, both from practice, policy and research. In response to the problem of child poverty, a children's rights approach in social work is often put forward. Poverty then is considered as a violation of the rights of children as recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, evidence also shows that a children's rights approach to child poverty risks to ignore the interconnectedness of child poverty with the broader issue of poverty. More in particular, a children's rights approach risks to ignore the welfare rights of parents.

In this presentation, we will discuss a rights based approach in social work to combat poverty. Based on a qualitative research project using in-depth interviews with 30 families living in poverty, that was conducted by a community development organisation in Flanders (Belgium), the perspectives of parents were examined. The interviews were structured based on article 23 on social rights of the Belgian constitution, resulting in six key subjects that guided the interviews: i) material wellbeing, ii) housing and living environment, iii) child-rearing and education, iv) health care, v) subjective wellbeing and vi) participation. The aim of the interviews was to explore the perspectives of parents living in poverty on how they





experience the realisation of their rights in relation to the rights of their children. By using this broad approach to social rights, we argue that the living conditions and welfare of children are for a significant part dependent on the family context in which they grow up. Combatting child poverty is not just a matter of child-related domains in social work, such as childcare or school social work, but has also much to do with the family income, parental employment, housing or the broader living environment of parents.

The findings of this research project go against dominant views on combatting child poverty in social work, that are only taking into account the interests of children. Even when parental interests are recognised, they are often framed in the vein of a 'blaming discourse', placing the responsibility on parents for their lack of parental child-rearing skills or engagement in education. Consequently, social work separating social resources for children from the resources of parents risk to create conflicts of interests between children and parents. We therefore argue that a children's rights approach should be a lever to connect the interests of children with the interests of other groups in society, particularly parents. As such, children's rights can be considered as a lever to strive for solidarity and social justice

### 34 | Using the law in social work AMHP practice to navigate coercion and care

*Simon Abbott (Kingston University & St George's University of London, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** mental health law, mental health social work, approved mental health professional, coercion and care

#### **Background and purpose:**

The Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended 2007) imposes autonomous decision-making responsibility on an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP), who is usually a social worker, in relation to deciding whether or not to detain a person in psychiatric hospital for assessment or treatment. The law envisages that the AMHP brings a social perspective to bear on the assessment and consideration of less restrictive options. The stakes in this area of law and social work are high as they deal with important issues concerning individual liberty that have profound implications in relation to the power of the state to intervene in the lives of citizens, where notions of coercion,



care and autonomy are often in tension.

This paper draws on a study of how social worker AMHPS use the law in action to consider how the research findings can inform professional practice in this challenging context. It addresses the following question: How do social workers reconcile the tension between coercion, care and autonomy when they use the law to take away a persons liberty? Conflicts, barriers and opportunities in relation to social work practice will be proposed.

**Methods:**

Eleven social work AMHPs, purposively selected from three different local authorities in England, participated in the study, which used qualitative in-depth interviews and practitioner diaries to collect case stories about using the law in action in circumstances where compulsory admission to hospital was a possibility. The use of case stories encouraged participants to provide a rich description of events as they un-folded over time. Practitioner diaries gave insight into how participants interpreted situations and gave meaning to actions and events.

Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis in the form of NVIVO was utilized to manage the data, and to support data analysis using framework analysis (Ritchie and Spencer 1994).  
Results

Participants in the study described their experience of using the law in practice as an interpretive and situated practice. The themes outlined in this paper are 'troubles and problems', 'risks and concerns', 'community versus containment', 'judgment and justification' and 'relationships and resources'. Tenability and trust are core concepts interwoven between the themes.

**Conclusions and implications:**

The research speaks to the main conference theme of challenges in social work research – conflicts, barriers and possibilities in relation to social work. It does this by drawing on social work research that is linked closely to the complex world of social work. The paper specifically addresses the conference sub theme of connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users. This is done by drawing on social work research findings to illuminate the connections diversities and controversies in the relationship between law and social work AMHP practice in the context of coercion and care.



## 283 | MIRIAM (Minimum Income Reform Innovation and Empowerment of women): gender-sensitive and empowering social work with single mothers

*Jan Depauw (Karel de Grote University College, Belgium)*

*Lynn De Pourcq (Karel de Grote University College, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** experimental design, gender-sensitive social work, psychological empowerment, SUPES

### Background

Single mothers face a high risk of poverty and social exclusion. In current European Welfare states Family Social Work has an important role in fighting (child) poverty. We identify two problems: first, a substantial part of anti-poverty politics captures the problem of poverty in terms of activation. As a consequence, single mothers risk being reduced to targets of actions of support. Many researchers contest this approach of 'the poor' as passive objects and advocate empowerment. Second, the method, direction, processes and outcomes of these interventions are rarely studied.

In this paper, we present insights emerging from a research project in which case-managers work on self-esteem, rediscovering strengths and capacities, heightening critical consciousness, and strengthening and extending social networks (in short: empowerment) through a holistic and gender sensitive counseling. We conducted an action-research in five Belgian Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSWs): social work organisations with an extensive mandate for providing social services. They - for instance - have the exclusive authority to allocate the minimum income.

The three research questions were: (1) What is the effect of a gender-sensitive and empowering approach through group social work, compared to the 'usual' – individual – forms of aid?, (2) What other measures, besides SUPES (Service Users Psychological Empowerment Scale), can be used to identify change on important life-issues of single mothers?, and (3) what are good practices in gender-sensitive and empowering social work with single mothers in poverty?

### Methods

Employing an experimental design, we investigated the effect of gender-sensitive and empowering group work with single mothers in five selected PCSWs. The PCSWs were selected on



having a high percentage of single mothers in their group of service users. The PCSWs that joined the research received a budget, sufficiently enough to enlist a case-manager that would guide the experimental group throughout the project. During the project, the case-managers were trained in gender and strengths-based social work.

Each of the case-managers selected a group of 10 single mothers for joining the experimental group, and a group, very similar to the first group, for receiving the usual aid. Both groups were measured at the start, after 5 months and after 10 months. Longitudinal data were analysed.

### **Results**

After five months we've found a significant increase in scores on empowerment for all the women. The increase was stronger for the experimental group, though not significantly. The increase in empowerment scores on important life domains such as education, leisure and housing in the experimental group was striking.

### **Conclusions**

The gender-sensitive and empowering group work with single mothers is attractive for both single mothers and case-managers. Time, openness and trust seem to be the building blocks for strengthening empowerment. SUPES and EU-Silc offer instruments to measure change over time. The experimental design though offers challenges for both researcher and case-managers.

## **132 | Advocacy for prisoners: an important social work role**

*Liesbeth Naessens (Odisee University College Brussels, Belgium)*

*Peter Raeymaeckers (University of Antwerp Master of Social Work, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** prisoners, advocacy, penal and welfare policy

Social workers who work with prisoners often experience that the social rights of their target group are challenged by different factors at the community, organisational and policy-level. As a consequence of this complexity and the commitment of social work to social justice, we consider advocacy for the inmate population as a key role for social work (Severson,



1994; Agllias, 2004; Green, Thorpe and Traupmann, 2005; Wormer et al., 2008; Sheenan, 2012). Prisoners can be considered as one of the most vulnerable, oppressed and marginalized target groups in our society (DeVeaux, 2014). They struggle with a variety of correctional, financial, psychological, behavioral and relational problems. Through advocacy social work can make a difference to the welfare of the prisoner by playing a pivotal role towards penal and welfare policy. In this paper we elaborate on the advocacy role that social workers adopt when providing services to prisoners. We define the advocacy role of the social worker at the individual, organizational, community and policy- level (DeVeaux, 2014).

The purpose of this research is to analyze the extent to which social worker develop their advocacy role to protect and enhance social rights of prisoners. We first investigate on which level social workers advocate for their clients in prison in everyday practice. We interviewed social workers and their supervisors working in eight social work organisations with prisoners in Brussels, the capital of Belgium. The results indicate that social workers advocate frequently at the individual and organisational level. However, they find it difficult to advocate on a community and policy level. We follow the argument of Wacquant (2001) stating that the penal state can be considered as an instrument to manage social problems. We therefore consider advocacy at the policy level as a key challenge for social workers that work with prisoners. We end this paper with recommendations on how the advocacy role of social workers at the policy level can be strengthened. Recommendations are aimed at both social workers and policy makers.

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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 6.2

### Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users

*Participation, social inclusion and access*

(Chair: Mette Rømer)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.

Room: 6.1 - Nordkraft

#### 374 | Outreach work and the problem of access: the importance of a street level approach

*Hans Grymonprez (Ghent University - Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** outreach, structural perspective, street level approach, accessibility

While outreach work is not new, and even traces back to the friendly visitors in the 19th century, the conceptualisation of outreach itself is open for debate. Recently, we argued that outreach work might be conceptualized either from a residual or from a structural approach (Grymonprez et al., 2016). In a residual approach, outreach social work can be seen as a strategy to manage access or as a strategy to link clients with appropriate services. In this sense, they ensure that people meet predefined criteria of social services. From a structural approach, however, the focus lies on how practices possibly contribute to the realization of human dignity in social interactions and might lead to a socio-political analysis of those situations in which social work intervenes. The latter is seen as a lever for the realisation of more equal opportunities to live a life in human dignity (Clarke, 2004; Lister, 1998). This presentation draws on preliminary findings from an ongoing research project situated in the context of outreach work towards the homeless. Outreach work towards the homeless is seen as part of broader homeless strategy (Feantsa, 2008). The aim of outreach is closely related to improve homeless access to services (Elissen et al., 2011; Olivet et al., 2010). This raises the question how real-life situations of the homeless and outreach interventions question residual approaches in social work and social welfare.

The point of view in this research project is based on a street-level approach (Brodkin, 2008). The rationale behind this



approach is derived from the observation that policy fiction (e.g. the intent or prescribed reality by policy) cannot grasp what is actually going on in social work practices. Street level research, Brodtkin argues, brings discretionary practice to the fore. Based on field notes from observation, document analysis and interviews collected between september 2015 and november 2016, I will elaborate on two cases of homelessness. These two 'extreme cases' must be seen against a background of a comprehensive network of social services and mental health care. These services operate in a context in which the obligation to guarantee the right to social welfare is under pressure. Access to services is problematic while social rights are not realised. I will show that dealing with ambiguity within 1) conflicting problem definitions and policy objectives concerning the homeless 2) barriers between the homeless and social services and (3) the needs and living conditions of homeless is essential for outreach to function as tool for reflection on dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in social welfare services and society in general, whilst outreach work itself, is not free from these dynamics. To conclude I will argue a street level approach to social work research is essential to grasp the tensions and contradictions evoked by predefined models whereupon policy makers count to tackle the problem of acces.

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### 110 | Whose views are we listening to? Identifying and addressing the gaps, barriers and challenges to gaining the perspectives of adults with experience of adult safeguarding investigations and interventions

*Kathryn Mackay (University of Stirling, United Kingdom)*  
*Fiona Sherwood-Johnson (University of Stirling, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** adult safeguarding, participative methodologies, hard to reach groups, consumerist and democratic methodologies

Adult support and protection (ASP), known also as adult safeguarding or adult protection, is a relatively new field of policy and research. Consequently there is a much smaller empirical base to inform social work practice. Adults at risk of harm or neglect and their families make up a very small proportion of research participants. The nature of such research: the questions it asks; its sampling techniques and the methods it employs have yet to receive the same critical analysis as general social care or support service research. This paper makes a contribution to that conversation by drawing upon the presenters' own research into ASP, using a mixture of qualitative, case study, participatory and cross-national comparative methodologies, over the last ten years. The paper explores the potential implications of divergent epistemological assumptions; the barriers to gaining access to participants; challenges to gaining greater diversity of perspectives on ASP; and making findings accessible and attractive to practitioners. First the paper utilises the consumerist, democratic and emancipatory models of service user and carer research to explore how epistemological assumptions that underpin legal or policy evaluation studies might narrow the focus of a study and overly control knowledge that is generated around ASP procedures and outcomes; rather than identify personal, familial, community or societal aspects that contribute to safety and vulnerability. In contrast more democratic, and



participative, approaches might be criticised for being removed from the reality of pressurised ASP work in practice. Second the presenters consider the potential gatekeeping barriers, and allied ethical dilemmas in asking people who have experienced ASP interventions to revisit painful periods in their lives in ways that benefit and do not further harm them. Third consideration is given the challenge of gaining greater diversity of perspectives on ASP, in particular how one might reach those who may never have been referred as an adult at risk or those subject only to initial inquiries. Finally the question about the extent to which such knowledge is accessible and attractive to practitioners is opened up.

In summary this paper offers a critical analysis of how research into ASP has so far been conducted and the lessons that can be learned from it. In so doing it brings to light the contradictions in researching one named policy stream but where the social problem it aims to address spans many policy areas: social care, mental health, housing, policing, community safety etc. It identifies the key barriers and challenges to gaining a greater diversity of perspectives from those who have experienced ASP but also those who may exist in the gaps. Importantly it suggests ways in which these barriers and challenges might be overcome by more creative sampling strategies and methods. The paper honestly reflects on the presenters' own research studies: their developing appreciation about the varied ASP knowledges that exist, how they might be better explored and crucially how findings might be made more accessible and meaningful to practitioners as well as policy makers.

### 300 | Bizitegi: a model of social inclusion from the 'Social Pedagogy Community'

*Miguel Angel Pulido-Rodriguez, (Ramon Llull University - School of Social Education and Social Work Pere Tarres, Spain)*

*Txus Morata, (Ramon Llull University - School of Social Education and Social Work Pere Tarres, Spain)*

*Eva Palasí (Ramon Llull University - School of Social Education and Social Work Pere Tarres, Spain)*

*Héctor Alonso (Ramon Llull University - School of Social Education and Social Work Pere Tarres, Spain)*

**Keywords:** empowerment, citizenship, social inclusion, user participation, reinsertion



Social exclusion processes often involve degradation of the exercise of critical active and participatory citizenship. However, participation in associations that promote this type of citizenship has proven able to reverse this process and generate a support and participation tissue in the community.

This study, conducted in the Bizitegi association of Bilbao, Spain, presents the analysis about the perception that the different actors involved in the association (users, professionals and volunteers) have on participation, and how this favours empowering its users as active citizens and how the actual practice of participation in Bizitegi affects nearby territorial communities and political structures, promoting a certain model of community development.

The methodology has been an evaluative participatory research from a mixed methods approach, and next research techniques had been implemented: 3 discussion groups, 11 in-depth interviews, 9 life-stories, 74 questionnaires and 5 participatory observations.

The results show information about the ways in which empowerment of users on its way out of social exclusion to join the social life is facilitated through social participation. Other benefits of participation include an improvement in the quality of life and subjective well-being of the beneficiaries of the intervention, as well as the promotion of community development in the neighborhood in which it operates. The final conclusions bring us closer to best practice guidelines that should be followed in social reintegration policies and programs seeking to incorporate the participation of users in the neighborhood as a central aspect of the reintegration process.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 6.3

### Theme 3: Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research

Participatory research

(Chair: Susan Gair)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.

Room: 6.2 - Nordkraft

#### 285 | IDE-AS in action. Participative practices of evaluation and research in the home-care intervention field Authors

*Andrea Petrella, (University of Padua, Italy)*

*Sara Serbati (University of Padua, Italy)*

*Paola Milani (University of Padua, Italy)*

**Keywords:** prevention, participative evaluation, transformative evaluation, home-care intervention, action-research, involvement of practitioners

This presentation describes the relevance of participative practices in evaluation procedures for the improvement of home-care interventions responding to problems connected to child-neglect. The aims of the project are I) to introduce participative methods of evaluation based on quantitative and qualitative tools and II) to identify effective practices and analyse them with practitioners and families.

The project is focused on the Municipality of Trento (Italy), funded by a local foundation (CARITRO) and scientifically supported by LabRIEF, a research unit within the University of Padua (Italy) concerned with action-research in the field of family education. The presentation analyses the partial results and actions collected after the first half of the research, among the implementation of home-care interventions with ten families.

The evaluation methodology is the same used in the national programme P.I.P.P.I. (Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalization) and introduces a path called participative and transformative evaluation (P.T.E. - Serbati, Milani, 2013). Data were collected directly by professionals with families, considering all of them as co-researchers. P.T.E. uses measures and data in a double function: (1) of





accountability, in order to collect information about the quality of interventions; (2) of negotiation (Guba & Lincoln 1989) between all the people who are essential to the child's development. Practitioners become co-workers and co-researchers with parents, teachers and other actors, helping to promote positive child developmental pathways.

Measures that were used are: (1) our Italian adaptation of the British Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, including (1a) the related questionnaire to measure family-functioning and (1b) the grid useful to build the shared assessment and care plan, and (2) SDQ and (3) PFS questionnaires, that measure respectively children's behaviour and families' social support.

Since it's an action-research project, particular attention is paid to training meetings with practitioners and to the exchange of knowledge, remarks and practices among all the actors involved in the process.

Periodically, social workers, home-care workers and researchers meet to identify shared visions about the development of the project and to discuss together all the materials gathered (care plans, questionnaires, interviews, texts). Preliminary insights and partial results will be given and discussed. Families will be involved in discussing findings and implemented processes through a focus group that will take place in the middle of the research path.

Moreover, in order to identify effective practices and analyse them with practitioners and families, the project will provide a specific and detailed focus on two families through in-depth interviews, detecting the effectiveness of the interventions and analysing the relationship established between family members and practitioners.

The first collected data (T0) show a remarkable focus given by practitioners to the involvement of parents in the design and co-construction of home-based interventions promoting at the same time child and family well-being. Since they are actively involved in the project and placed in a cooperative environment together with researchers, social workers, home-care workers and parents perceive their fundamental role not only in terms of service, education and care towards children but also in terms of actors of change and co-researchers.

The action-research is expected to provide more findings and recommendations in order to promote cooperative and participative practices of evaluation within social services and to reinforce effective practices in the field of home-care intervention.



### 327 | Participatory Action Research with a Medical Social Work Team: Using an academic- practice collaborative approach to evaluate family meeting decision-making processes

*Anne O'Loughlin, (National Rehabilitation Hospital Dun Laoghaire, Ireland)*

*Sarah Donnelly (University College Dublin, Ireland)*

*Paul O'Carroll (National Rehabilitation Hospital, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland)*

**Keywords:** family meetings, social work, practitioner researchers, academic/practice collaboration, rehabilitation

This paper begins with a discussion about problems in building practitioner based approaches in social work research. A number of arguments in the literature are made about the importance of developing collaborative links between university-based researchers and social work practitioners in the field (March and Fisher 2005; Shaw 2003:2005; Gibbs 2001) in order to grow the knowledge base . It then discusses an academic/hospital partnership research study that sought to explore the opportunities for developing practice based research for medical social workers in a national rehabilitation hospital, with a particular focus on decision-making in family meetings.

Family meetings are an integral part of clinical work for medical social workers and are also an important part of each patient and their family member's journey through their inpatient rehabilitation. In rehabilitation services, family meetings offer patients, family members and health and social care professionals an opportunity to ask 'where to from here?' (Neville, 2006). Professional groups such as social workers are expected to take leads in facilitating these processes yet surprisingly, this is often not a routine part of their formal professional education (Hudson et al., 2009). Uncertainty also exists in relation to social workers' confidence levels and skill base in relation to this important group decision-making forum. The study used an action research approach where hospital social workers (n= 14), along with the social work academic, engaged in the study design, data collection and analysis. The team sought to explore how family meetings were experienced and valued from patient, family and interdisciplinary team perspectives. To achieve this a mixed methods study design was adopted, involving the use of a cross sectional survey (n=100) of family meetings applied routinely over a three month period.



Findings related to this study will be presented both in terms of the social workers' experiences of acting as co-producers of knowledge as well as findings related to the examination of the family meetings process in a rehabilitation setting. An additional benefit of this project which will be discussed was the building of mutual research capacity between the social work academic and social work practitioners through the process of acting as co-researchers and how this process impacted on practitioner's research skill base and confidence to engage in future research projects.

### 397 | In Unity We Speak Out: Re-imagining Social Work Research with Marginalized Communities by Using Testimonio and Community-Based Participatory Research

*Miriamgeorgina Valdovinos (University of Connecticut, School of Social Work, USA)*

**Keywords:** testimonio narrative research, community-based participatory research, marginalized communities and social work research, critical methodologies

**Background:**

Marginalized communities (e.g. undocumented immigrants, women of color living in poverty) are often hesitant to participate in research studies due to misrepresentations or misuses of the data retrieved in previous empirical investigations. Critical qualitative methodologies such as testimonios combined with community-based participatory research (CBPR) offer an alternative research process to better decipher the experiences of diverse populations in contact with social work practitioners due to emerging social problems (e.g. anti-immigrant sentiment, discrimination). This paper offers an innovative and culturally responsive methodological approach that takes into consideration the urgency of these experiences. Examples are highlighted from an empirical study capturing the help-seeking experiences of Latina undocumented immigrants living in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States that have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV). The paper's main purpose is to re-envision collaborative research that highlights complex experiences that require a pro-active response from social work scholars to address social injustices and inequities that these communities continue to encounter.

**Summary:**



This presentation will identify ways that research initiatives can: a) capture collective experiences of injustices, b) offer collaborative processes for research findings that transform human suffering, and c) emphasize story-telling approaches.

Testimonio, or testimony, utilizes story-telling narratives where the story-teller “speaks to reveal racial, classed, gendered, and nativist injustices they have suffered as a means of healing, empowerment, and advocacy for a more humane present and future” (Huber, 2009, p. 643). The use of testimonio in the current study offered a space for narrated journeys of IPV and immigration life experiences with attention to injustices one had suffered and the effect these injustices had on one’s life. CBPR principles were integrated at various steps of the study. This included beginning with a research topic of importance to the community, creating a collaborative research approach, and including alternative deliverables to share findings (i.e. Spanish community-radio talks).

The highlighted study accessed the voices of the abused undocumented immigrant survivors differently and broadened the conversation of what was known about their cultural experiences as well as their collective experiences. Their immigration status placed them at risk of being discriminated against, excluded from having access to social support networks, or being denied social services when seeking help for the violence. This methodology situated critical race theory paradigms precisely to expand the information that was available about the phenomenon in question under the precarious social context for undocumented Latina immigrants in the United States.

### **Implications:**

This paper considers the possibilities for different methodological approaches in social work research that specifically incorporate partnerships with community members and academics which reconsider traditional “ivory tower” power dynamics. Testimonio has been reclaimed as a tool for women of color to theorize oppression, resistance, and subjectivity. Even with the critiques that testimonio is not strictly about an ‘absolute truth’, its form serves as a tool for building a solidarity discourse with victims of state terrorism or other forms of injustices. Thus, it can engender and generate this discourse of solidarity needed to better represent marginalized communities’ experiences in social work research.



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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 6.4

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### Theme 5: Complexities and controversies about the effects or outcomes of social work and social work research

(Chair: Helle Cathrine Hansen)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.

Room: 6.3 - Nordkraft

#### 28 | What do evaluations tell us about the state of contemporary social work?

*Martyn Higgins (London South Bank University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** evaluations, social work research, critical pedagogy

Since the introduction in England of the social work degree in 2002 there have been a number of significant changes to social work culminating with the implementation of the Social Work Reform Board's innovations in 2013. A qualitative case study of these reforms was undertaken after obtaining ethical approval. Data was collected at two different points in time by means of interviews and focus groups. Interviews were conducted with academics (10), practice educators (8) and academics involved in practice learning (2). Two focus groups were undertaken with service users (11) and three focus groups with students (17). A total of 48 participants were involved in the data collection. Drawing on this research study this paper critically explores the role of evaluation research in social work and their implications for social work practice and research. Evaluations can be linked to wider trends in society such as modernity, reflexive modernity, and the audit society. These wider influences affect the use of evaluations in social work practice and research. A way forward for social work is proposed. Social work needs to develop a critical pedagogy of hope to transform the profession's relationship not only to research but to practice as well. The key message of this paper is that evaluation studies mirror the underlying tensions of late modernity. Therefore, social work and social work research need to adopt a critical pedagogic approach to the use of evaluation research.





### 373 | Executive Role in Social Work: Complexity and controversy

*Paula Sousa (Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro University, Portugal)*  
*Jose Luis Almeida (Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro University, Portugal)*

**Keywords:** multiple roles, executive role, direct work role, professional jurisdiction

**Background and purpose:**

There remains, among social workers, much confusion and uncertainty about the role(s) of social worker and such uncertainty has a strong impact on the own delimitation of the professional jurisdiction of social work practice. The concept of 'jurisdiction' applied to the subject of profession comes from Freidson (1986) and Abbott (1988).

This problem has been detected, as a social workers educators for several years, during the field education where both students and professionals reported that difficulty in defining and distinguishing professional roles.

It is considered an issue of great relevance for the reason that social work as a 'practice-based profession' (IFSW, IASSW, 2014) requires a clear understanding of social work roles in daily practice.

This research stems from the results obtained in a doctoral research (PhD) in Social Work (2014), which had as study objective: Examine the daily practices of a group of social workers working in different contexts and thus analyze the type of roles played by these social workers.

We conducted a literature review which stood out the idea of multiple roles of social workers. "Multiple roles are an essential part of human relationships and are inherent in complex social work practice" (Higham, 2006, p. 83). This multiplicity of roles is also referred by Beckett (2006, 2010) stating that this is a distinctive feature of the social work, "social workers do characteristically combine several roles" (Beckett, 2010, p. 55). However, this multiplicity of roles is perceived as highly complex for many social workers who see this characteristic as confusing and ambiguous. Thus, when not properly clarified for Social Workers themselves, drag an uncertainty regarding the definition of his own practice due to the undefinable nature of it.

Therefore, it has defined the following research question(s):  
 The social workers who work in different contexts and placements are perfectly informed about the roles they play?





Are they able to explain and designate some of these roles? In particular, there is a role that assumes a greater predominance?

### **Methods:**

For the collection of empirical data there was recourse to Semi-structured interview due to its flexible structure (Warren, 2009), specifically the 'focused interview' (Flick, 2005, p. 77). This type of interview intends to focus on the subject under study and for this to happen are defined four key criteria: non-directivity, specificity, breadth and depth, as well as take into account the personal context of the interviewee (see Flick, 2005 p. 78).

Regarding the Sample, was elected the Multi-case sampling based on the principle of diversification since this is seen as the main criterion for selection in qualitative samples.

Regarding the decision to limit the number of individuals to interview, it was followed the criteria of 'theoretical saturation'. (Flick, 2005, p. 67), that is, when considered to have reached the point of 'theoretical saturation' it was given by finished and closed the sample, and that happened after having conducted 26 interviews.

The data analysis was performed through an interview coding process based on analysis procedures of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2009), following the three phases: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. This coding process allowed define the central categories and the main outcomes.

### **Results and discussion:**

The main result is the finding of a great ignorance on the part of social workers interviewed regarding the multiple roles they play, that is, they describe the contents of these roles but cannot explain and clarify the inherent complexity of these and even less give them names, including the terminologies that identify and define them.

But the finding, perhaps, more controversial was to have arisen as the most prominent role in the daily practices of social work the Executive Role, using the term and arguments presented by Beckett (2006; 2010).

Yet, a relevant contribution to the discussion is the controversy over the Executive Role, which some consider very characteristic of social work, stating that "they are arguably what make social work a separate and distinct activity. They are in a sense its soul "(Beckett, 2010, p. 51), but some of the social workers interviewed said that social work was to move away from what they considered to be the "pure" social work, as has increasingly moved away from its commitments to direct work with individuals, families and communities and thereby



mitigating the Direct Work Role.

### **Conclusions and implications:**

The main outcome of the study shows that the Executive Role is the one that occurs more in the practice of social worker due to the fact of work in helping and changing living conditions much more on "backstage" and not so much on personal interaction with service users. Working on the "backstage" refers, e.g., to mobilize external resources (other organizations, services, professional, etc.).

This Executive Role is quite complex as it encompasses different types: Gatekeeper; Care manager / care co-ordinator; Responsibility holder; Control agent; Multi-agency co-ordinator / keyworker; Service developer (based on Beckett, 2010, p. 52-55). This variety was evidenced in the study which shows not only the complexity of the Executive Role as well as the complexity of social work practice in general.

Several implications for practice can be drawn from the prevalence of the Executive Role, but we highlight the contribution that could give to the jurisdiction of the professional activity because if, as suggested by Thompson (2000, p.13), "social work is what social workers do" this means that there needs to be greater awareness of this role among social workers in order to contribute to a major clarification and delimitation of the jurisdiction of professional practice.

### **415 | Imprisoned men as fathers - strengthening family relationships**

*John Devaney, (Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom)*

*Michelle Butler, (Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom)*

*David Hayes (Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom)*

*Andrew Percy (Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** children, imprisonment, offending, families

### **Background and purpose:**

When men are imprisoned the effects are felt not only by them but also by their families, and in particular their children. Research highlights that the children of imprisoned fathers have significantly poorer social, emotional and psychological outcomes compared to their peers in the immediate and longer term. As such social workers should be concerned about how



best to support the children of prisoners. This qualitative study examined the outcomes of an innovative parenting programme for fathers in Northern Ireland's maximum security prison. The study sought to:

- Examine the rationale, design and implementation of the Families Matter programme.
- Assess if programme participation can reduce some of the negative effects of imprisonment for fathers, their partners/caregivers and children.
- Examine if the Families Matter programme can help improve relationships between fathers and their families during imprisonment.
- Assess if programme participation affects order and control within the prison and quality of life and psychological well-being for fathers.
- Develop a preliminary 'theory of action' linking programme components and activities to short term changes at the prison, father and family level as well as potential longer term outcomes.

### **Methods:**

A mixed methods design was used in this study, combining ethnographic approaches with interviews with fathers, family members and professionals involved in the delivery of the programme. One cohort of fathers and their families were followed throughout the 17 week programme in 2015-2016 in an attempt to outline how programme components linked to observed and reported changes in fathers, families and the prison environment.

### **Results:**

The research findings can be grouped under three headings: programme design and delivery; benefits of the Families Matter programme to imprisoned men, their female partners and children, and prison staff; and potential issues going forward. Overall the programme was viewed as positive by all involved, both in seeking to maintain and develop the relationships between fathers and their children, while also reducing men's problematic behaviour within the prison. The programme content and delivery style were seen as essential components in maximising the benefits for all participants. However, delivering a programme aimed at educating and empowering men is not straightforward within a regime designed to contain and control dangerous individuals.

### **Conclusions and implications:**

This exploratory study highlights the importance of recognising imprisoned men's role as fathers, and the benefits for their



children, their partners and themselves. It also supports the recent literature on desistance from crime, and the importance of seeking to effect change for those who have offended within the context of their family relationships. This study raises important issues for the role of social work in working in criminal justice at a time when the rhetoric of punishment is eclipsing the call for rehabilitation.

#### 446 | Sociomateriality of expertise in social services – a theoretical study in the context of Finnish social and health care reform

*Raija Koskinen (University of Helsinki, Finland)*

**Keywords:** complexity, digitalization, expertise, social services, sociomateriality

This theoretical paper focuses on the theme of expertise in the complexity of social services. The discussion is contextualized in the current extensive reform of Finnish social and health care. Finland represents the Nordic welfare model known of characteristics such as comprehensive public responsibility for basic welfare tasks, a strong government role in all policy areas and high degree of universalism. The financial basis of the welfare system lays in taxation and redistribution. The demographic change, especially the welfare needs of the increasing ageing population create economic challenges.

The current reform covers changes in legislation as well as in the organizational structures and the roles of expertise in the local, regional and national level. The aim is to proceed with the reform gradually, in order to implement a new system in 2019. One element in the reform concerns digitalization. This implies new challenges for the expertise in social services.

Sociomateriality, a conceptual umbrella introduced by Orlikowski & Scott advances the view that there is an inherent inseparability between the technical and the social. In this presentation, the ideas of sociomateriality are further discussed based on the studies of several scholars such as Pickering, Barad, Leonardi and Gherardi. Furthermore, these ideas are viewed in the context of the Finnish social and health care reform and the efforts to utilize digitalization as part of it.

This presentation provides conceptualizations and theorizing addressing political, administrative and economic influences



and challenges for social work research in the complexity of welfare system. Concerning digitalization, the ideas of sociomateriality give insight to the complex dynamics of welfare practices as non-human elements, such as new digital technology is involved in the practical work in the realm of social services. In order to prevail, social work and social work research need to recognise the phenomena involved.



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## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 6.5

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### Theme 6: Research on different forms of partnerships/cooperation – including power and conflicts in social work

(Chair: Mia Arp Fallov)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.

Room: 10.15 - Nordkraft

#### 77 | Ethical review of collaborative research in social work

*Laura Chubb (University of Auckland, New Zealand)*

*Christa Fouche (University of Auckland, New Zealand)*

**Keywords:** research ethics, ethical review, collaborative research approaches

**Background:** Research aimed at community involvement or collaboration with service users have expanded considerably since the early 2000's. The criteria used for ethical review have been slow to adapt to the emergent and participatory nature of this research. This resulted in researchers reporting negative attitudes towards, and experiences with, review boards and ethics review processes; painting ethical review committees at times as insufficient or unnecessary. It is widely accepted though that ethical review is a necessary process to safeguard researchers and participants whilst ensuring accountability by both researchers and organizations. This raised the question on current knowledge about practices to effectively manage ethical review processes in collaborative research. This presentation will address the main theme by focusing on both the generic challenges researchers report in managing ethical review and of strategies utilized or recommended to conduct participatory research in an ethical manner. It fits the sub-theme of research on different forms of partnerships, as it will highlight the relationship with ethical review committees in social work research.

**Methods:** A synthesis of the 39 articles published in English in the period 2000-2014 was undertaken to assess the state of play regarding reported challenges with ethical review of collaborative research. The contrasting experiences of researchers and ethical review committee members were considered in articles where the primary focus was related to issues with ethical review of collaborative research.





**Results:** The focus of this presentation will be on the generic challenges researchers report in managing ethical review and of strategies utilized or recommended to conduct participatory research in an ethical manner. These include consideration of the concepts 'community', 'participant', and 'vulnerability' in conducting collaborative research, and attention to how we exert control, view power imbalances, and perceive safety of participants. Engagement is seen as a crucial strategy to ensure safety and ethical conduct, even though the nature and process of this engagement between communities, researchers and ethical review committees is unclear.

**Conclusions and implications:** With research being a powerful way through which the voices of those deemed 'at-risk', 'vulnerable' or 'marginal' can be included in decision-making, it becomes increasingly important that we get the process right to safeguard both researchers and participants. This presentation raises theoretical and practical issues on how we view the safety and worth of those communities and individuals participating in social work research and implications for ethics review committee policy and research practice.

#### 428 | Reimagining the researcher? Role negotiation and ethical boundaries in 'participative' projects

*Isabelle Brodie*  
*Fiona Factor*

**Keywords:** participation, research roles, child sexual exploitation

The language of partnership and cooperation in social work and applied research encompasses many different types of relationship, mediated by varying degrees of power, the relationship to different institutions and degree of inclusivity. This paper focuses specifically on the role of the researcher in 'research' that is described as 'participative' and aims to directly engage young people.

The paper is based on two different research projects relating to child sexual exploitation in the United Kingdom: one involving the development of a Child Sexual Exploitation and Knowledge Hub, which seeks to engage young people with the aim of improving police engagement with victims and witnesses; another involving a national evaluation of child sexual exploitation services in England and incorporating a



‘participation’ strand which aims to engage young people in developing information about participative practice in child sexual exploitation.

The two projects have highlighted a series of tensions, which this paper will explore in greater detail. These tensions include the theory and language relating to ‘participation’, which in turn affects the way in which the research process, and the associated research relationships, are conceptualised. Reflection on the process of developing the two projects has also highlighted the ambiguous and ambivalent role of the ‘researcher’, and the blurring of the boundaries between research, practice development and direct work. This has, in turn, generated new questions about the ethical responsibilities of the researchers. The paper suggests the extent to which applied researchers occupy an alternative territory that requires reconsideration of traditional partnership arrangements – and the extent to which this represents a new form of interaction between research and practice. It is suggested that these tensions have specific significance in the context of the still developing area of child sexual exploitation services, where participative practice has a high profile and where research has exercised a high level of influence on policy and practice.

## 128 | The construction of empowering approaches within a workfare paradigm

*Maja Lundemark Andersen (Aalborg University, Denmark)*

**Keywords:** empowerment, service-user perspectives, practice research, professional learning

- Is it possible to construct empowering approaches as a process where the citizens have influence over social efforts and thereby take ownership on his way to jobs or training?
- What kind of partnerships and /or conflicts might be embedded in these constructions?
- Which kind of professional training and cooperation are helpful in these processes?

When a part of the government defines empowerment as a process where the citizen has influence over social efforts and thereby take ownership on his way to jobs or training. ” (STAR projektbeskrivelse, 2014: 1 – in my translation) it is interesting



to research how the initiatives are developed and fulfilled in social work practice in a JobCenter.

This way of thinking and practicing social work puts new demands on the shoulders of professionals and citizens if partnerships (or conflicts) between them are supposed to be realized in the future. An interesting question to raise is thus: How can professionals learn to communicate and work with empowerment in cooperations with the citizens and at the same time administrate cut backs and different forms of control? According to Caswell (2014), the mind-set currently central in social work is one where sanctions are the only way to teach citizens outside the workforce how to find and keep a job. Structural explanations for unemployment as well as initiatives not focusing on learning are unthinkable. Therefore, it is important to know – and to choose – how these lines of thoughts and strategies are attached to the concept of empowerment in advanced welfare states and how practice research might be informed by empowerment.

It makes it relevant to make an examination of the understanding and use of empowerment in order to examine if empowerment still is a fruitful concept that breaks away from the dominant theory of knowledge in social work – or not. To create an empowering partnership between citizens and professionals there is a need to find ways to overcome different kinds of complexities and dilemmas in social work within the forms of practice research. And it is urgent to deal with the production of power in professional/citizen relationships and to discuss, negotiate and choose the most important problems to be addressed in a practice research process. In other words: making power relations visible and negotiable. Using citizens' perspectives and the democratic principles of New Public Governance could strengthen empowerment processes and encourage new ideas to qualify and develop practice research.

This presentation will address some of the empowering processes due to a two year observation study at a Jobcenter developing empowerment as a strategy to bring the citizens closer to employment or closer to work and education. I will discuss the interpretations of empowerment, the professional strategies of empowering interventions and the development of partnerships and collaborations in the Jobcenter. One of the core themes is a discussion about professional learning in a daily social work praxis dominated by cross pressures.



## Paper 41 - Early social work career orientations: towards a typology

*Roger Smith (Durham University, United Kingdom)*

*Laura Venn (Durham University, United Kingdom)*

*Evgenia Stepanova (Durham University, United Kingdom)*

*John Carpenter (Bristol University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** Social work careers, Professional identity  
Typology, Career orientation

This paper aims to present some early findings from a longitudinal study of the progression of a cohort of 'fast track' entrants to the social work profession as they move into the early stages of their social work careers. The broad aims of the study were to assess the implications for retention, practitioner capability and career development of those selected for a distinctive, condensed and intensive qualifying programme implemented in the UK in 2010. The present paper reports on one element of that study which comprised an interview-based exploration of practitioners' views about their early career progression and the preparation offered by their qualifying programmes. 42 interviews were carried out, with an equal number from the fast track programme (Step Up to Social Work) and from other 'mainstream' qualifying routes. The interviews were subsequently transcribed and subject to detailed cross-sectional analysis using NVivo.

Whilst the findings have been highly informative in terms of identifying participants' views on the factors which support sound career development (or not), in this paper I want to concentrate on a specific aspect of the findings which we had not in fact anticipated, but which may well offer valuable insights into the ways practitioners position themselves in relation to their professional identity.

Here, we have identified a three-fold typology ('strivers', 'doers', and 'seekers') of career orientations which appear to be held consistently by respondents and which we believe offer some important insights into social workers' career development and the implications for supervisors and organisations in terms of the ways in which this is understood and managed.



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## SYMPOSIUM 17

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### 130 | DARSIG Symposium: "The challenges of researching and supporting social work decision making"

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.  
Room: 3.3.17 - Nordkraft

*Andrew Whittaker, London South Bank University, United Kingdom)*

*Campbell Killick, South Eastern Trust, 52a Church Street, Newtownards Northern Ireland, United Kingdom)*

*Mark Hardy, (University of York, United Kingdom)*

*Judith Mullineux, (Ulster University, United Kingdom)*

*Kate Leonard, (Royal Holloway, University of London, United Kingdom)*

*Louise O'Connor (Royal Holloway, University of London, United Kingdom)*

*Alessandro Sicora (Università della Calabria, Italy)*

**Keywords:** decision making, professional judgment, assessment, social work education

Professional judgement and decision making are central components of good social work practice that raise challenges for researchers, practitioners, service users and policy makers. The Decisions, Assessment and Risk Special Interest Group (DARSIG) of the European Social Work Research Association (ESWRA) has drawn together five papers that address key challenges identified in the conference themes.

The first paper by Mark Hardy, addresses the wider context of discourses about risk and decision making that can provoke controversies between policy and practice (subtheme 2). It draws upon an empirical study to illustrate how existential thinking can help practitioners negotiate the 'absurd' aspects of practice towards a more 'authentic' practice (subtheme 3, 5).

The second paper by Campbell Killick is an empirical study using a repertory grid methodology to explore how practice educators make the important decision whether a student should pass or fail their final placement learning opportunity (subtheme 3). It explores the potential impact of heuristics and



practitioner bias in the decision making process and the implications for social work education (subtheme 4).

The third and fourth papers explore how educators can support students to make the transition from novice to expert decision makers by using research as a framework for social work education (subtheme 4). The third paper by Louise O'Connor and Kate Leonard is a longitudinal study that explores what informs the decision making of students and qualified social workers in practice settings. It uses a grounded theory approach with focus groups of students, practitioners and advanced practitioners/managers to explore the process of moving from an initial 'outsider' position as a student to an 'insider' position as an expert practitioner (subtheme 4). The emerging theoretical framework explores the organisational context, the impact of emotions and the passing of time and has implications for the connections between research, practitioners and policy makers (subtheme 2).

The fourth paper by Andrew Whittaker reports the findings of two related empirical studies about the process of moving from novice to expert decision makers (subtheme 4). The first is an ethnographic study of child protection social workers that found that as practitioners became more experienced, they developed sophisticated pattern recognition skills to build a story about the families they were working with. The second study is a randomised controlled trial that continues the research by developing a methodology for teaching students decision making skills by providing them with rapid digital feedback from expert practitioners (subtheme 3).

The final paper by Alessandro Sicora explores the value of reflecting upon mistakes in social work. The prevention of mistakes in social work provokes controversies between policy makers, practitioners and service users, such as debates about risk-averse practices (subtheme 1). This paper stresses that mistakes are inevitable and attention should be focused upon identifying latent errors and learning to prevent similar future errors. The paper draws upon recent research to explore reflective frameworks and other innovative methodologies to improve the quality of decision making (subtheme 4).





## **DARSIG symposium paper 1: Social work through an existential lens – sense and nonsense in decision making**

Author 3

Social work decision making has been under sustained scrutiny for some time now. High profile service failures have contributed to a perception that the quality of social work decision making is poor. Against such a backdrop, decision making itself becomes a 'high risk' endeavour. Indeed, expectations of infallibility, although clearly unrealistic, have nevertheless infiltrated the discourse of social work policy and practice. How do practitioners cope with these expectations? In this paper I will argue that the highly charged context in which practitioners make decisions, with the common expectation that they are 'damned if they do, damned if they don't', is quite particular to social work, and requires both detailed empirical investigation and careful theoretical elaboration. It seems that, in various ways, the character of social work decision making has taken on an existential character. Drawing upon data and findings from an empirical study of risk based decision making in various domains of social work, I will elaborate on why this is so, as well as how existential thinking might enable individual practitioners to negotiate the 'absurd' aspects of their work and in doing so protect the inherent potential of practice in ways which are both 'meaningful' and 'authentic'.

## **DARSIG symposium paper 2: Challenges in assessing fitness to practice**

Author 2 and author 4

Practice learning is a central component of social work training in the United Kingdom and internationally. During placements the Student has the opportunity to apply knowledge, skills and values to real-life situations and to learn from the experiences, challenges and dilemmas that they face. By the end of final placement the student should have shown themselves to be sufficiently competent to undertake the professional social work role. The practice teacher has a key role in managing, supporting and assessing the student's learning. In Northern Ireland, practice teachers receive a high level of training and



support but managing a struggling student can be complex and stressful. In particular the decision to pass or fail a final placement student can be challenging as a range of factors need to be taken into account.

This presentation will explore the experience of practice teachers making the pass/fail decision at the end of the final practice learning opportunity. It will describe empirical research a qualitative method (repertory grid, Fransella & Bannister 1977) used to explore the decision making process and identify the key influential factors. The potential impact of heuristics (rules or thumb, Taylor 2016) and practitioner bias will be examined

FRANSELLA, F. & BANNISTER, D. (1977). A Manual for Repertory Grid Technique. London: Academic Press.

Taylor BJ (2016) Heuristics in professional judgement: A psycho-social rationality model. British Journal of Social Work, advance access. [DOI 10.1093/bjsw/bcw084]

### **DARSIG symposium paper 3: From outsider to insider: the journey from student to expert in social work decision-making**

Authors 5 and 6.

This paper discusses the findings of a longitudinal qualitative study of decision-making in children and families social work in England between 2010-2016. It develops the arguments presented in a previous article (O'Connor and Leonard, 2014). A grounded theory approach was utilised involving 51 participants. Eight focus groups were held; three with social work students, two with practitioners, and three with advanced practitioners and managers.

The aim of the study was to explore:

1. What informs student and qualified social worker decision-making in the practice context?
2. The similarities and differences between students and qualified social workers in practice, consultant, leadership or management roles.



Emerging core categories have been elaborated and refined over the length of the study to develop the constituents of theory building. Theoretical sampling enabled full development of identified categories. Initially six core categories were identified. These were the impact of emotions, passing of time, strength of voice, ownership, management and developing role. These have subsequently been refined in stages two and three of the research culminating in four core categories: social work role, impact of emotion, passing of time and organisational culture. The emerging theoretical framework identifies the development of the social work professional from the role of student as 'outside player looking into' the organisation, through to expertise as 'inside players' within organisations. This role's myriad requirements at different levels are influenced by organisational context and expectations, the impact of emotions as well as the real and lived time of practitioners and the people with whom they work. This paper considers the implications for social work practice, education and leadership.

#### **DARSIG symposium paper 4: Learning to see through expert eyes: What does experience teaches us and can it be taught?**

Author 1

Child protection social workers must make difficult decisions in real life circumstances that often involve limited knowledge, uncertainty, conflicting values, time pressures and powerful emotions. These circumstances can pose a significant challenge to reasoning skills, especially when the cost of errors and poor judgment can be unacceptably high. Frequent staff turnover has meant that many frontline social workers are relatively inexperienced but must make complex decisions quickly.

The paper will report on the findings of two related empirical studies. The first study is an ethnographic study of real life decision making in child protection, which explored the differences in judgment and decision making between novice and expert practitioners. The study found that practitioners' reasoning processes were a dynamic interplay of intuitive and



analytic processes with emotionally-informed intuitive processes as the primary driver. As practitioners became more experienced, they engaged in progressively more sophisticated pattern recognition and story building processes to analyse and evaluate complex information.

The second study continues this research and is a randomised controlled trial of an educational intervention based upon the first study. It examines whether social work students can be supported to develop better decision making skills and critical reasoning strategies through intensive feedback from expert practitioners. The educational method has recently been successfully utilized by the New York Fire Department and the US Marines and its applicability to social work will be discussed. This research is on-going and the paper will share early data.

### **DARSIG symposium paper 5: Mistakes and decision making: the importance of reflection and learning**

Author 7

Reflection on mistakes is a powerful source for more effective decision making and action in social work, as in any other field of human activity. Reason (1990) identifies two forms of errors: errors in execution (I thought well, but I did wrong) and errors in planning or in problem solving (I did well, but I thought wrong). Professional errors are just one of the many possible classifications and, according to Reamer (2008, p. 62), occur 'when practitioners depart from widely accepted standards and best practices in the profession'.

Mistakes are inevitable and security has also costs and not only benefits. So, in the frame of appropriate error prevention systems, social workers should pay special attention to latent errors and risks, find immediate measures to repair and limit harm and learn to prevent similar events in the future. At the same time, exploration and experimentation are needed when previous attempts made using ordinary and normal strategies failed. Also in this case decision making needs to be defensible and reasonable (methodology and shared communication with



colleagues are basic requirements for this) and is improved by reflective service users and their active contribution.

Using conclusions from the most relevant literature on this topic and some of the outcomes of recent research, 'smart questions' reflective frameworks, reflective friends and 'concise reflective writing' will be presented as some of the easiest and more effective strategies aimed at improving the quality of decision making using new learning developed by reflecting on mistakes.




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 SYMPOSIUM 18
 

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### 305 | The role of gerontological social work in changing landscape of old age services – challenges and opportunities for research in different welfare models

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.  
Room: 6.7 - Nordkraft

Marjaana Seppänen, (University of Helsinki, Finland)  
 Maria Irene Carvalho, (The University of Lincoln, United Kingdom)  
 Sally Richard  
 Alisoun Milne  
 Denise Tanner  
 Liz Lloyd  
 Mary Pat Sullivan  
 Eeva Rossi  
 Marjo Outila  
 Mo Ray

**Keywords:** gerontological social work, welfare model, challenges for GSW, role of GSW, rights

The implications of economic, political and organisational contexts for the changing landscape of social work and personal social services with older people have changed substantially in different welfare state contexts in Europe. This symposium outlines major themes and their impact and examines the case 'for' social work with older people with particular attention to social work with older people with high support needs. The symposium considers what social work with older people might achieve and raises the question of its role in a variety of contexts. Opportunities for regaining aspects of professional social work and challenging the focus on administrative models of practice are discussed in connection to different welfare models, especially from the viewpoint of social work research.

**Paper 1, Title: Fields of Social Work in ageing: Rights Vs financial sustainability (Conservative Welfare model: Case of Southern Europe/ Portugal)**  
**Maria Irene Carvalho (University of Lisboa)**

Ageing has become a subject of great interest for Social Workers. In this presentation we examine the relationship





between Social Work, ageing and the social policies in Portugal. We highlight the Social Work professionals in the social protection system in old age and in social facilities at a central, local and community level.

From a questionnaire applied to 115 social workers who work in the ageing field, we analyzed his/her profile, the type of employer and the social intervention in this area.

We concluded that the field of action is broad and diverse. At professional level, their responsibilities are related with: active ageing; conceptual and implementation of social policies; quality of social facilities; and promotion of the rights of older people. The interventions are connected with direct support to older people and their families, and indirect intervention in community integration. However, management for the financial sustainability and quality of social facilities stands out at the community level in nonprofit organizations.

**Paper 2, Title: Reinvigorating the case for social work with older people (Liberal welfare model: Case of UK)**

**Mo Ray, Sally Richards, Alisoun Milne, Denise Tanner, Liz Lloyd and Mary Pat Sullivan (G8 Universities/UK)**

The current policy emphasis in England is on promoting independence, community based living, preventing the need for more intensive support and the provision of comprehensive and personalised support services for older people with complex and changing needs. It is this set of intersecting issues that social workers are equipped to effectively manage. Social work with older people in England has always had rather a tenuous foothold and over the past 20 years, there has been a steady but significant depletion in the numbers of social workers who specialise in practice with older people and their families. The impact of a move to replace qualified social work staff with cheaper, less qualified staff, combined with austerity measures and a push to self-directed models of care have contributed in this depletion. This purpose of this presentation is to consider some of the ways an academic social work special interest group, based in England, have sought to promote the importance and value of gerontological social work practice and research. Priorities for developing the profile of gerontological social work in research and practice are considered.

**Paper 3, Title: Assessment, support and care-taking: Gerontological social work practices and knowledge (Nordic Welfare model: case of Finland)**

**Eeva Rossi, Marjo Outila (University of Lapland) and Marjaana Seppänen (University of Helsinki)**



The purpose of this presentation is to identify, analyse and interpret key practices and knowledge in gerontological social work in a Nordic welfare state, especially in Finland. We explore social work practices and knowledge using data gathered through thematic and dialogical interviews with seven social workers. In those interviews, social workers described their daily work with older adults. Using frame analysis, the data revealed assessment, support and care-taking frames which included many practices. The social work knowledge consists of factual, theoretical, procedural and practical and personal knowledge. Furthermore, clients' personal knowledge is essential in social work practices of every kind. The study findings identify the importance of support and care-taking practices in gerontological rehabilitation, as well as a need for extensive social work knowledge. Challenges for further development of gerontological social work are discussed.



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**SYMPOSIUM 19**

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**352 | Researching the professional ethical identity of social workers: challenges and possibilities**

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.  
Room: 6.8 - Nordkraft

*Ed de Jonge, (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

*Sarah Banks, (Durham University, United Kingdom)*

*Kim Strom-Gottfried, (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA)*

*Merlinda Weinberg, (Dalhousie University, Canada)*

*Ana Marija Sobočan, (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)*

*Hugh McLaughlin, (Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom)*

*Sabrina Keinemans (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)*

*Teresa Bertotti (University of Milano Bicocca, Italy)*

**Keywords:** professional ethical identity, literature review, discourse analysis, constructivist approach, phenomenological approach

**Background/purpose**

The symposium is organised by an evolving international network of researchers sharing an interest in ethical aspects of the professional identity of social workers. This topic is pertinent in the current climate of increasing marketization, managerialism and austerity in welfare services across Europe. These trends appear to undermine the possibilities for a unique professional identity for social workers, whilst also creating conditions in which some social workers judge it is necessary to develop and preserve such an identity to maintain ethical practice. The purpose is to examine 'professional ethical identity' in theory and practice, including whether and how social work practitioners perform this in their everyday work and in research contexts.

Questions to be addressed include:

- What is meant by 'professional ethical identity' and how useful is this concept? Does the idea of a global professional ethical identity make sense, or are there



- fundamental differences, based on national policy, ethical traditions, ethnicity, culture, etc?
- Which theoretical frameworks/paradigms are helpful to conceptualize this identity (or identities) - e.g. essentialist, realist, constructivist or intersectionalist approaches, and how do they relate to each other?
  - What are the consequences of different conceptualisations for research? Which methodologies fit with which theoretical frameworks – e.g. real time observations, qualitative interviews, discourse analysis?
  - How do theoretical paradigms and methodological approaches influence the outcomes of research? What is revealed and what concealed?

### Summary

The symposium will be chaired by Sarah Banks, who will offer a short introduction and facilitate dialogue with participants at the end. There will be four short presentations – each engaging with one or more of the key questions listed above. After some general questions, presenters and participants will engage in facilitated dialogue around the key questions, focussing on different conceptions of 'professional ethical identity' and methodological challenges in researching this topic. A summary is as follows:

1. Introduction to the symposium, overview and rationale (Author 1)
2. Four short presentations; see below (Author 2, Author 3, Author 4, Author 5)
3. Dialogue with participants on key questions (Chair, Author 1, with additional facilitation by Author 6,7,8)

### Relation to themes

Within the overarching theme, 'challenges in social work research', the symposium especially relates to theme 3: challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research. As the abstracts illustrate, research into ethical aspects of the social workers' professional identity is challenging theoretically and methodologically, and above all relevant to professional practice.



## **Conclusion/consequences**

Together with our audience we will formulate conclusions about the conceptualisation of ethical aspects of professional identity and consequences for future (international) research. We will also explore the possibilities of evolving the network into a special interest group (SIG) of ESWRA.

## **PAPER 1: Ethics and professional identity in social work: A systematic review of the literature (Author 2)**

### **Background and purpose**

Professional identity refers to an individual's identification with the qualities unique to a given field or discipline. It shapes the ways that members compare and differentiate themselves with members of other professions and are able to organize to influence policies and social and employment conditions. This literature review investigates existing research on ways in which ethics influence and are influenced by strong professional identity.

### **Methods**

Four bibliographic databases were searched for studies addressing professional identity internationally in health and helping professions, resulting in 974 studies, which were reviewed to ascertain prominent definitions concepts and findings. A second search narrowed the focus to social work and resulted in 139 potentially relevant studies for review.

### **Results**

There were comparatively few studies in social work, as compared to medicine, nursing, or mental health fields. Significant predictors/correlates associated with professional identity were grouped in the following domains:

- Individual-level qualities and competencies can predict or enhance the development of professional identity.
- Identity is strengthened by: (a) Professional role models and mentors, as well as experience in the field such as clinical rotation or a social work field placement; (b) Professional development and networking after completing education; (c) Credentialing and recognizable professional degrees.



## **Conclusions and implications**

The concept of professional identity is tightly linked with internalizing and living out of professional values and ethics; nearly all the authors who provide a definition of professional identity development make reference to “professional values.” Existing research can inform a social work agenda for studying and strengthening the role of ethics in professional identity.

## **PAPER 2: Discourse Analysis as a Tool for Investigating Professional Identity in Social Work Ethics (Author 3)**

### **Purpose**

The purpose is to examine the potential of discourse analysis for understanding the social construction of identity as negotiated in talk with others. Discourse analysis, which is under-utilised in social work, draws on a range of traditions. It offers both theories and approaches that can be used to study how social practices are mediated through discourse.

### **Summary**

In a Canadian research study on ethics in social work, discourse analysis was employed to analyse how research participants co-constructed, with interviewers, their identities as ethical social work practitioners. The understanding of a negotiation of identity of the ethical practitioner is in contrast to dominant discourses, such as utilitarianism, that assume a liberal-humanist notion of an autonomous individual whose selfhood is an internal essential construction. This argument is illustrated with an extract where a practitioner struggled with being viewed as an ethical professional in her interview.

### **Conference Themes**

The presentation opens up possibilities for a different methodological and theoretical approach in social work research through the use of discourse analysis. It also has relevance for comprehending the complexities of what counts as “truth” in research when data is understood as a co-production between participant and interviewer.

### **Conclusion and consequences**

Discourse analysis holds promise as a tool for the exploration of professional identity and ethics and what that means. The





contention in discourse analysis is that identity is highly variable and situated. The consequences are to reinforce an epistemological position of the social construction of knowledge and identity, thus raising questions about what constitutes professional identity and if it is possible to define it.

### **PAPER 3: Professional identities of social workers in Slovenia (Author 4)**

#### **Background and purpose**

Based on an empirical study, this presentation explores social workers' professional identities through the lenses of how the purpose of social work is understood and the authority of social work profession experienced. The presentation examines how social workers design their professional identity, how they 'experience' it and how they 'use' it and how this influences professional work and decisions.

#### **Methods**

The explorative study was conducted among Slovenian social workers, employed in statutory social work institutions (Centres for Social Work). The study used participant observation and narrative interviews with 35 social workers, whose social work experience ranged from 5 – 32 years. The data were analysed using the documentary method (Bohnsack, 2010). Researching the social worker's habitus in relation to professional identity is a methodologically complex and challenging task, connecting this presentation to the conference theme 3.

#### **Conclusions and implications**

The findings show that the social workers' professional identities are strongly influenced by their professional roles, while expectations about these roles are formed through the ideas and visions of what social work as a profession is and/or should be. These ideas and visions are, in turn, experienced as strongly personal: less connected to professional education and codified work standards/principles than to a sense of an intuitive and experience-based professional self-development. The latter most likely also influences perceptions of social workers' professional selves primarily as 'moral agents' and 'moral persons', while concepts like 'moral suffering', 'moral inadequacy' and 'moral restoration' have also been distilled as



relevant (based on the theoretical framework of Goffman's (1971) remedial work). Against the background of roles and authority, social workers' professional identity is experienced as ambivalent and vulnerable, calling for improved educational inputs and practical supports.

#### **PAPER 4: The ethical dimensions of how social workers experience their own professional identity (Ed de Jonge)**

##### **Background and purpose**

This study centres on two questions: (1) How do social workers experience their own professional identity in everyday practice? (2) To what extent do ethical aspects play a role in this experience? At the same time the study tries to engage social workers in the research as much as possible, in the role of reflective and inquisitive practitioners of their own experiences. The background for this approach is that in my opinion research into professional identity should take the experience of professionals seriously and should not lead to expropriation or even 'identity theft'.

##### **Methods**

The research is of a small-scale and explorative nature. It could be labelled as phenomenological and hermeneutical, and it is empowering in its approach. The participants are members of a 5-year old and quite stable network, combining a Community of Practice with practice-based research. The network consists of 10 social workers, 1 researcher and 1 facilitator. The social workers were initially asked to write about an experience in everyday practice in which they felt that their professional identity was under pressure and one in which it could flourish. The accounts were discussed during meetings of the network, focussing on understanding the practice experience in relation to the professional identity of the worker and its ethical aspects.

##### **Results, conclusions and implications**

The first results show that there is a great variety in what aspects of professional experience social workers associate with their own professional identity. In some cases there seems to be a kind of a Leitmotiv in the descriptions of the workers, sometimes of an ethical nature, e.g. ethical conditions for



professional cooperation. The main question for discussion concerns the ethical consequences of paradigmatic and methodological choices regarding the ownership of professional identity.



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## SYMPOSIUM 20

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### 222 | Collaborative learning in local partnerships for public value – a multiple case study

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12.10 p.m. to 1.40 p.m.  
Room: 10.14 - Nordkraft

*Eltje Bos, (Amsterdam University of Applied Science, Netherlands)*

*Pieter van Vliet, (Amsterdam University of Applied Science, Netherlands)*

*Mike de Kreek, (Amsterdam University of Applied Science, Netherlands)*

*Gradener Jeroen (Amsterdam University of Applied Science, Netherlands)*

*Anna de Zeeuw (Amsterdam University of Applied Science, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** collaborative learning, community development, multistakeholder partnerships, civic driven change

Recently, the impact of the ongoing transformation in the Netherlands from traditional welfare state arrangements into arrangements enabling a more active role of the informal civil society is becoming visible. For instance, there is an emerging activism of local people engaging with social and physical issues as well as with well-being in general. We see a shift from 'third generation' civil participation where citizens contribute to value creation, into a 'fourth generation' (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011) civil involvement aiming at citizens obtaining 'voice' in, and sometimes even control over, public services provision. The cardinal rule here is that local government and social service providers have to listen to and facilitate local citizen initiatives. However, in local settings with weaker social networks, community social workers still require more active endeavours to fuel people to obtain a sense of ownership over their social and physical environment.

Transformational processes at the local level are said to be associated with community social workers, local people and civil servants engaging in activities of 'collaborative learning'. This refers to the adoption of new roles and modes of conduct,



new capacities and interactions. More precisely, collaborative learning is “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (Gray, 1989, p. 5). According to Dillenbourg this requires: “a situation in which particular forms of interaction among people are expected to occur, which would trigger learning mechanisms” (Dillenbourg, 1999, p. 7). The intended learning processes are formulated both on individual level (e.g. reflexivity with respect to personal wisdom) and on collective level (e.g. resilience in terms of a solution).

Although there is no guarantee for collaborative learning to indeed occur, one can increase the probability that it will, by influencing three core elements: 1) the initial conditions in a certain situation, 2) the roles that participants can take in the interactions and 3) the learning mechanisms themselves when they go off track. In our recently started multiple case study - funded by the Netherlands Scientific Board (NWO) - on these processes of collaboration, we focussed on the dynamics in growing partnerships between citizens, community social workers and civil servants. Three cases of social neighbourhood initiatives are presented that each create public value in their own way, while simultaneously adopting traditional governmental and social services provision. We will highlight their respective developmental phases, and the challenges in collaborative learning. One important lesson at this stage is that the words ‘professional’ and ‘volunteer’ seem to have become inappropriate, because both types of local actors can either possess or lack the skills required to nurture collaborative learning. These kinds of findings are shared in a collaborative learning trajectory with the stakeholders and the research group. Our experiences with this new role will be woven into our presentations.

### **Paper 1: The Lucas Community**

The Lucas Community (LC) is a neighbourhood initiative, committed to the improvement of liveability and neighbourhood economy in the West-Amsterdam city district of Osdorp. Since 2013, the LC aims to stay ‘autonomous’, by abstaining from structural government subsidies and the involvement of



community social work professionals. Their central concept of “Citizen-Entrepreneur”, registered as a trademark, emphasizes their aspiration for civic driven independence. Strategically, this autonomy is being guarded by a group of highly skilled and educated, (sometimes retired) volunteers. At this moment, LC includes 23 Citizens-Entrepreneurs and 63 volunteers.

One of LC’s hallmark projects is Lucas Green, focusing on the development and maintenance of local gardens and parks. This initiative competes with government-led green services and challenges the primacy of political accountability over green spaces. Handling this competition and challenges, demands of LC volunteers to display organizational strength. But it also requires negotiating skills of all local stakeholders involved. As a consequence, there is a shift in meaning of ‘professionalism’ in handling local issues. The specific professional expertise (competences) of community social workers no longer seems to be the crucial factor in community affairs, but on the contrary the presence of specific (professional) expertise and complementary competences in general among the relevant local stakeholders.

Furthermore, this shift towards civic led local development also demands of civil servants to switch from a traditional to a stimulating, facilitating and supporting role and to adopt a more oppositional role within local governance, to create the space to make things possible. Government and social projects are increasingly building more cooperative, co-creating relationships, working together on a project contributing with specific skills and expertise. Collaborative learning occurs as local stakeholders need to understand each other and, in particular, understand and respect each other's problems.

### **Paper 2: Day Care Project for homeless**

The Day Care Project (DCP) consists of a welcoming coffeehouse for homeless people where they can participate in a range of activities. The project is run by the Volksbond Amsterdam (‘People’s Association Amsterdam’) which was founded in 1875. The DCP is located in the busy shopping street Haarlemmerstraat, in the heart of the City Centre. In 2012 the local government decided to decrease the funding of the DCP. Since then, the Volksbond is working on a relaunch of





the DCP as an independent social company which provides certain services that generate income. Volunteering visitors of the DCP perform services such as running a vintage store, cleaning the streets and maintaining box trees in the Haarlemmerstraat.

The DCP aims for empowerment of its visitors and tries to offer a place where people can find some peace. At the same time, the DCP wants to become an independent social enterprise. The latter still requires an improvement in sharing and building a collective entrepreneurial attitude among all people within the DCP. Many people are not used yet to the shift from the DCP where a visitor could get a free coffee or a dinner to a place where these products cost a small amount of money. Other participants like the bar volunteers have many ideas about making the DCP a little more profitable, but they do not feel recognized in their ideas by the involved professionals.

A first analysis of the internal processes of the DCP uncovers a mutually experienced gap between the professionals and the active volunteers. This indicates an asymmetry between the two groups that is too big to start a collaborative learning process. However, returning to their common aim of more equal responsibilities and synergy can bring them in a process of collaborative learning.

### **Paper 3: Pek-O-Bello**

As a reaction to the plans for city renewal in their 'Van der Pek' neighbourhood, a number of locals organized a meeting in 2013 with local government and the housing company. Instead of demolition, their neighbourhood was planned to be renovated. Following this success, the involved locals organized themselves in a social enterprise called 'Pek-O-Bello' in 2014. With a temporary subsidy of the local government Pek-O-Bello pursues an improvement of the social cohesion by social activities and an adoption of the 'housekeeping activities' in the neighbourhood. For the latter a payment is aimed for in order to offer participants a small income. The core of the organization consists of a board and four programs: Informal Care, Clean Up!, Green and Youth.

Currently, personal circumstances cause drop-out of volunteers



in key positions. This weakens the organization, because, among other things, it increases the work load for others. In general, relying on volunteers for performing the various tasks is a challenge, because continuity both in numbers and in agreements is an issue. For example, the rules for persons with social benefits doing voluntary work imply that they can only stay for six months. Moreover, taking over some of the regular activities from local government and housing companies has proven to be hard, because mutual language and expectations diverge. The word 'volunteers', for example, is easily associated with 'free of charge', while at the same time the quality standards for their work are as high as ever. Related to this, competition with other organizations doing similar work is an important issue.

In terms of collaborative learning all stakeholders are continuously investing in creating common goals, language and expectations. We will illustrate this by sharing exemplary events both of progress and of setback looking at their situational, interactional and learning aspects.



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## WORKSHOP 8

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### 153 | Innovations in an intergenerational society

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12:10 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.  
Room: 4.105 - Rendsburggade

*Mandy Talhout, (RUG Groningen & Windesheim UAS, Netherlands)*

*Eelco Schilder, (Windesheim UAS, Netherlands)*

*Tamara Mulders (Windesheim UAS, Netherlands)*

*Ali Hettinga (Windesheim UAS, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** intergenerational, interdisciplinary, research, higher education

#### **Introduction**

The coexistence of generations is a given in every society. Intergenerational collaboration is a key characteristic of a strong society and is strongly connected with social work, gerontological and pedagogical issues. With people living longer lives and an urgency for more social cohesion, professionals in their own field of activity need to take a broader view on how people from all generations benefit from each other and address (social) issues together. To provide professionals this broader view, Windesheim University of Applied Sciences developed, in direct collaboration with several international partners, a 20 week bachelor minor "Innovations in an intergenerational society". Connected to a PHD research program at the University of Groningen.

#### **The aim**

This bachelor minor first of all aims to provide students a better understanding of different generations, and to support them in the development of different perspectives on generations (multicultural, multidisciplinary and international) and the way generations do or do not interact. Secondly, the minor aims to support students in gaining knowledge and skills to change and improve society by introducing new innovative products, services and by providing new insights through research. Thirdly we aim to connect the minor to a PHD research project by Mandy Talhout (MSc). Who researches similarities and differences in the way people from three generations experienced their youth. Her research focuses on the supposed effects of the individualization process on youth in the family. Is it true the importance of family for young people is declining? And if so, what role do family and



upbringing play?

By making the connection we gain new insights and good practice on how research, higher education and the community can be connected and benefit from each other's knowledge and expertise.

### **Connection with research**

To create this connection the researcher introduces statements from her research to be discussed by the students, these students can participate in the research project by doing sub studies under the researchers supervision and the students take part in the focus group of the research project. The research program is a continuum and successive groups of students can work on (parts of) the different topics.

### **International network**

This bachelor program was developed in cooperation with 5 international partner universities in Europe and are from Belgium (Ghent University College), Denmark (Lillebaelt University College), Finland (Seinajoki UAS), Turkey (University of Antalya). Besides these partnerships we work with international experts from a diversity of (social) organizations.

### **The workshop**

In a dialogic way we will share our experiences, our struggles and good practices with our international colleagues. We aim at a participating audience that has a specific interest in connecting research, higher education with the field/community and likes to exchange experiences with us. Who knows, we might discover common grounds and this might be the first step towards future cooperation.



## PARALLEL SESSIONS 7

FRIDAY | APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>

TIME | 2:45 P.M. TO 4:15 P.M.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 7.1

### **Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users**

*Social work with children and families*

(Chair: Judith Metz)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: Body and mind – Nordkraft

#### **221 | Time well spent? How social workers in child protection spend their time**

*Jo Moriarty (King's College London, United Kingdom)*

*Mary Baginsky (King's College London, United Kingdom)*

*Jill Manthorpe (King's College London, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** time diary, workload, social work activity, child protection

#### **Background**

Workloads and the amount of time spent on administration completing case records and other reports are recurring themes in research and in consultations undertaken with social workers in England. In particular, the balance between face to face contact with families and other indirect activities, such as writing reports, has become a source of contention and is associated with reduced job satisfaction and an intention to leave the profession.

To a certain extent, similar findings are reported in research undertaken in other countries, although the emphasis on case recording and information systems appears to be less dominant. However, given that most of this research on the topic is largely based on self-report, social work researchers are faced with methodological and ethical challenges in collecting and analysing data on how social workers spend their time.

#### **Methods**

This paper will use data from 162 time diaries completed by 121 social workers working in eight different local authorities in 2016. Forty one workers completed diaries in over two separate weeks while the remainder completed a diary in one. Social workers recorded what they were doing in each half hour period from a pre-selected list of activities. This enabled a calculation to be made of time spent on each activity over a seven day





period. The social workers were all working in authorities that had received funding through the Department of Education's Innovation Programme to implement the strengths-based safety-organised approach to child protection.

### Findings

The data are being analysed currently. The presentation will report the time spent on different activities and the extent to which different practitioners and authorities varied in their approaches. This will be linked with data reported by parents and children in the same study on when and how they saw social workers and their views of the way that social workers used their time with them.

### Conclusions and implications

The paper will consider the factors relating to recording and information systems that constrain and facilitate how local authorities can implement new approaches to child protection. It will highlight the advantages and disadvantages of time diaries as a way of evaluating social workers' use of their time. It will end by discussing some of the methodological advantages and disadvantages of this method of data collection and ask what it tells us about social workers' and families' perceptions of time spent in direct contact with families.

## 393 | The challenges of social work practice in child welfare in Georgia

*Inga Saitadze (The City University of New York, USA)*

*Darejan Dvalishvili (Washington University in St. Louis, USA)*

**Keywords:** child welfare, social work research, social work, Republic of Georgia

The development of social work profession is closely linked to the child welfare system of Georgia. There have been many changes in the development of the profession since 1999, when there were only 12 social workers with no professional education working on a small scale projects. Currently, the country offers BA and MA programs in social work in two major universities. According to the latest statistics, there are more than 600 social workers working in social work fields of Georgia.

However, despite many achievements in the field, challenges still remain, particularly in child welfare system. Social workers working in that system lack skills to work with children victims



of abuse, children with disabilities etc. Unpreparedness of social workers in the child welfare field often becomes a topic of a discussion among the experts and professionals of the profession. Moreover, there is no law in place that regulates the profession or a professional organization that mandates maintaining standards of work, or provides continuous/compulsory professional trainings.

The current study focused to identify the main challenges social workers face in child welfare system of Georgia through  
a) revision of the university program curriculums and  
b) analyzing the responsibilities/mandates of social workers and their readiness for working in child welfare.

**Methodology:** 5 Focus groups with BA and MA social work students, the representatives of Social Service Agency overseeing the statutory social workers and faculty members and phone interviews with 172 statutory social workers from over the country. **Data-collection:** June-September, 2016  
Preliminary findings showed that the high caseloads, the lack of professional development opportunities and interests in new emerging fields are the key reasons why social workers leave child welfare in Georgia. Moreover, it also appears that despite almost all involved parties (faculty, students and SSA administration) acknowledge the achievements of social work in child welfare, they all are concerned how to prevent the high turn-over. The paper aims to contribute to the improvements in communication between field workers, academia and policy makers.

## 156 | An analysis of performance and inspection in English child protection services

*Rick Hood (Kingston University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** child protection, inspection, measuring outcomes, child welfare policy, data analysis

### **Background:**

Child protection, a complex and politically sensitive area of practice, has long had an issue with performance. Its public reputation has been scarred by hostile media coverage of deaths from child abuse, while inspections by the government agency, Ofsted, recently found up to three quarters of local authority children's social care services to be inadequate or requiring improvement. The response from senior administrators



has been defensive, arguing that international comparisons show the UK to have a relatively safe and effective child protection system. However, there are concerns that a culture of blame and compliance, reinforced by a punitive inspection regime, are stifling creativity and innovation and leading to increasing rates of statutory intervention in family life.

**Aim:**

Using publically available datasets, the study aimed to identify any connection between quality indicators and Ofsted inspection ratings in English local authorities, and explore the impact of an inadequate rating.

**Method:**

Performance indicators for all English local authorities from 2001-14 were combined into a single dataset. Statistical analysis was undertaken to explore trends and correlations.

**Findings:**

1. Quality measures mainly focused on the timeliness of work processes, but these did not seem to affect outcomes in the form of re-referral rates.
2. A small number of indicators were able to predict an inadequate Ofsted rating in 2012 and 2013. These were: timeliness of initial assessments, rates of re-referrals, and agency workers.
3. Changes in performance measures in the year following an inadequate Ofsted rating seemed to suggest greater use of child protection plans and investigations compared with similarly performing local authorities.

**Implications:**

1. Existing quality indicators tend to measure the timeliness of completing work processes, but these seem to have little bearing on outcomes.
2. The Ofsted inspection process, with high numbers of local authorities rated inadequate, may be exacerbating the shift towards protective interventions in the sector.

**Conclusion:**

Existing performance indicators are insufficiently focused on outcomes and may be contributing to institutional anxiety about risk in children's social care. Different measures are needed to refocus services on what end-users want them to achieve.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 7.2

### Theme 2: Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users

*Research on families*

(Chair: Tim Vanhove)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 6.1 – Nordkraft

#### 279 | Cross-contextual research on Family complexity in social work: methodological challenges and possibilities

*Ingunn Tollisen Ellingsen, (University of Stavanger, Norway)*

*Siv Oltedal, (University of Stavanger, Norway)*

*Ingunn Studsrød (University of Stavanger, Norway)*

*Reidun Ims (University of Stavanger, Norway)*

**Keywords:** cross-contextual research, comparative research, family complexity, vignette study

#### **Background:**

Social workers all around the world deals with family complexity in their everyday practice, and different societal contexts and changing family patterns add to the complexity that is already prominent in the field. Family welfare and family policy are closely linked and influence the ways in which social workers work with families facing complex problems. In the NORFACE project: Family complexity and social work in different welfare regimes, we aim at comparing family policies and family based social work across different welfare states and service areas. Social workers from eight countries take part in the study, and data are collected from social workers from four service areas in each country: child protection, substance misuse, mental health and migration. In the research project, we combine different methodological approaches of focus group interviews, vignette study, individual interviews with stake holders and policy makers as well as document analysis of relevant policy documents.

#### **Purpose of the proposed presentation:**

In our presentation, we will direct attention to methodological challenges and possibilities in such 'cross context' comparative research with a combined focus group and vignette study approach. We will analyze and discuss different phases in our



research process, from constructing a vignette that is feasible to be used in different welfare systems and contexts for social work practice, to recruiting participants and conducting the interviews, as well as the phase of analyzing, and co-creating new knowledge with social workers and researchers from other countries.

### **Addressing conference subtheme number 3:**

Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research, in which specific focus is on choosing a methodological approach that has the potential to engage social workers in experience sharing.

### **Conclusions and implications:**

When the vignette is perceived as realistic, participants seem to engage in and share their experiences and reflections 'in action' and 'on action'. The research design enables insights in how social workers in different contexts reflect upon the case and how they would have approached the case, in a way that is suitable for cross-contextual comparison. Our experiences from our research project may be helpful for other researchers who intend to do cross-national and cross-contextual research.

### **133 | Evaluating perceptions of the impact of attending a family centre on social networks and social capital: emerging findings from a PhD study**

*Fiona Mercer (Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** social networks, social capital, families, family support, service user involvement

### **Background**

This paper relates to the conference sub-theme 'Connections, diversities and controversies between social work research and policy makers, practitioners or service users.'

Glasgow is a city with high levels of deprivation, with more than one in three children living in poverty (Scottish Government, 2013). Deprivation is linked to poor health (Cattell, 2001), well-being (Bond, Kearns, Mason, Tannahill & Egan, 2012) and social exclusion (Sloggett & Joshi, 1994), and although the concept is multidimensional, it is recognised to be a combination of low income, unemployment, deprivation and social isolation (Scottish Government, 2013). Whilst the link between poverty and inequality is complex, social networks,



and the product of these – social capital, have been found to mediate the relationship (Marmot, 2005). However, there is a gap in the literature which explores the meaning and lived experience of families in creating and developing social networks. It is essential that this void is addressed in order to offer valuable and effective support for families who are most vulnerable.

The aim of this project is to understand parents' lived experience of creating and developing social networks and social capital within one third sector family centre.

### **Aim**

A case study approach which evaluates how attending a family centre can impact on social networks and social capital.

### **Objectives**

- 1) Explore parents' lived experience of social networks which have been created through attending the family centre.
- 2) Investigate parents' perceptions of the impact of social networks and social capital, created through attending the family centre on health, well-being, and social lives.
- 3) Evaluate the appropriateness of service user involvement (SUI) in understanding the meaning associated with creating and developing social networks and social capital.
- 4) Analyse characteristics of parents' social networks which have been created through attending the family centre.
- 5) Identify implications for practice, both within the family centre itself and in broader social work practice.

### **Methods**

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with parents in the family centre and analysed qualitatively using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) - a methodology which is rooted in enabling a deep insight into personal accounts of experiences in the social world (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Participants must attend the family centre, be over 16 years old, and have children of their own between 0-12 years (family centre criteria). Purposive sampling will be conducted in order to create a small (8-10), homogeneous and relevant sample, which is in line with the research methodology.





## 184 | What contribution does Family Group Conferencing make to longer term outcomes for children and families?

*Mary Mitchell (University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** process and quality of life outcomes, children and families, decision making, family group conferencing

This paper will report on the findings of a qualitative study which sought to understand the contribution FGC makes to longer-term outcomes for children and families who have been involved in the process. The Family Group Conference (FGC), is a family led, decision-making approach where practical plans are made by the family to keep children safe and improve their quality of life. FGC attempts to strengthen the family's capacity to take care of its members by engaging the adult members to take on the role of promoting the child's welfare and attempting to adjust power differences between families and statutory authorities. There is significant research/evidence about the impact of the process on families, its immediate outcomes but less is known about outcomes in the longer term.

**Method:** A multi-case study approach was adopted in order to gain a rich and deep knowledge of the real life interactions and perspectives of those involved in FGC and to convey as full a picture as possible of that multifaceted reality (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Eleven FGC case studies were developed and each case study include the perspective of different stakeholders in the process including: looked after children and their parents and children (n=32), as well as professionals (n=28) involved with them. FGC service documents (n=94) were also analysed.

**The study found:** process quality and outcomes are important to improve longer-term personal outcomes for service users.

- FGC recognises inter-familial relationships. The process builds capacity of individuals to reflect on their relationships and improve communication, impacting on their longer-term personal relationships. This increased capacity can support family members manage future crisis and conflict if it arise.
- The preparation stage of FGC is important to support the repositioning of families with social work services, engendering a sense of hope and commitment by family members to engage in the change process.
- The lived experience of empowering and democratising



practice can create powerful occurrences for service users and ethically important moments for practitioners.

- FGC offers professional and service users an opportunity to reframe unhelpful attitudes towards each other, often created unintentionally from professional helping. In the longer term this may contribute towards a reduced need for social work services and/or improved working relationships between social work and family.

### **The implications of the study**

This study adds important knowledge regarding outcomes to international empirical work on FGC. In addition, with the increased focus on outcomes and tick-box managerialism within child welfare policy and practice, knowledge from this study highlights the importance of process quality and outcomes on longer term personal outcomes for children and families involved with social work services. Results raise several questions for further social work research. In particular: Who defines outcomes in social work? How does the positioning of children and families within child welfare practice affect outcomes? Given the current focus on risk, is it possible for social work role to move away from strategy and decision making for families towards knowledge, skill and resources to support families to make and to carry out their own decisions?

## **263 | Family Group Conferences in High-Conflict families**

*Tor Slettebø (VID specialized university, Norway)*

**Keywords:** family group conferences, high - conflict families, family services

### **Background and purpose**

The harmful effects of high-conflict divorce and parental separation on children are well known (Cummings & Davies 2010, Nilsen, Skipstein Gustavsen 2012). High-conflict divorce/separation refers to couples who have been engaged in the divorce process for at least two years whose relationship is characterized by attributes like high degree of anger, hostility, distrust, verbal abuse etc (Levite & Cohen 2012). Children of high-conflict parental separation are at a greater risk for behavioural, academic and psychological problems (Henry, Fieldstone, Thomson & Treharne, 2011). Much emphasis has been paid to enable professionals to find better ways to help former partners resolve their conflicts. However, high-conflict



families rarely benefit from services available to divorcing couples such as parental education programs, mediation, and often it is left to the family court system to make decisions in these cases (Haddad, Phillips & Bone 2016). Such long fierce battles have become a growing concern to many of the professionals in the child and family services confronted with the pain of the children caught up in these situations, and there is a need for methods where parents are able to see, hear and empathise with their children (Lawick & Visser, 2015). The Norwegian Directory of Children, Youth and Families has been concerned with developing new ways to create a context for movement out of the deadlock for these families, and especially meeting the needs of the children. As a consequence they initiated a pilot where four family welfare services have tested out Family Group Conferences (FGC) as a method to strengthen the best interest of children in these cases. VID specialized university has been in charge of the evaluation of the pilot, and the paper will be a presentation of the results. The question in focus has been if and how FGC can increase children's participation in high-conflict cases in family services and what would be the preconditions for implementing FGC in these services.

### **Methods**

The evaluation of the pilot has been based on the FGCs carried out in 2014 and 2015 in the four Family service offices and is based on qualitative interviews with 60 interviews with children, parents, family members, FGC - coordinators, therapists and project workers.

### **Results**

The evaluation shows that FGC is a very useful method of bringing in the perspectives of the children and meeting their needs, and on their own terms. FGC does also facilitate a better dialogue between parents and family members. However, there is also room for improvement, especially in meeting the emotional needs of the children in the preparation of the FGC, and in some cases the conflict between adults are so great that children should not be involved.

### **Conclusion and implications**

From being a successful method in child protection services, FGC is now in the process of being introduced to family services as means to increase children's participation in high-conflict situations and thereby also their well-being.



## 150 | Assembling life history narratives from quantitative longitudinal panel data: What's the story for families using social work?

*Elaine Sharland (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** mixed methods, life history narratives, quantitative panel studies, predictors and outcomes of social work use

### **Background and purpose:**

In the UK and Europe there are relatively few longitudinal studies of the predictors and outcomes of routine social work use. Researchers have made little use of existing quantitative longitudinal panel/cohort surveys for this purpose, and the presenter and colleagues have now tried this, conducting multivariate analysis using four UK cohort/panel studies. A surprising, and at face value disturbing, finding is that children and families using social work appear to do worse than similar others over time. We must treat this finding with great caution, since the datasets used offer limited information about the social work involved or about severe adversities that may influence outcomes. Nonetheless, the finding deserves further interrogation.

Embedded within panel/cohort studies is narrative potential that is arguably untapped but may enrich our understanding of people's lives over time. This presentation illustrates a distinctive method trialled by the researchers to assemble from quantitative panel data the life histories of families using social work. Our purpose was to explore whether crossing the qualitative/quantitative divide in this person-centred way could illuminate our somewhat puzzling findings from large-scale multivariate analysis.

### **Methods:**

We selected from the British Household Panel Survey three families who used social work and, according to certain key outcome variables, appeared to fare worse over time. Adapting a little-used methodology pioneered by Singer et al (1998), we assembled these families' life histories by drawing together several hundred variables, recorded across 6-8 years. Variables selected captured: socio-economic, financial, employment and housing circumstances; social support, family and parent-child relationships; individual attitudes and behaviours; health, wellbeing and life satisfaction. Piecing these together, we constructed holistic narratives using our research voice to describe the families' life histories before, during and after using social work.

**Results:**

Our findings are tentative, due to our small-scale experimental use of the method and the limited social work information in the dataset. Nonetheless, this presentation will show how life histories crafted in this way can bring to light, in ways that aggregate findings can obscure, the complexities, diversity and non-linear trajectories followed by children and families using routine social work. Their stories expose, for example, the interactive impacts of multiple adversities, such as parents' deteriorated health bringing exit from the labour market, increased caring responsibility, financial insecurity and strained parent-child relationships. These narratives also illuminate complexity and unpredictability in the relationships between social work use and outcomes. For example, different children in the same vulnerable family receiving social work may fare quite differently, and unpredictable events such as accidents can have a substantial impact on outcomes.

**Conclusions and implications:**

Despite some limitations of our dataset, we conclude that animating the lives of social work users through life history narratives may allow us to interrogate and understand better the findings from existing quantitative longitudinal studies. This approach may also complement further quantitative and qualitative longitudinal research on the predictors and outcomes of social work use.



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS 7.3

### **Theme 3: Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research and/or social pedagogical research**

Innovative approaches and challenges in social work and social work research

(Chair: Didier Reynaert)

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Room: 6.2 – Nordkraft

#### **54 | An experimental approach towards testing social work interventions: set-up, complexities and lessons learned**

*Wim Van Lancker (Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy - University of Antwerp, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** social work interventions, outreach, randomized controlled trial

Social workers are often confronted with the complexities of evaluating their own interventions. Properly evaluating one's own interventions is hard to do, and requires the involvement and support of organisations and local governments. Local practices in Belgium, but elsewhere as well, show that evaluation proper seldom happens, and when it happens it is often based on subjective assessments. In this paper, we will present the outline, methodology and framework of a pilot programme that will be implemented in the Belgian city of Kortrijk to properly test an innovative outreach approach for the integrated delivery of local services, aimed at the integration of disadvantaged families in the labour market.

Multi-disciplinary case handlers will 1) visit a well-defined target group of disadvantaged families that are usually not in reach of the local welfare agency; 2) make an assessment of the specific problems and needs of these families, making use of a newly developed smartphone application; and 3) guide these families in finding the right kind of support for a period of 6 months, instead of expecting these families to muddle through the multitude of local services on their own. In short, the case handler will be the single point of contact for disadvantaged families, bringing a one stop shop in social welfare delivery on their doorstep.

To identify disadvantaged families, we will exploit a unique





feature of the Flemish institutional set-up in which home visits by district nurses will serve as our entry into these families' homes. The effectiveness of the pilot programme will be tested by means of a randomized controlled trial. This will enable us to test whether close counselling by case handlers helps in improving take up of local employment services, and how it impacts on the well-being of the families in the treatment group. Moreover, it will be examined whether and how the programme is scalable and can be transferred to local contexts with similar problems. The complexities of setting up an experiment in a real-life social work setting and the lessons learned for social work practices will be discussed.

### 112 | Working Relationships in Social Work – Attempt of an Empirically-Based Typology and Reflections on the Challenge of Generalizability of Reconstructed Cases

*Roland Becker-Lenz, (UAS Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, Switzerland)*

*Joel Gautschi (UAS Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, Switzerland)*

*Cornelia Rüegger (UAS Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, Switzerland)*

**Keywords:** working relationship, child welfare, qualitative reconstructive research, typology, methodological challenges

**Objectives:** The "working relationship" between social workers and clients is at the core of professional practice. Based on evidence from psychotherapeutic settings, there are strong reasons to assume that a good working relationship is a crucial factor for beneficial outcomes of psycho-social interventions in general (Grawe 1998; Cameron/Keenan 2010). In social work theory and theory of professions there are several working relationship models (e. g., Heiner 2010; Oevermann 1996; Schütze 1992, 1996), and there's a huge body of prescriptive guidelines and methods on how to build "good" working relationships. Surprisingly, descriptive empirical studies on a) how social worker and clients actually build their relationships, and b) what types of working relationships they build are scarce (e.g., Bell 1999; Cloos et al. 2009; Platt 2007; Köngeter 2008). Therefore our study aims to build an empirically-based typology of characteristics of working relationships' between social workers and clients.

**Methods:** We used a qualitative-explorative research design to



explore the characteristics of working relationships in social work exemplarily in the field of child welfare and child protection. We collected data for 7 cases of 6 professionals from different types of voluntary and non-voluntary child and family oriented services in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. For each case we made audio recordings of a) several conversations between social workers and clients, b) interviews with social workers, c) interviews with clients, and collected case files and further organisational documents. Data of 3 selected cases was extensively analysed with objective hermeneutics, an hermeneutical approach for sequential micro analysis of text material (Oevermann 1993; 2000; Oevermann et al. 1979).

**Results:** We have finished our data analysis of the selected cases and are currently working out types of working relationships as steps toward a typology of working relationships in social work. First results point to – at least – three distinct types of working relationships with differing characteristics. Surprisingly the influence of the compulsory nature of the context was weaker than anticipated, which points to a high level of social workers' discretion on how to structure working relationships. At the conference we shall present the final results of our study.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** First, we'll discuss the results in the light of the current literature on working relationship and focus on how our reconstructed types relates to working relationship models and the context of the working relationship. Second, using the example of our study design and results, we'll address the common challenge of generalisability of results from extensive exploratory qualitative studies. We'll reflect on the possibilities and limitations of this research approach with regard to generalisability. Based on this, we'll conclude with suggestions on how to establish typologies and how to progress with the generalisability of exploratory studies in general.

## 267 | Challenges of Micro-mobilization of Graduate Social Workers for Alternatives in Social Work - The Perspective of Action Researcher

Gorana Panic (University of Jyväskylä/Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, Finland)



**Keywords:** action research, micro-mobilization, social work education, graduate social workers, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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 is taking place, new wave of academisation and the expansion of university social work programs had started in 2000, in a period of post-war and post-socialist transitions. Demands of neoliberal transformation, involvement of international actors in social work education, shortage of social workers as well as, ubiquity of ethnic divisions within the country had created a favourable context for establishing more social work schools. Today, social work studies exists at four public universities. Growth in social work education that is evident in growth of its institutions, yearly enrolled and graduated students does not necessarily mean that this growth is likely followed by employment opportunities. Number of unemployed social workers in 2014 was 126 in entity of Republika Srpska, and 423 in the entity of Federation of BiH. Despite these developments, little is known about the graduate social workers' (GSWs) experiences regarding trajectories once they are outside of social work studies.

This paper is based on my doctoral dissertation, an ongoing critical action research. Its dynamic and nonlinear study design started as exploration of the existing situation based on the graduate social workers' direct experiences and perspectives. The aim of the study is to generate critical understandings in collaboration with GSWs of the issues they have encountered upon graduation, as well as to identify possible alternatives in response to the given circumstances. Research participants were recruited using purposive sampling strategy, and from a single social work school. First interviews were conducted in 2014 with nine social workers who graduated between 2011 and 2013. Interviews were analysed using data-driven thematic analysis, and then its core themes were used as a ground for planning informed action.

Interviewees reported on their own gloomy situation upon graduation, as well as of the colleagues from their own and previous cohorts. Some of them were not only unemployed social workers, but has been pushed into precarious jobs outside of social work profession and university qualification. Others were caught into transition loop within social work profession, doing unpaid jobs obscured as "voluntary work" and repeated internships, while some remained in perennial job seeking. Despite these scenarios, along sharing common circumstances and interest, resistance to given situation in forms of individual acts of resistance or collective action by



GSW's were not found. Widespread notion among GSWs was that there is no alternative but to accommodate to given circumstances. Over the period of 2015 and 2016 action cycles were developed around the concept of micro-mobilization with GSWs, using conventional face-to-face groups and online groups on social media. This presentation highlights challenges of micro-mobilization of graduate social workers for alternatives in social work, and initiating bottom-up change in the context being studied.




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 SYMPOSIUM 21
 

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### 332 | From International to Transnational Social Work? Perspectives of Social Work Research

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
Room: 10.15 - Nordkraft

*Claudia Olivier-Mensah, (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany)*

*Wolfgang Schröer, (Universität Hildesheim, Germany)*

*Cornelia Schweppe, (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany)*

*Ronald Lutz, (University of Applied Sciences Erfurt, Germany)*

*Ine Lietaert (Ghent University, Belgium)*

*Britta Buschmann (Research Training Group "Transnational Social Support", Germany)*

**Keywords:** social work research, internationality, transnationality, globalization, knowledge, social practices

The symposium addresses the theoretical foundation and developments from an international and a transnational social work research approach. Having in common that both perspectives are promoting an opening, exchange and border-crossing of traditionally connotated nation-state framed social work models in a globalized world, we will outline the differentiation of inter and transnationality. We argue that a transnational perspective is going one step beyond the international lense by reflecting a comparative perspective of two or more nation-states and seeing social work not bonded to a nation-state development. Instead "transnational studies" in the field of social work open up the possibility for the reflection on and definition of social processes and formations in a nation state and thereby also providing a perspective on developments and constellations that serve to interconnect national borders. The fields of social work are thereby influenced by an "ongoing interconnection or flow of people, ideas, objects, and capital across the borders of nation states in which the state shapes but does not contain such linkages and movements." (Glick Schiller & Levitt, 2006: 5). A reflection of "methodological nationalism" and the idea of social work as "border work" are highlighting how social, political, legal and biographical interrelationships as well as different stakeholders and interests in social work are put in place that address or



interlink the borders drawn by nation states. These border interconnections must be identified since they challenge the organizational structures and practices of social work. Under a transnational social work perspective social work itself is part of the trans-formation process rather than an enclosed comparable national system, as an international social work approach (sometimes) suggests. The planned symposium will take up these challenges with the aim to critically reflect and systematically analyse social work research, its position and its global opening approaches.

### **Lecturers and Abstracts:**

1. Inter-Trans-National Social Work Research. An Introduction (Claudia Olivier-Mensah, Wolfgang Schröer, Cornelia Schweppe – Mainz, Hildesheim/Germany)
2. Border Thinking. Recognizing local knowledge in International Social Work (Inkje Kristin Sachau, Ronald Lutz, Alexander Stauss – Erfurt/Germany)
3. Transnational Strategies and Challenges regarding the implementation of Voluntary Return Programs in Social Work (Ine Lietaert – Ghent/Belgium)
4. Matching Practices in Transnational Adoption: Navigating Judgement and Decision-Making in Social Work (Britta Buschmann – Mainz/Germany)

### **1. Inter-Trans-National Social Work Research. An Introduction – Claudia Olivier-Mensah, Wolfgang Schröer, Cornelia Schweppe**

The presentation addresses the developments from an inter- to a transnational approach and presents the basic principles of "transnational social work". By using the examples of "children and youth welfare" and "care of the elderly", we will show how operational areas of social work that are not explicitly geared towards "transnational" goals are nevertheless also integrated in cross-border processes on the political and organisational level as well as on the level of the target groups of social work. We will especially show how a transnational perspective permits to shed a new light on the negotiation of different stakeholders involved in these fields as well as to reveal new stakeholders. New forms of a transnational welfare mix as well as the emergence of so far hardly considered social actors will be





highlighted and discussed with regard to its implication for the social and political position and subjective options for action of people towards whose needs social work is directed.

## **2.Border Thinking. Recognizing local knowledge in International Social Work – Inkje Kristin Sachau, Ronald Lutz, Alexander Stauss**

International social work is caused through current confrontations. It deals with the consequences of colonization, de-colonization, globalization and indigenization. This requires a "border thinking" and a new focus on local (indigenous knowledge).

Taking the "colonial wounds" as a chance, the creation of a "diverse world" based on older forms of knowledge would be imaginable. Especially social movements of populations that have been marginalized in colonialism, are seen as subject of hope. Mignolo (2009) designed the "idea" of a "border thinking" to oppose to the continuing colonial rule with another knowledge. His idea focuses on two facets: The re-appropriation and re-interpretation of concepts and content from repressed and forgotten traditions and an interculturality as an exchange and negotiation. Both recognizes local (indigenous) knowledge and transform this into a practice of International Social Work, this is the main thesis of the presentation.

"Border thinking" and local knowledge also refer to another aspect: Each knowledge has an origin and is unique. In this respect all scientific statements are political, "because each statement is committed to its place of origin" (Castro Varela/Dhawan 2005, 23). Texts are never just texts, they always reflect also hopes, traditions, values and utopias. In this respect science is never innocent, value-free or apolitical. On the contrary, science and social work research consistently must be made "public" and its theory must be designed as a political practice.

Finally, it arises a political utopia: Learning from the "South" to rethink the "North". Processes of confrontation within "International Social Work" let knowledge and practices be recognized.



### **3. Transnational Strategies and Challenges regarding the Implementation of Voluntary Return Programs in Social Work – Ine Lietaert**

The recent nexus between migration research and social work research led to interesting impulses and approaches to study transnational processes in social work. However, there seems to be a predominant focus on transnational processes and transnational social work in Western host countries, resulting in scant attention to the influences of transnational processes in social work practices beyond these borders. This talk aims to transcend the preserving national and western-centric orientation in social work research by investigating the practices of assisted voluntary return (AVR) support and study the challenges that this cross border support practice poses for social workers. The paper draws on evidence of interviews with social workers supporting returnees in the host country and in countries of origin, to reveal the strategies these social workers employ and identify the challenges they face when delivering support within the context of the Belgian AVR program.

The findings revealed that social workers in the host country as well as in the countries of origin needed, yet were often lacking, specific 'transnational knowledge'. They needed a specific understanding of the life-worlds of the beneficiaries in the cross border context, to enable them to support returning migrants. This knowledge could be created by extensive exchange between the practitioners both before the return of the migrants, as well as by feedback loops on the provided support afterwards. The results show that challenges were reinforced for the social workers in the countries of origin, who needed to build their social work practice within a transnational institutional context: within the framework of projects created by a West European government, but which take place in a very different setting. Viewing these findings, I will reflect on its implications for the provision of AVR support and transnational social work programmes.

### **4. Matching Practices in Transnational Adoption: Navigating Judgement and Decision-Making in Social Work – Britta Buschmann**



In the process of transnational adoption as a long-term biographical experience, professional judgement and decision-making take place at different points of time and in various contexts. They range from the very first meeting of potential adoptive parents and social workers to post-adoption services offered by the adoption placement offices (APO). Construction and meaning-making of origins in transnational adoption from a Cultural Studies perspective, using Constructivist Grounded Theory and ethnographical approaches as methodological frameworks are currently examined in an empirical research project. Drawing on selected interview and online data, the presentation will take a closer look at how matching as decision-making is reasoned and carried out in an international arena involving different actors and interests. As Laakso and Pölsö (2014) argue, matching can be outlined as a navigational process of decision-making, which will become visible in the following elaboration. In social work, matching is considered to be a pivotal part of child placement and an important precondition for a successful adoption.

The data this paper is based on suggests that the APOs focus on the prospective parents, their capacities and strengths indeed. Concentrating on this party is to be understood as a means of advocating the child's best interest and of minimising the risk of a mismatch, i.e. choosing unable applicants. Also matching remains relevant to the families in the making and un-making of difference vs. likeness, and fate vs. coincidence, especially in continuous kinning efforts. The (re)negotiation of these aspects is thus an ongoing process also after the actual act of adoption and the phase of family integration.

Hence, a closer examination of assessment criteria and matching decisions can contribute to a more detailed understanding of decision-making in the field of child welfare of social work, such as transnational adoption.




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 SYMPOSIUM 22
 

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### 371 | Challenges in multi-country research methodology and data analysis: learning from pilot research on the united voices of youth and practitioners in Europe

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
Room: 3.3.17 - Nordkraft

*Michael Rasell, (School of Health and Social Care, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom)*

*Lars Uggerhøj, (Department of Sociology and Social Work, Aalborg University, Denmark)*

*Agnieszka Naumiuk, (Faculty of Education, University of Warsaw, Poland)*

*Theano Kallinikaki, (Department of Social Administration and Political Science, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece)*

*Carla Pinto, (ISCSP, University of Lisbon, Portugal)*

*Leslie Hicks, (School of Health and Social Care, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom)*

*Kirsten Mejlvig, (Department of Sociology and Social Work, Aalborg University, Denmark)*

*Victoria Schmidt (Faculty of Education/Social Sciences, Masaryk University, Czech Republic)*

*Fernando Serra (ISCSP, University of Lisbon, Portugal)*

**Keywords:** multi-country research methodology, collaborative research, local community innovation, youth participation, international social work research

This symposium is based on a six-country pilot research project “Innovation in local communities” and engages with one broad methodological and one broad empirical question:

- How to develop a cross-national research methodology to investigate local social work issues?
- What is the potential for local community innovation across Europe in response to recent pressures?

The research project brought together researchers in Denmark, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal and Greece. Interactive research workshops were conducted in 2015-2016 with 65 community practitioners and 90 adults aged 18-25 across the six European locations about how local communities and welfare services can respond innovatively to recent increases in marginalisation and vulnerability. The focus on



local communities and use of a bottom-up research approach were regarded as important because “micro or local level analysis is ... needed to understand the contributions of welfare programmes to reducing inequality and alleviating poverty, and to demonstrate how people and communities live without well-developed welfare systems and provisions” (Huegler, Lyons and Pawar 2009: 13).

Methodologically, the local nature of social work practice and associated importance of context mean that much social work research is based on case studies from single countries, cities or sub-regions. At the same time, it is clear that social work across Europe faces shared challenges to promote well-being and participation in the face of increasingly limited resources and neoliberal policy developments. IFSW Europe has thus issued statements in recent years that condemn cuts to welfare services and the social consequences of the financial crisis, including the rise of discrimination and disproportionate impact on vulnerable and marginalised groups. It is therefore timely for social work researchers to ask how research can respond to these common challenges by studying issues across borders. The papers in the symposium synthesise results from six countries, providing a basis to critically discuss the processes of generating and analysing data cross-nationally.

Overall the symposium contributes to the conference’s third subtheme: “Challenges and possibilities for different methodological, theoretical and professional approaches in social work research”. The first paper is explicitly methodological, engaging with the thorny question of robustness and rigour in multi-country research. The two empirical papers focus on the research process and results generated with the project’s two target groups: community practitioners and 18-25 year olds. Each empirical paper highlights the potential of using interactive, collaborative research methods to generate cross-national data and the value of combining bottom-up data across countries to strengthen citizen/practitioner voice and critique dominant policy discourses. The symposium closes with 20 minutes of audience discussion to share ideas and broaden the conversation about the possibilities for cross-country social work research.

Reference: Huegler, N, Lyons, K. and Pawar, M. (2009) ‘Setting the Scene’ in Lyons, K. et al (eds.) SAGE Handbook of International Social Work. London: Sage, pp. 1-33



## **Paper 1: Methodological approaches to multi-site research in international social work**

**Authors: Lars Uggerhøj, Michael Rasell, Carla Pinto, Kirsten Meljvig**

This paper seeks to develop the methodological bases of cross-national research in social work by reflecting on a six-country pilot project about innovation in local communities. Drawing on experiences from collaborative research with practitioners and young people, we argue that the importance of local and national factors in shaping the work of practitioners and wider policy responses means that an explicitly comparative approach to social work research across countries is unhelpful. Instead, we suggest that multi-site research offers potential for combining results and identifying important differences across locations. In advocating for multi-site research, we propose a 'flexible methodology' in which the precise data collection tools can vary as long as activities focus on the project's core aims and research questions. Interactive activities are useful to generate ideas with practitioners, citizens and/or service users, for example discussions and brainstorms. The subsequent data analysis should synthesise key themes, explain divergences and consider the role of local context in shaping results. In this way, multi-country social work research can respect local context whilst providing stronger evidence by combining data from multiple sites.

## **Paper 2: Collaborate to innovate: the role of practitioners in addressing local community needs**

**Authors: Theano Kallinikaki, Agnieszka Naumiuk, Carla Pinto, Michael Rasell**

European policy discourses increasingly emphasise co-creation and 'stakeholder involvement' as means to generate and deliver innovation in the community and public sectors. Yet, there has been little focused discussion on the exact nature of this cooperation between communities, policymakers and services as well as the role that practitioners can play in it. This paper reports on the local community needs identified by practitioners in six different European locations and their suggestions for innovation to tackle marginalisation. Whilst the context for community work varies greatly between countries, a strong message is the importance of citizen participation. Practitioners can act as channels of horizontal and vertical communication, supporting communities to become engaged and relay their views to policy makers. Crucially, the practitioner participants in the research did not limit citizens' role to identifying needs or generating ideas, but also placed emphasis on community





involvement in implementing solutions. Trust, self-esteem and relationship-building were identified as key in making such participation both successful and sustainable. However, these dimensions are neither recognised nor valued in current local development policies across Europe that prefer short term, externally designed projects with clearly measurable outcomes. The collaborative view of community involvement supported by practitioners stands in strong contrast to the notions of consultation and transfer of responsibility found in policy discourses on co-creation, implying that the benefits of creative and committed communities may be missed or not fully realised.

### **Paper 3: Voice and action to build youth-friendly communities**

**Authors: Leslie Hicks, Agnieszka Naumiuk, Victoria Schmidt, Kirsten Meljvig, Theano Kallinikaki, Lars Uggerhøj**

Young people are a major focus of national and European policies, but often treated as 'objects' rather than active agents in schemes designed to shape their educational achievement, employment and 'good' citizenship. Less emphasis is placed on young people's own views of their needs and possible contributions to communities. This paper reports on European pilot research that ran interactive workshops with 18-25 year olds in six different cities to generate ideas on how communities can become more 'youth-friendly'. There was strong opinion that existing structures do not provide opportunities for youth to fully engage and make a difference, which can potentially promote feelings of alienation. Young people were very clear on ways to innovate and enhance their role, both in terms of amenities and infrastructure as well as integration into wider society, for example through initiatives to build relationships across different generations or partnership meetings between youth and key adults (parents teachers, practitioners). There was a strong wish to move beyond mere consultation to ensure that key decision makers hear and respect the priorities outlined by young people, demanding a rethink of methods of contact and communication. The bottom-up research methodology allowed participants to articulate a strong vision of engagement, citizenship, voice and participation with commonalities across countries.

### **Section 4: Audience discussion: developing an agenda for multi-country research**

The symposium will finish with a 20-minute audience discussion about cross-country research in social work. Participants will be invited to reflect on the nature of community and youth



participation in their own contexts and how this may influence the design of cross-national research. Discussion will then broaden to consider multi-country research around the research interests of audience members. The discussion will facilitate networking among the audience and also ensure the symposium's relevance to wider fields on of social work research.



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## WORKSHOP 9

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### 275 | Heuristic decision-making in social work between practice and law

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
Room: 6.7 - Nordkraft

*Jacob Magnussen (Metropol University College, Denmark)*  
*Idamarie Leth Svendsen (Metropol University College, Denmark)*

**Keywords:** workshop, heuristics, law, decision making, state care (placements)

Our workshop will deal with the theme of our R&D project: 'Heuristic decision-making in social work between practice and law' (see description below). The goal of the seminar is to generate an interest in the topic of heuristics in social work. Hopefully it will develop into a network.

As to the pedagogical framework of the workshop, it will start in one of the following two ways:

- 1) A case evaluation by two groups of participants in the workshop. The design (experiment) is to show the differences between ex post and ex-ante decision making in the same case by revealing variable information to the two groups of participants concerning the outcome of the case (this text not to be shown to the participants)
- 2) An experiment, designed to show the impact of simple 'framing' on decision-making – by asking participants to explain their understanding of the legal principle: 'Best interests of the child', while having been unknowingly primed in different ways, for instance by exposure to varying – and seemingly - coincidental figures or numbers.

From one of these 'experiment's the workshop will discuss and evaluate our preliminary findings from our R&D project (below). The other 'experiment' will possibly be used to 'test' our claims in the discussions.

**Title:**

Heuristic decision-making in social work between practice and law



**Background and purpose:** Description of the problem, study objectives, research question(s) and/or hypotheses

We are interested in decision-making patterns in child protection cases on the basis of an empirical study in two Danish municipalities, characterized by different local standards/methods for decision-making. Our perspective is the implications of specific factors in the local environment (municipal standards/methods) on decisions to place a child in residential care. Particularly, we examine how decision-makers manage legal demands for both accountability and professional judgment. We understand accountability as a focus on later evaluation of decisions in hindsight (“ex post”) and judgment as a more situational practice (“ex ante”).

The study is a naturalistic field study with an explorative and descriptive purpose. The sample consists of – relevant decision-making situations in – two municipalities selected on the basis of their different strategies to influence the decision-making environment through local standards and methods. Methods: study design, including a description of participants and selection strategies, data collection procedures, measures, and approaches to analysis

The study will make use of observations, interviews (group and individuals) as well as legal review and a meta-review of the literature about decision making concerning placement/residential care. The meta-review and the group interviews will be used to design our observations- and our interview guides in order to explore and compare the ex-ante judgements in cases concerning placement or not in both the two municipalities. The findings from the observations and interviews will be confronted with an ex post legal review of the very same cases concerning placement or not.

**Results:** specific results in summary form.

The results from the comparative study of two municipalities will be findings of both positive heuristics and critical biases as seen from each of our two approaches – the ex post and the ex-ante. The ex post approach will find biases in the decision making process according to law and the principle of law (legal accountability). At the same time these biases will have little value as feedback or prescriptions to improve the ex-ante decision making process about placement or not. Respectively, the ex-ante approach will find positive heuristics in the decision making process as to manage the complexity of data and at the same time being efficient coping strategies to the workload. However, such heuristics and coping strategies do



not guarantee as 'feed forwards' the likelihood of successful outcomes of the actual decision taken nor remove future risks and accountability.

**Conclusions and implications:** description of the main outcome(s) of the study and implications for practice, policy, or further research.

The results will be used to discuss the implications of law and the ex post approach to errors and biases in respect with the ex-ante approach to heuristic decision making.



## ACCEPTED POSTERS

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### Exhibition

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1.30p.m. to 2.45p.m.

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1.40p.m. to 2.45p.m.

Room: DGI-hallen both days

### 30 | The practice of practice oriented social work research: The case of UAS in The Netherlands

*Martine Ganzevles (HU University of applied Sciences Utrecht +  
Tilburg University/TRANZO, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** insight in dilemma's and motives of SW researchers, research strategies, practice oriented social work research, prove and improve, universities of applied sciences, PhD research

#### **Abstract:**

In the last decade a call is made upon a stronger knowledge base for Social Work and an abiding professionalism of practice. Transformations in The Netherlands state welfare regime are amongst others a big impetus for this demand. Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) contribute substantially in answering this legitimation call. UAS in The Netherlands adopted a research function since 2000 and practice oriented research is prevailing in their type of research. Both fields; social work practice and social work research as conducted by UAS, are relatively new and are to a certain degree reinventing themselves. It makes practice oriented social work research a timely topic.

This poster presents the outline and aim of the PHD research on how to optimise practice-oriented social work research; preliminary results of the research are presented addressing the question in what ways UAS find solutions in living up to claim of scientific rigour and practice relevance in conducting social work research.

#### **Main aim of the research:**

Contribute to an insight on dilemma's and motives of social work researchers in choosing and applying research strategies that live up to scientific and practical claims(descriptive); defining promising research methods and strategies and; provide guidelines how to choose the most appropriate design given the circumstances.





## 35 | The role of sexual orientation in relationship quality and maintenance

*Jill Chonod (Indiana University, USA)*

*Jacqui Gabb (Open University, United Kingdom)*

*Priscilla Dunk-West (Flinders University, Australia)*

**Keywords:** sexual minoritie, relationship quality, Heteronormativity

### **Background:**

LGBTQ families face discrimination and non-acceptance across many countries and cultural contexts and are also not well represented in research on relationship satisfaction. Utilizing a strengths-based approach, the current study sought to determine if relationship happiness differed amongst LGBTQ couples and opposite-sex couples and the role that parenting plays in their happiness.

### **Methods:**

This international community sample (n=8,132) was obtained from a survey distributed in the U.K., the U.S., and Australia with participants located in more than 60 countries. We utilized ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to explore the significant variables for relationship quality. Due to multiple comparisons, Bonferroni correction was used (.05/20), and alpha was set at  $p \leq .002$ . In this model, 75% of the variance for relationship quality was explained; however, sexual orientation was not statistically significant. Sex, relationship duration, use of relationship support, children in the household, faith in relationship, happiness with life, relationship maintenance, happiness with partner, most important person in one's life, arguments over money, and feeling as if your partner listens were all significant. Participants who indicated that his/her child(ren), friend, or family member were the most important person in their life compared to those participants that indicated that their partner was the most significant had lower relationship quality.

To determine the role of parenthood in relationship quality and relationship maintenance as it relates to sexual orientation, we conducted post hoc tests for significance. Results indicated that heterosexual parents reported the lowest relationship quality as well as the lowest relationship maintenance followed by LGBQ parents, heterosexual nonparents, and with the highest levels of both relationship quality and relationship maintenance, LGBQ nonparents.



### Conclusions:

Given that research has found that everyday activities or routine relationship maintenance are integral to relationship satisfaction (Dainton, 2000), we included this as one of the variables in our study. Our data point to everyday relationship practices as being constitutive of relationship quality and couple identity. Firstly, corroborating other findings (Kurdek, 1988, 1995, 2003; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1987), in our study there was no statistical difference between LGBQ and heterosexual people in terms of relationship quality and relationship maintenance. Given the lack of social and legal recognition to same sex couples, this is counterintuitive to the dominant discourse attached to sexual identity. Further research in this area will contribute to better understanding of the mechanisms through which dominant negative discourses of heteronormativity are mediated in the context of same-sex relationships.

The role of parenting is important to understanding relationship quality and couple practices. Of all groups, heterosexual parents report the lowest relationship quality and relationship maintenance scores. Despite these findings, our research found no statistical significance between parents who identified as heterosexual or LGBQ in relation to relationship quality or relationship maintenance. This suggests that traditional gender roles in relation to parenting may play less of a part in relationship satisfaction than previously appreciated.

### 79 | Telling it with words AND numbers?: survey of health and social care professionals on communicating risk in dementia care

*Michelle McDowell (Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Germany)*

*Brian Taylor (University of Ulster, United Kingdom)*

**Keywords:** communication, dementia, risk

#### Background and purpose

Risk communication involves the exchange of information and opinions about risks and benefits of care options. Effective risk communication tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual is essential to support informed, shared decision making in dementia care. This study explores:



- how risks are conceptualised by individuals with dementia, family carers and professionals working in dementia care practice; and
- perspectives of health and social care professionals on verbal, numeric and visual modes of communicating risk likelihoods.

## Methods

This study comprised five phases, each phase informing the next.

1. Literature review with a systematic search to identify peer-reviewed, published research on 'risk concepts' and 'risk communication' in dementia care.
2. Interviews: individuals with mild to moderate dementia who have recently made a decision about their care that involved thinking about risks (15 interviews).
3. Focus groups: family carers of people with dementia (5 groups; 22 carers).
4. Focus groups: health & social care professionals in dementia care (5 groups; 35 professionals).
5. Web administered survey: all health and social care professionals in statutory community dementia care services in Northern Ireland (70 complete plus 55 partial of 250 population).

## Results

The survey findings will be presented, covering the following topics:

- identifying situations where professionals are using numeric information;
- identifying the risk outcomes presenting most concern in practice;
- exploring variability in words used by professionals to convey numeric expressions of risk;
- measuring accuracy of perceptions of risk likelihoods (of four specified severe outcomes) and establishing predictors of accuracy using regression modelling;
- investigating suitability of visual aids for communicating likelihoods;
- identifying issues and challenges in communicating about risks; and
- establishing numeracy levels of practitioners using the Adaptive Berlin Numeracy Test.

## Conclusions and implications

The presentation will focus on the survey findings, for which the data is currently being analysed. To indicate quality and



viability of producing these on time, publications from earlier stages of this project are listed below.

### **Publications from this project**

Stevenson M, Taylor BJ and Knox J (2016, in press) Risk in dementia care: searching for the evidence. Health, Risk and Society.

Stevenson M, McDowell ME & Taylor BJ (2016, in press) Concepts for communication about risk in dementia care: A review of the literature. Dementia: The International Journal of Social Research and Practice.

Stevenson M and Taylor BJ (2016, in press) Risk communication in dementia care: family perspectives. Journal of Risk Research.

Stevenson M & Taylor BJ (2016, in press) Risk communication in dementia care: professional perspectives on consequences, likelihood, words and numbers. British Journal of Social Work.

### **108 | Intervention with Families in Extreme Distress - The perspective of the clients of welfare services and the social workers who treat them**

*Ahuva Even-Zohar (Ariel University, Israel)*

**Keywords:** Families in Extreme Distress, Welfare departments Social worker, Treatment, Client

#### **Background:**

Poor, unorganized, multi-problem families have always been at the core of the social worker's profession, and continues to be a challenge for their intervention. Sharlin & Shamai (2000) defined multi-problem families who live in deep economic deprivation, in addition to a plethora of other problems, which is transmitted from generation to generation, as "Families in Extreme Distress". A set of factors characterized the multi-problematic patterns of these families: poverty (debt, lack of income); housing (physical neglect); health problems (chronic diseases, psychiatric hospitalizations); couple functioning (lack of communication, violence); parental functioning (lack of boundaries); children (learning difficulties); substance abuse (drugs, alcohol); anti-social behavior (arrests); support systems (limited access to resources).

Multi-problem, poor families are usually under the care of social services, and maintain lasting relationships with social workers.



The purpose of the study was to learn about the two points of view: (a) of the clients of welfare departments who are characterized as Families in Extreme Distress, according to a scale for assessing such families, and (b) of the social workers who treat them.

**Method:**

After receiving ethics approval, we asked social workers of the welfare departments in Israel who agreed to participate in the study, to choose their clients that meet the criteria of Families in Extreme Distress. Then, 13 pairs (dyads) of the clients and their social workers were interviewed using identical questions based on a semi-structured interview. Questions related to the client's difficulties and the primary needs of the family, the reasons the client require treatment, the strengths and the resources of the family, kinds of help given to the family, the therapeutic relationship between the social worker and the client, suggestions for improving the treatment of those families.

**Findings:**

A number of common themes were found in the interviews: Difficult economic situation; coping with illness; receiving help; the strengths of the clients; the therapeutic relationship; improvement suggestions.

The comparison between the answers of the clients and of the social workers shows three patterns: (1) The same phraseology used by the client and by the social worker. (2) Different wording of the client vs. the social worker. (3) Differences in the perceptions in assessing the situation. For example,

The theme: Difficult economic situation

The same phraseology:

The client: "We needed baby's food, clothing, diapers."

The social worker: "They had no money even to buy food for the child".

Different wording:

The client: "Sometimes we get stuck without bread, without shopping for Saturday". The social worker: "Lack of resources".

Differences in the perceptions:

The client: "The economic situation is difficult."

The social worker: "Problematic parental functioning".

**Conclusions and implications:**



The issues discussed in the interviews allow the social workers to learn about their client's experiences during the treatment, and to examine their attitudes in order to improve the services. The practical conclusion is to recommend that social workers enable clients to express themselves about what kind of services they wish to receive, and to evaluate the treatment given to them throughout the process. This conclusion is consistent with the known approach that evaluation of intervention programs can improve social services.

Sharlin, S. A., & Shamai, M. (2000). *Therapeutic Intervention with Poor, Unorganized Families*. NY: The Haworth press, Inc.

### 173 | The effectiveness of preventive cooperation systems for community support of elderly dementia patients in Japan: How does one utilize the narrative of elderly dementia patients in social work?

*Yuki Donen (Spohia University, Japan)*

**Keywords:** elderly dementia patients, community support Narrative, Japan

This study aims to discuss the effectiveness of building a preventive cooperation system centered on the dementia patient him/herself and local residents to continuously listen to patient narratives and utilize them in social work practice so that the patient may continue to live a normal lifestyle within his/her community.

Due to the deterioration of cognitive functions such as memory impairment, the narrative of dementia patients can be contradictory to the medical one which is characterized by temporality and causality (Rita, 2008), thus creating obstacles for research and practice in social work (Donen, 2016). Nonetheless, we need to focus on the narratives of elderly dementia patients when seeking to provide a community support system that ensures the dignity of the patient is preserved and is in line with their desires.

Japan is now in urgent need of measures to deal with the rapid increase of elderly dementia patients as the country with the highest aging rate in the world and a fast-declining population due to low birth rate.





This study has compared the two cooperation systems of community support for elderly dementia patients that are currently in place. The first is a cooperation system built as a responsive measure in the event of a problem; it is also the main support method used in clinical practice in Japan today. This cooperation system could lead to a delayed discovery and diagnosis of dementia, making listening to patient narratives difficult as symptoms have already worsened, which tends to narrow the scope of social work to problem-solving.

The other is a preventive cooperation system which builds relationships surrounding the patient and his/her family before a problem occurs, with participation from social workers, doctors and nurses, as well as volunteers and local residents so that a potential problem could be alerted. This system allows earlier detection and diagnosis of symptoms as the patient is exposed to medical professionals at an early stage; and while the patient's narrative is heard on a continuous basis social work may also be practiced from a long-term perspective.

This study is focused on the sixth sub-theme, which deals with the two different partnership/cooperation systems in community support for elderly dementia patients. By adhering to the purpose of the conference, the study explores a new way of social work practice in which conflicts and barriers between service users, that is, the patient and his/her family, and practitioners, administrators, as well as local residents may be overcome.

The results find that a preventive cooperation system is effective in supporting local life that upholds the dignity of elderly dementia patients and meets their desires. Japan is now adopting a preventive cooperation system in the form of so-called "dementia cafes", which are modeled after Alzheimer's cafes in the Netherlands and memory cafes in the United Kingdom. However, as there is no prior research on this type of social support further discussion is required in future studies.

## 224 | Whither the Professional Doctorate in Social Work?

Sue Taplin (University of Suffolk, United Kingdom)

**Keywords:** The Professional Doctorate in Social Work, Developing Research-Mindedness, Embedding Research in the Undergraduate Curriculum

**Background and Purpose:**

Having completed a Professional Doctorate in Social Work, the author will give a realistic portrayal of the challenges and complexities of choosing this method of study, and how this has influenced her professional career, both as a practitioner and as a Social Work academic.

**Summary of main points of presentation:**

- To outline the author's motivation to complete a Doctorate in Social Work
- To explore the advantages and disadvantages for social workers of choosing this method of study
- To examine the influence that successfully completing a professional doctorate has had on the author's career as a practitioner and as a University academic, designing an undergraduate training programme that demonstrates the author's belief in the centrality of research to social work practice

**Addressing the conference themes**

While addressing the overall conference theme of 'Challenges in Social Work Research', this presentation will closely address the sub-theme of 'Social Work Research as a framework for Social Work Education

**Conclusions/Implications of presentation**

The author will present initial findings of a small-scale study exploring how former students have developed research-mindedness as a result of studying on the programme and have embraced research in their current social work practice, thus demonstrating the implications for practice and issues for subsequent research

**242 | Culture and Race in Social Emotional Learning Programs**

*Tiffany Jones (University of Washington, USA)*

*Todd Herrenkohl (University of Washington, USA)*

*Amelia Gavin (University of Washington, USA)*

**Keywords:** Social Emotional Learning, School Social Work,

**Background:**

Preventing mental health problems and supporting a whole child approach to learning are goals of social emotional learning (SEL) programs, which are increasingly being implemented in



schools in Europe and the U.S. (Sancassiani et al., 2015). School social workers are often at the front lines delivering SEL programming, supporting implementation, or assisting with research and evaluation of SEL programs. The consideration of race and culture in the development and implementation of social emotional learning (SEL) programs is critically important, yet there are few examples of intentional efforts to plan and deliver programs that attend adequately to race and cultural differences (Hoffman, 2009). SEL programs can be controversial in that evidence supports their use (Dulak et al., 2011), yet culture is often considered after-the-fact, by adapting interventions to specific contexts or in the context of implementation. This may be particularly inadequate in the case of SEL programs which are inherently value laden, as they involve teaching strategies for social interaction and emotion regulation. Using colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) as a guiding framework, this presentation will challenge the assumption of universality in SEL programs, and present a conceptual framework to center race and culture in the research and practice of SEL.

### **Methods:**

The current study reviewed the published literature on SEL programming and cultural adaptation. Colorblind racism (ignoring the privileges and oppressions associated with race and culture) was used as a framework to critically examine the literature. Culture includes the values, norms, beliefs, and behavioral styles, of a given group of people. Race is considered separately, to acknowledge the race-based systems of oppression that maintain the social hierarchy.

### **Results:**

The present study finds that published findings of SEL programs present interventions as neutral on issues of race and culture, which assumes that the values and strategies purported by programs are universally relevant for all children, and does not recognize important differences in the race-based and cultural experiences of students. For example, individual self-control is at the heart of many SEL programs, but is not a central value for many cultures (Hoffman, 2009). Examples of alternative strategies frame culture as difference, not deficit (Davis & Yang, 2006), use restorative rather than punitive



responses to conflict (Morningside Center, 2015), or incorporate discussions of systems of oppression directly (Barr, 2010).

### **Implications:**

Program strategies are assumed to have universal relevance across race and culture in many interventions, risking the growth of disparities in behavioral health and academic achievement (Garner, 2014). Most SEL programs are delivered in a whole classroom or school format, making cultural adaptations particularly challenging. SEL interventions have the potential to reduce disparities, but they are unlikely to do so until they recognize the value of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), study racial and cultural differences through explicit anti-oppressive strategies, and meaningfully incorporate racial and cultural differences into the content and delivery of SEL programs.

## **246 | Measuring collaboration social work professionals**

*Sanne Rumping (Hogeschool van Amsterdam - University for applied sciences, Netherlands)*

**Keywords:** collaboration, tool, professionals

Collaboration is a modern concern within social work. Social work professionals should collaborate more with professionals from other disciplines, volunteers and parents. Within social work practices it seems hard to organize sustained collaboration between professionals, professionals-volunteers and professionals-parents (Boendermaker, Fukkink & Metz 2015). Therefore it's important to provide insight in how professionals experience collaboration with other professionals, volunteers and parents. Bronstein's (2002; 2003) Index of Interdisciplinary Collaboration (IIC) is a validated and widely used tool to provide insight into how professionals experience collaboration with other professionals.

The instrument consists of 5 subscales:

- 1) interdependence
- 2) newly created activities
- 3) flexibility
- 4) collective ownership of goals
- 5) reflection on the process. Interdependence is a key element in collaboration.



Collaborators rely on interactions with others to accomplish goals and tasks. Interdependence is the idea that you are always connected to others (Bronstein 2003; Mellin 2010; D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, Rodriguez, & Beaulieu 2005). Based on Bronstein's IIC I developed the subscale interdependence to provide insight in interdependence in collaboration with volunteers and parents (n=255). Cronbach's alphas for the subscale interdependence were .84 and .80 respectively. The subscale is tested in three fields related to social work: youth work, child welfare and education.

The findings show that professionals in different fields experience significant differences in interdependence with volunteers and parents. Based on this, I would like to advocate that the developed IIC can be used as a tool to provide insight in experiences among collaboration. The instrument contributes to collaboration strategies for professionals and is a useful tool to bridge different fields in social work.

### 255 | FMER-funded project "Case Management for Older Drug Users" as an example for Social Work-research with mixed-methods-approaches

*Ines Arendt (University of Applied Sciences Koblenz, Germany)  
Martin Schmid  
Klaudia Follmann-Muth*

**Keywords:** cross-selection analysis, analysis of need of help of elderly drug users, adaptation of Case Management for elderly drug users, pre-post-study, summative evaluation of Case Management, qualitative guided interviews of Social Workers formative evaluation of study, mixed-method-approach practical example of Social Work research

Persons using illegal drugs such as heroin grow older than it has previously been assumed. One of the causes for this development is the availability of substitution treatment and the overall well-developed medical and psychological care for drug addicts. However, this is accompanied by a certain degree of problem shifting. Several studies indicate that elderly drug users are not only significantly impacted by health and psychosocial problems but are also affected earlier by age-related problems like limited mobility and care needs. In the following years the number of elderly drug users with the need





for care services and age-related diseases will increase substantially.

To learn more about the health-situation of elderly drug users we interviewed more than 130 older drug users with standardized methods and hold results of this cross-selection-analysis. In general the subject of substance abuse at an older age is a quite important one, also regarding to substances like alcohol and legal medicine.

In Germany Social Workers are “aging” with their clients and so are the methods they are using. The research team of the project “Case Management for Older Drug Users”, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, at the University of Applied Sciences Koblenz and the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Cologne, adapted a Case Management-method that suits those special needs of older drug users. Main changes are more flexibility and short term-interventions instead of long and complicated help-processes. Case Management as a well-known and effective method for Social Workers seems to be quite a help for managing effective help-processes. Within our research we are evaluating the method based on our manual: “Case Management for Older Drug Users”. More than twenty Social Workers are practicing this adapted method with their clients and within a pre-post-interview-design we interview the clients (n = 80) with standardized interview-methods about their mental and physical well-being, their housing situations, their financial status e.g. before and after the treatment with Case Management. That’s how we want to learn if our ideas fit to the needs of older heroin users (summative evaluation).

Within the pre-post-study we are facing client recruiting problems. That’s why additionally we are focussing on a qualitative study in which we will get an insight of the work of the Social Workers that are using our adapted Case Management. This additional qualitative part can be seen as an evaluation of our adapted method. By holding qualitative guided interviews with more than 20 Social Workers we want to learn about the gain of this method, problems in including clients in Case Management-processes, advantages and disadvantages of the method (formative evaluation).

So the project with a duration of three years serves as a complex and practical example for Social Work-research and its methods. It discusses occurring problems in research with Social Workers and clients just as it carries interesting knowledge of the target group elderly drug users and their special needs.





## 276 | Young girls in the Arctic experiencing violence

*Tordis Kristine Sovde (University of the Arctic, UiT, Norway)*

**Keywords:** violence, young, experiences, perpetrator  
Attitudes

Background about violence is very important. Different research results show there are more violence all over in arctic areas. In Norway the population of the Northern Region on all levels are exposed to violence more than elsewhere in Norway. The national criminal statistics show rather alarming occurrence of violence and abuse with 24 % of the boys and 12% girls on a national level exposed to violence.

### Methods

The focus of our research design was young girls aged 13-22 years and their experiences of violence by quality interviews. The theoretical approaches were based on the socialconstructive views and modernity in -the industrialized world and globalization (Giddens 2006). The research was based on our own former media analysis of youth violence in the regional papers reports during a whole year.

The Norwegian National Board of Research Ethics did not give any research restrictions of interviewing these young girls. The most difficult methodical problems turned out to be finding young informants willing to share their experiences. Our eleven informants were 18 years of age at the time of interviewing, the Norwegian age of majority. All the interviews were taped, then transcribed and analyzed.

### Results

- Young girls in the northern Norway experienced different forms of violence from their peers, both from boys and other girls.
- Some girls are very brutal
- Young girls in the northern Norway had experienced digital violence on internet, for instance of having sexualized pictures spread
- The term violence holds much. Sexual violence includes everything from forcible kiss, to rape. Physical violence is everything from pushing into fists and a stranglehold.
- All the young girls had experienced different kinds of violence and threats. either or both as victims and witnesses
- We found no incidents of gang violence
- The taboo problems. The very majority of the girl victims did not tell anything to their families and friends about those incidents



- Some of the victims who had tried to tell adult persons about the incidents, were met from the schools and authorities with passively and partly belittling attitudes.
- Some of the victims found ways of being able to move to get away from the perpetrator

### Conclusions

Young girls are more the victims of the youth violence .  
It is important to identify the need for help to the young victims,

It is important to implement good programs for different ways of preventions on a local level

It is important to advocate for increased political will and greater attention and resources for raising awareness about the problem of youth violence.

Coordination and cooperation from helping instances are necessary

### 288 | The what, who and how of Befriending and Mentoring interventions in the field of Social Work in Belgium (Flanders)

*Bea Van Robaeys (KDG, Belgium)*

*Vicky Lyssens-Danneboom(KDG, Belgium)*

**Keywords:** Social Support interventions in social work  
Befriending, Mentoring, mixed methods

#### Background:

Social support, and its relationship with the health and general well-being of individuals, has been widely documented. In addition, certain groups of individuals (older people, people with disabilities, people with poor mental health,... ) have been found to experience low levels of social support and to have an increased incidence of social isolation and loneliness. In Belgium, as well as in many other Western countries, the strong relationship between social support and people's well-being has led to the development of a range of targeted social work interventions to provide social support to those deemed to be at higher risk of a range of negative outcomes. Befriending and Mentoring are two of these interventions that are becoming increasingly popular. Befriending is a service provided by volunteers who offer companionship on a regular basis for a range of socially isolated or lonely people. Mentoring tends to be defined as involving and supporting an individual in education, employment or training. The success of both



(voluntary) interventions relies on the creation of a strong and supportive relationship between two people. As upon today, in Belgium (Flanders), no efforts have been made to map the existing befriending and mentoring projects, nor to study and describe their precise workings, user groups and characteristics.

**Method:**

This research addresses this shortcoming, and profoundly examines the befriending and mentoring landscape in Flanders, employing both quantitative (web-survey) and qualitative research methods (in-depth interviews and focus groups). In this poster presentation, we present the results of the web-survey, conducted in september 2016, in which 55 Flemish befriending and mentoring organisations participated. Based on the results of this web-survey, we will provide a typology of these organisations, based on their users groups, specific goals, number of volunteers and clients, as well as on their working methods and strategies used.

**Results:**

The first results reveal the majority of Flemish social support organisations within the field of social work to be rather small, largely female (with reference to both volunteers and participants) and to provide befriending rather than mentoring services.

**'Guidelines for Social and Community Mediation in the field of reintegration of people with addictive behaviours and dependencies'**

*Helena Almeida (University of Coimbra - Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Portugal)*

**Keywords:** Social Work, Social Intervention, Social and Community Mediation, Reintegration of people with addictive behaviours and dependencies, Social work research

Social Reintegration interventions implies the building of links between persons, organizations, stakeholders, politics and professionals to give support to people needs. In this process, social and community mediation is a conceptual and operative tool, that can enable participation and the construction of social alternatives towards reintegration.

This proposal addresses to disseminate guidelines in the field of social reintegration, as a way of transposing evidence into intervention with people with addictive behaviours and



dependencies. SICAD in cooperation with a Observatory of a Portuguese University published the "Guidelines for Social and Community Mediation in the field of reintegration of people with addictive behaviours and dependencies", a product of a working group composed by ten people, representing seven different institutions, and several practitioners, with different experiences in the field of social reintegration, considering alcohol and illicit substances. The activity of the group started with the development of a systematic review of the existing theories regarding Mediation as a concept and a social intervention model, followed by working sessions, based on a reflexive and analytical methodology, aiming at achieving a set of guidelines that can lead to good practices in the field of social (re)integration.

In Social Work, social integration must considers different levels and goals. Micro level- intervention aims to build up competencies, motivation and to improve the person's capacities to act as a citizen of rights and duties; Meso level - the action is directed to the family and other relevant elements in the person's close relation network, in order to involve them in the reintegration process, as a support to the person's needs; Macro level - the objective is to achieve the changing of attitudes and behaviours towards dependencies, in order to diminish prejudice and negative representations.

During this reflexive teamwork, the group also established five pillars which are basic and transversal to all practice in this area. Communication as a structural condition to the whole work, Empowerment of the person and the communities, Enhancement of systems interactions (partnership, framework, innovation), Involvement to promote cooperation and coconstruction of social alternatives and Mobility of social systems, where are included needed transitions to change representations about additive behaviours and dependencies.

The team reflected on the practice and the intervention that is delivered in the field of reintegration and established aims and working procedures, including strategies used to achieve objectives, analysing cases.

This approach brings news ways of conceiving the action in social reintegration field, including the mediation process in social intervention aiming to achieve citizenship of people with addictive behaviours and dependencies.

This proposition (preference for poster) intends to be an example on how to promote the link between research, policy and practice by creating a theoretical framework to support the



design of guidelines for intervention, which are based in the experience of practitioners in social reintegration field. Three fields of knowledge and institutions were involved in this work: Research, Policy and Practice.





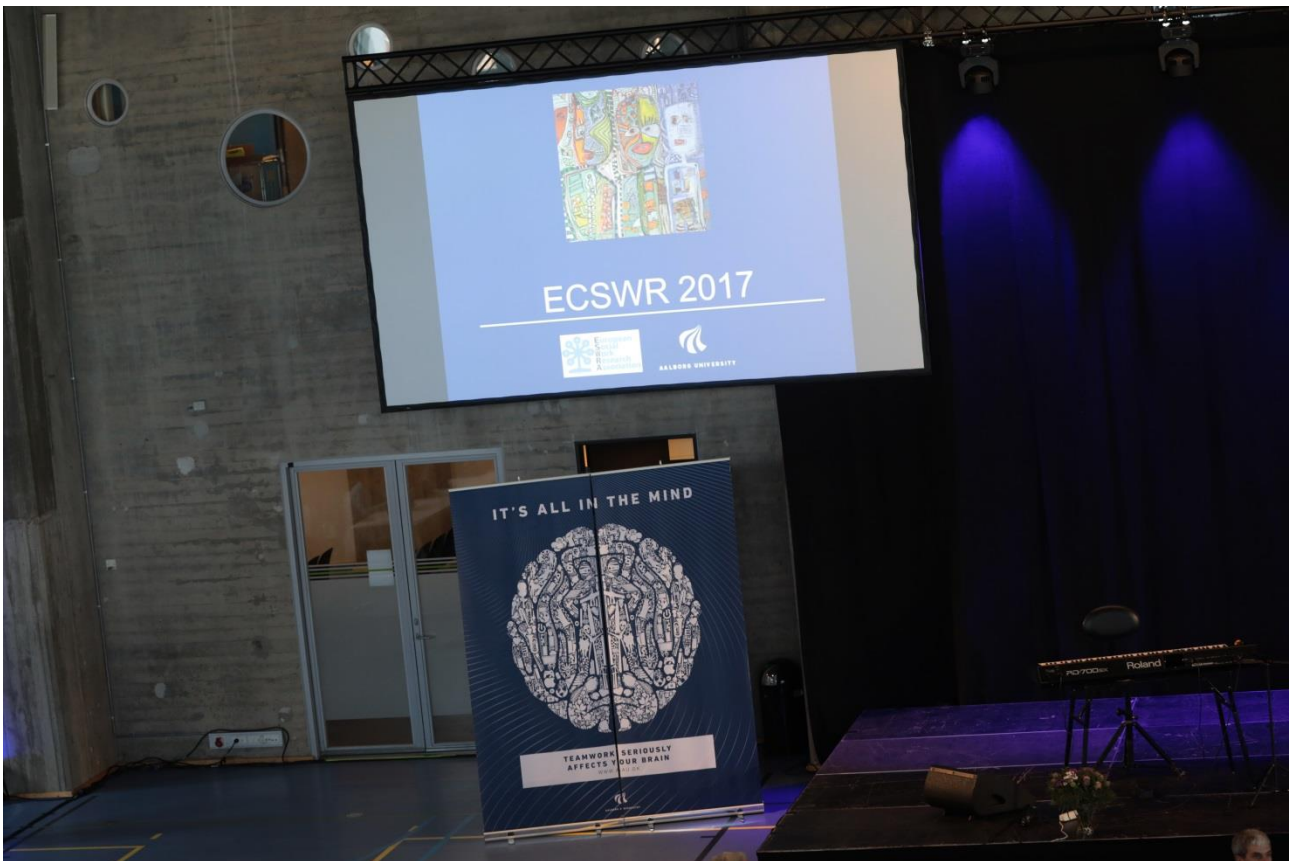








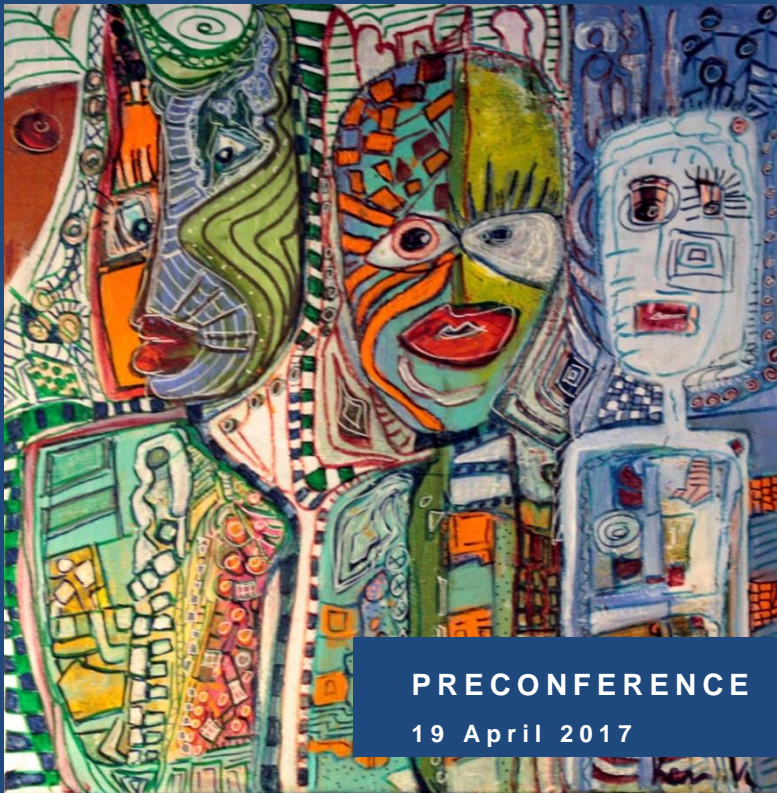






# 7<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN CONFERENCE FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

*Challenges in social work research – conflicts,  
barriers and possibilities in relation to social work*



PRECONFERENCE

19 April 2017



## ORGANISATION

- European Social Work Research Association (ESWRA)
- Department of Sociology and Social Work, Aalborg University

## HOST CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

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**PRE- CONFERENCE- OVERVIEW  
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIG)**

**1. CRITICAL REALISM AND SOCIAL WORK  
RESEARCH**

Time: 12 noon to 3.00 p.m.

Room: 5.237, Rendsburggade

**2. SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE RESEARCH**

Time: 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Room: 6.1, Nordkraft

**3. SOCIAL WORK, HISTORY AND RESEARCH**

Time: 10.15 a.m. – 2.00p.m.

Room: 10.14, Nordkraft

**4. SOCIAL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
ACROSS EUROPE**

Time: 10.15 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Room: 4.105, Rendsburggade

**5. SOCIAL WORK AND EXTREME EVENTS**

*Together with*

**SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH ON INTEGRATION  
POLICIES WITH MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**

Time: 12.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Room: Body and Mind, Nordkraft

**6. DOCTORAL AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS**

Time: 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Room: 6.2, Nordkraft

PRE- CONFERENCE- OVERVIEW  
**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIG)**

**7. ARTS-BASED RESEARCH IN SOCIAL WORK**

Time: 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.  
Room: 10.15, Nordkraft

**8. SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT**

Time: 9.00 a.m. to 12.15p.m.  
Room: 6.8, Nordkraft

**9. DECISIONS ASSESSMENT AND RISK**

Time: 9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.  
Room: 6.3, Nordkraft

**10. GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIAL WORK**

Time: 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.  
Room: 6.7, Nordkraft

**11. RESEARCH ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

Time: 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.  
Room: 3.3.17, Nordkraft



## 1. CRITICAL REALISM AND SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

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### *Critical Realism as a Framework for Tackling Challenges in Social Work Practice & Research*

Time: 12.00 noon – 3.00 pm  
Room: 5.237, Rendsburggade

Contact persons:

Monica Kjørstad ([Monica.Kjorstad@hioa.no](mailto:Monica.Kjorstad@hioa.no))

Elina Pekkarinen

([Elina.Pekkarinen@nuorisotutkimus.fi](mailto:Elina.Pekkarinen@nuorisotutkimus.fi))

Social work is defined by its complexity and variety of different relations. This complexity causes challenges in solving social dilemmas and promoting wellbeing for people both in social work research and practice. This year the European Conference for Social Work Research (ECSWR2017) focuses on challenges that arise from the diversity of interests and different stakeholders within the fields of social work.

Social dissonance does not have to be an emergency or crisis situation; in fact, it is the daily bread of discipline of social work. It can also be regarded as a steppingstone for a better future. In order to analyze these challenges, however, one needs theories to define and evaluate the situation at hand. Critical realism is a philosophy of science that is particularly suitable for studying complex social situations where viewpoints are contradictory, interests overlapping, and motives conflicting. Critical realism offers ontological, epistemological and empirical frameworks for tackling the complex nature of social reality.

Critical realism has been a subject of three symposiums and one workshop during the six ESWRA-conferences that have been held. 2013 in Jyväskylä, 2014 in Bolzano, 2015 in Ljubljana, and 2016 in Lisbon, dozens of researchers in social work gathered together to discuss the philosophy of critical realism together with empirical presentations from different parts of Europe. This year the special

interest group of critical realism and social work research holds a pre-conference,

which focuses on tackling the contradictions, challenges, and complexity in social work. The pre-conference offers top-quality presentations, lively discussions, and an opportunity to connect with people interested in the philosophy of critical realism.

**Confirmed presenters:** Hannah Jobling (University of York), Gry Cecilie Høiland (University of Stavanger), Mansoor Kazi (University of Albany) and Elina Pekkarinen (Finnish Youth Research Network).

**Program:**

**12:00 - 12:15**

Welcoming by Monica Kjørstad

**12:15 - 12:45**

Hannah Jobling: *"Exploring causality in mental health policy and practice - A qualitative case study"*

**12:45 - 13:15**

Gry Cecilie Høiland: *"When implementation stops - tracing a top down implementation process in a complex multi-leveled public service organization"*

**13:15 - 13:30**

Break

**13:45 - 14:15**

Mansoor Kazi: *"Critical realism and big data in human services evaluation"*

**14:15 - 14:45**

Elina Pekkarinen: *"Exploring the Position-Practice System"*

**14:45 - 15:00**

Summing up



## Presenters

**Hannah Jobling** is a Lecturer in Social Work at the University of York. She researches and writes on mental health policy and practice, social work with young people, the policy-practice relationship, ethics in everyday practice, and critical realism as a framework for social work research.

**Gry Cecilie Høiland** (University of Stavanger) is a sociologist with specializations within organizational sociology of work and welfare and with a special interest in the framework of critical realism as well as innovation and implementation processes in complex organizations. She is currently a Ph.D. researcher at the Center for Innovation Research at the University of Stavanger Business School in Norway where she is working on a case study exploring a specific implementation process in the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration.

**Mansoor Kazi** is assistant professor at the School of Social Welfare at University of Albany. For the time being, he is evaluating human services in US, UK and in Finland. Books: 'Realist evaluation in practice', Sage (2003); 'International perspectives on evidence-based practice in social work', Venture press (2004) (with Bruce Thyer).

**Elina Pekkarinen** is a Senior Researcher at the Finnish Youth Research Society, and president of the Finnish Society for Childhood Studies. Her research themes include childhood and youth studies, child welfare issues, and questions of exclusion and marginalization. She co-ordinates the Special Interest Group 'Critical Realism and Social Work Research' within ESWRA together with Monica Kjørstad.

**Monica Kjørstad** is Associate professor in social work at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences. Her fields of interests are implementation issues in social work and social policy, social administration and planning, leadership and theory of science. She co-ordinates the Special Interest Group 'Critical Realism and Social Work Research' within ESWRA together with Elina Pekkarinen.

## 2. SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE RESEARCH

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Time: 9.00 am – 3.30 pm

Room:6.1, Nordkraft

Contact persons:

Mirja Satka ([mirja.satka@helsinki.fi](mailto:mirja.satka@helsinki.fi))

### **9.30 a.m.**

Welcome to social work practice research pre conference, Laura Yliruka

### **9.45 a.m.**

Sara Serbati, Italy: P.I.P.P.I. program for vulnerable families - a new conceptualization

### **10.30 a.m.**

Martine Ganzevles, Netherlands: How to optimize practice oriented social work?

### **11.15 a.m. -12.15p.m.**

Lunch break

### **12.15 p.m.**

Judith Metz, Netherlands: Living Labs in Youth Work

### **13.00 p.m.**

Mirja Satka, Aino Kääriäinen and Heidi Muurinen, Finland: Learning Lab - a concept under development

### **13.45 p.m. -14.00p.m.**

Coffee break

### **14.00 p.m.**

Short presentations of practice research in Europe, organized by Tor Slettebo

### **15.00 p.m. -15.30p.m.**

A concluding debate for the pre-conference on 2018





### 3. SOCIAL WORK, HISTORY AND RESEARCH

#### Forgotten voices from the history of social work?

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Time: 10.15 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.

Room: 10.14, Nordkraft

Contact persons:

Sarah Matthews ([sarah.matthews@open.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.matthews@open.ac.uk))

Stefan Köngeter ([koengeter@uni-trier.de](mailto:koengeter@uni-trier.de))

The session will be divided into two parts:

**The first** made up of three papers on the following topics:

1. stories of children from residential care
2. stories social work students and educators
3. stories from social movements

**The second** will begin with a panel to encourage discussion about connections between the three papers, other related topics, an opportunity to network and thinking ahead to 2018 conference.

There will be refreshment available and a break for lunch (this is at an extra cost when booking)

## 4. SOCIAL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACROSS EUROPE

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**Exploring methodologies to address the challenges and dilemmas of effective social work with children and families across Europe**

Time: 10.15 a.m. – 2.30 p.m.  
Room: 4.105, Rendsburggade

Contact person:  
Michelle Lefevre ([M.Lefevre@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:M.Lefevre@sussex.ac.uk))

Aim of the SIG: A World Café method will be used to enable participants to explore ways in which research methodologies could enable us to explore and address the dilemmas and challenges of effective social work with children and families across Europe. Discussion in small groups will build a picture of the gaps in knowledge and what is known about helpful methodologies, to explore and consider new approaches to address these questions. In the final part of the SIG, there will be an opportunity for those interested in taking forward similar questions across countries to network together and begin to develop ideas for collaborative research projects.

*Convenors:* Michelle Lefevre (University of Sussex, England), Karen Winter (Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland), Silvia Fargion (Free University of Bozen, Bolzano, Italy), Gillian Ruch (University of Sussex, England).



## **Programme:**

### **10.00 a.m.**

Welcome and brief introductions from the SIG convenors. An introduction to the world café method and its etiquette.

### **10.15 a.m. -11.15 a.m.**

World café, with four rounds, to enable all participants to have an opportunity of speaking with everyone. Themes for discussion:

- What are the key dilemmas and challenges for social work with children and families in your country, and where are the gaps in knowledge?
- What kinds of research methodologies are known to be successful with these kinds of dilemmas and challenges? (i.e. what are people already using?)
- Are there gaps in methodologies which mean we are struggling to answer these key dilemmas and challenges?
- What methodologies could be trialled to bring new insights? (new methodologies to old questions? Old methodologies to new questions?)

### **11.55a.m. - 12.30 p.m.**

Sandwich lunch and opportunity to network

### **12.30 p.m. -1.30 p.m.**

Sharing insights from each table with the larger group. Exploring whether potential networks are emerging of individuals who would be interested in working together to develop new projects.

### **1.30 p.m. -2.30p.m.**

Network formation and planning: an opportunity to meet within nascent networks to share information and consider developing new collaborative projects.

## 5. SOCIAL WORK AND EXTREME EVENTS

### TOGETHER WITH SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH ON INTEGRATION POLICIES WITH MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

---

*Environmental and political refugees' A fake distinction? Questions and answers from social work*

Time: 12.30p.m. – 3.30 p.m.  
Room: Body and Mind, Nordkraft

Contact person:  
Reima Ana Maglajlic ([R.A.Maglajlic@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:R.A.Maglajlic@sussex.ac.uk))  
Emilio Jose Gomez Ciriano  
([emiliojose.gomez@uclm.es](mailto:emiliojose.gomez@uclm.es))

#### **Presentations**

**12.30-13.30**

Natalia Farmer

'Rethinking immigration controversies and social work entanglements in climate of chaos'

Emilio Jose Gomez

'How to manage the migration and refugee flows?'

Reima Ana Maglajlic

'Organisation of social services during and after natural disasters – lessons from social work research' (10 mins presentation followed by 10 mins for Q&A)

**13.30-14.00 Break**

**14.00 – 15.30**

Whole group discussion

Social work in extremis - Current good practices, concerns and implications for future social work research (facilitated by Emilio and Rea)



## 6. DOCTORAL AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

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*Sponsored by European Journal of Social Work*

Time: 9.00 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.  
Room: 6.2, Nordkraft

Contact person:

Sofia Dedotsi ([sofia.dedotsi@gmail.com](mailto:sofia.dedotsi@gmail.com))

Gorana Panić ([gorana.panic@chydenius.fi](mailto:gorana.panic@chydenius.fi))

### Program:

#### **09.00 a.m. 09.10 a.m.**

Welcome and Introductions

#### **09.10 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.**

Getting Published, Professor S. Braye, Editor of the European Journal of Social Work, and Professor M. Preston-Shoot, former editor of Social Work Education and the European Journal of Social Work, and founding editor of Ethics & Social Welfare, offer this workshop with practical advice about writing for publication in academic journals, either as part of the doctoral thesis or following its completion. Through a mix of presentation and group discussion, ways of overcoming the key challenge of writing, and tips on how to be successful in your submission will be explored. Also, there will be a chance to share your own ideas and to ask questions about the process of submission and peer review.

#### **11.00 a.m. - 11.15 a.m.**

Coffee Break

#### **11.15 a.m. - 12.00 a.m.**

Doctoral Defence Day ('3D'), Professor P. Nurius, University of Washington and Professor S. Hojer, University of Gothenburg, discuss on how to prepare for the '3D' and defend successfully the PhD thesis.

**12.00 a.m. - 13.00 a.m.**

“After the PhD, What?” - Early Career Development, Dr J. Symonds, University of Bristol and Dr M. Humme, University of Münster, share their experiences, challenges and opportunities after completing a PhD in Social Work. In addition, Professor C. Kjeldsen, University of Aarhus, discusses grants and funding available for postgraduate research in Europe.

**13.00 a.m. - 13.15 a.m.**

Coffee Break

**13.15 a.m. - 14.15 a.m.**

3Minute Thesis Competition, 3MT is an awesome opportunity for PhD students to share their thesis in progress or under submission with broader audience, get feedback by a panel of academics and engage with others further. The winner will also get the prize of 100 euros!

**14.15 a.m. - 15.15 a.m.**

Group discussion and SIG goals, convenors, members of the Special Interest Group and other participants give updates and discuss future goals for the Doctoral and Early Career Researchers SIG.





## 7. ARTS-BASED RESEARCH IN SOCIAL WORK

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### Challenges and possibilities for using arts as a different methodological approach in social work research

Time: 10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.

Room: 10.15, Nordkraft

Contact person:

Mieko Yoshihama [miekoy@umich.edu](mailto:miekoy@umich.edu)

Mike de Kreek [m.de.kreek@hva.nl](mailto:m.de.kreek@hva.nl)

Eltje Boss [e.bos@hva.nl](mailto:e.bos@hva.nl)

Dear all,

Since Ephrat Huss, who intended to share a workshop with us, is not be able to visit the conference, we have to modify the program for this SIG.

So we invite you to give a presentation of your recent research about art in social work.

Will you please be so kind to let us know if you intend to do so, and what subject you want to address.

We will draw up a program, based on your reactions.

With Best regards,

Dr. Mike de Kreek , Prof. Dr. Eltje Bos

## 8. SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT

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### **Best Practices and Challenges for Research and Education**

Time: 9.00 a.m. - 12.15 p.m.

Room: 6.8, Nordkraft

Contact person:

Jean Pierre Wilken ([jean-pierre.wilken@hu.nl](mailto:jean-pierre.wilken@hu.nl))

### **Programme**

#### **9.00 a.m. - 9.15 a.m.**

Welcome and introduction by prof. Jean Pierre Wilken, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands and member of the ESWRA board

#### **9.15 a.m. - 9.45 a.m.**

Presentation by prof. Hugh McLaughlin, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK  
*Overview of current developments and challenges*

#### **9.45 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.**

Short presentations, followed by discussion: short presentation of project, one lesson and one challenge for the future.

#### **9.45 a.m. – 10.15 a.m.**

Cecilia Heule MSw, ass. prof. Arne Kristiansen, Lund University, Sweden; prof. Ole-Petter Askheim, Lillehammer University College, Norway and service users

*The PowerUs network: mending the gap – strategies for user involvement in social work education*

#### **10.15 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.**

coffee/ tea break

#### **10.30 a.m. – 10.45 a.m.**

Sascha van Gijzel MSw, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands

*Working on inclusion. The involvement of persons with an intellectual disability in research and education in Utrecht University of Applied Sciences.*



**10.45 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.**

Ass prof Sidsel Therese Natland, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway  
*Conflicts between users and practitioners – lessons learned in a collaborative research project*

**11.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.**

Prof. Kristel Driessens, Gent University, Belgium and Cecilia Heule, Lund University / PowerUs.  
*How to develop collaborative networks (cost) and projects; sharing and spreading experiences and knowledge*  
*A transnational ESF project to compare educational projects working with service users*

**11.30 a.m. – 12.00 noon**

prof. Hugh McLaughlin  
*Discussing a plan for a book on Service User Involvement in Social Work research and education*

**12.00 noon – 12.15 p.m.** Wrap up

## 9. DECISIONS ASSESSMENT AND RISK

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Time: 9.00 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

Room 6.3, Nordkraft

Contact person:

Brian Taylor ([bj.taylor@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:bj.taylor@ulster.ac.uk))

### **Program:**

#### **09.00 a.m.**

Welcome and introductions

#### **09.15 a.m.**

What does risk mean for social work in your client group and country context?

Presentation by Professor Brian Taylor (Ulster University, Northern Ireland) and Dr Johanna Hietamäki (<TO ADD>) followed by group discussion.

#### **10.30 a.m.**

Coffee break

#### **10.45 a.m.**

Opportunity to discuss potential collaboration in research or publishing. Choice of topics will be agreed in the group, and we will then divide into small groups according to participant preferences.

#### **12.00 noon**

Sandwich lunch and opportunity for networking

#### **12.30 p.m.**

Finish

The aims of the Decisions, Assessment and Risk Special Interest Group of the European Social Work Research Association are to support the development of research on decision making, assessment and risk in social work and to promote the use of research on these topics to inform practice, management and teaching in the profession. This pre-conference event at the ECSWR 2017 in Aalborg is to support DARSIG members in these aims.



## 10. GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIAL WORK

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Time: 9.00 am - 3.30 pm

Room: 6.7, Nordkraft

Contact person:

Mo Ray

Marjaana Seppänen ([marjaana.seppanen@helsinki.fi](mailto:marjaana.seppanen@helsinki.fi))

### Program

#### 10.00 a.m.

Welcome and presentation of participants

#### 10.30 a.m.

The present situation of gerontological social work in Europe: Presentation of results of mapping and discussion

#### 12.30 p.m.

Lunch break

#### 13.30 p.m. – 15.30 p.m.

Possibilities for research co-operation

- What are your current research priorities?
- What do you identify as the unanswered research questions in GSW?
- Potential overlaps and collaborations

## 11. RESEARCH ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

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Time: 9.00 am - 3.30 pm

Room: 3.3.17, Nordkraft

Contact person:

Kirsteen Laidlaw ([Kirsteen.laidlaw@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:Kirsteen.laidlaw@cumbria.ac.uk))

Jo Finch ([j.finch@uel.ac.uk](mailto:j.finch@uel.ac.uk))

The purpose of our pre-conference workshop is for

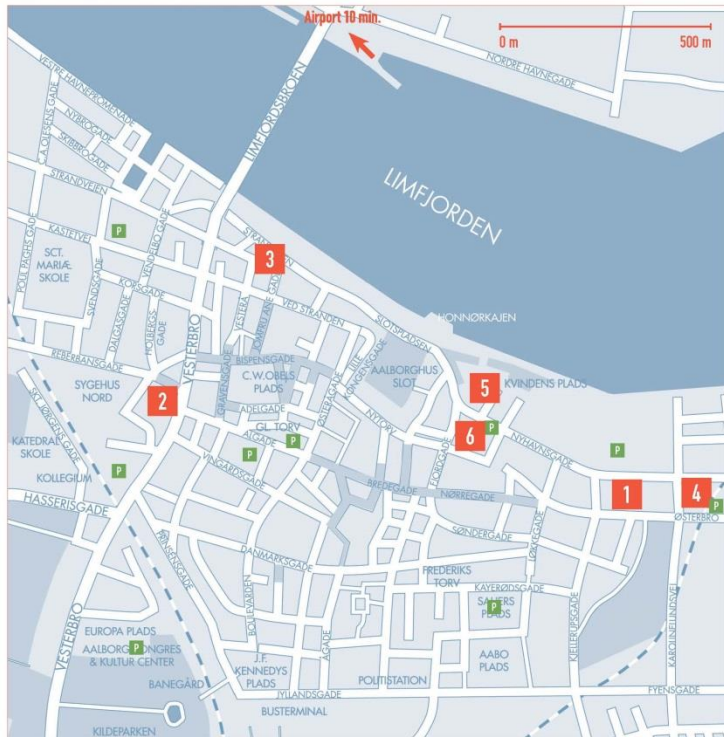
- a) members of the SIG to share their research interests
- b) members to determine goals for SIG
- c) members to begin to plan collaborative research projects.





## LOCATION MAP

ENJOY AALBORG ECSWR 2017



**1** Nordkraft  
Conference venue  
Welcome Reception - Kedelhallen  
Conference Dinner - DGI-Hallen

**2** Helnan Phønix Hotel  
Accommodation

**3** Radisson Blu Limfjord Hotel  
Accommodation

**4** Hotel Aalborg  
Accommodation

**5** First Hotel Aalborg  
Accommodation

**6** Hotel CABINN Aalborg  
Accommodation

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## List of participants ECSWR 2017 per April 10th 2017

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## Pre-conference - Critical realism and social work research

<b>Family name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation/University</b>	<b>Nation</b>
Abbott	Simon	Kingston University & St George's University of London	United Kingdom
Baerlocher	Regula Elisabeth	Social Department Zurich	Switzerland
Christiansen	Øivin	RKBV Vest, Uni Research Helse	Norway
Depauw	Jan	Karel de Grote University College	Belgium
Farmer	G. Lawrence	Fordham University	USA
Havnen	Karen	RKBV Vest, Uni Research	Norway
Helne	Tuula	Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland)	Finland
Høiland	Gry Cecilie	University of Stavanger	Norway
Kazi	Mansoor	Realist Evaluation Inc	USA
Kjørstad	Monica	Oslo and Akershus University College	Norway
Kojar	Bente Heggem	Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Norway
Mäntysaari	Mikko	University of Jyväskylä	Finland
Pekkarinen	Elina	Finnish Youth Research Society	Finland
Raithby	Michele	Swansea University	United Kingdom
Aamodt	Hilde	Hioa	Norway

## Pre-conference - Social Work Practice Research

Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
Andersen	Maja Lundemark	Aalborg University	Denmark
Bohinc	Lea Sugman	University of Ljubljana	Slovenia
Ganzevles	Martine	HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht	The Netherlands
Glumbikova	Katerina	University of Ostrava	Czech Rep.
Grundelová	Barbora	University of Ostrava	Czech Rep.
Halvorsen	Anne	University of Agder	Norway
Halås	Catrine Torbjørnsen	Nord Universitet	Norway
Hansen	Helle Cathrine	HiOA/VID	Norway
Hanssen	Jorid Krane	Nord University	Norway
Hingley-Jones	Helen	Middlesex University	United Kingdom
Kiik	Riina	NTNU, Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Norway
Kong	Sui-Ting	University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong
Kääriäinen	Aino	University of Helsinki	Finland
Landi	Camilla	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	Italy
Mason	William	University of Sheffield	United Kingdom
Matthies	Ailla-Leena	University of Jyväskylä	Finland
Metz	Judith	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
Moe	Anne	Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)	Norway
Moretti	Carla	Università Politecnica delle Marche	Italy
Naumiuk	Agnieszka	University of Warsaw	Poland
Njøs	Berit Marie	Western Norway University of Applied Sciences	Norway
Närhi	Kati	University of Jyväskylä	Finland
Satka	Mirja	University of Helsinki	Finland
Selseng	Lillian Bruland	Western Norway University of Applied Sciences	Norway
Serbati	Sara	University of Padua	Italy
Skjefstad	Nina Schjøll	NTNU	Norway
Slettebø	Tor	VID specialized university college	Norway
Stanková	Zuzana	University of Ostrava	Czech Rep.
Taube	Vera	FHWS	Germany
Uggerhøj	Lars	Aalborg University	Denmark
van Pelt	Mariël	HAN University of Applied Sciences Nijmegen	The Netherlands
Yliruka	Laura	The Heikki Waris Institute/Socca	Finland

## Pre-conference - Social Work, History and Research

Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
Bombach	Clara	Zurich University	Switzerland
Bossert	Markus	FHNW	Switzerland
Branco	Francisco	Catholic University of Portugal	Portugal
Cree	Vivienne	The University of Edinburgh	United Kingdom
Gabriel	Thomas	ZHAW Department of Social Work	Switzerland
Gal	John	Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Israel
Haus	Gisela	University of Applied Sciences North Western Switzerland FHNW	Switzerland
Kallinikaki	Theano	Democritus University Thrace	Greece
Keller	Samuel	ZHAW University of Applied Sciences Zurich	Switzerland
Kemp	Susan	University of Washington School of Social Work	USA
Koskinen	Raija	University of Helsinki	Finland
Lanza	Caroline (Carrie)	University of Washington	USA
Lau	Dayana	Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg	Germany
Lorenz	Walter	Free University of Bozen	Italy
Matthews	Sarah	The Open University	United Kingdom
Maurer	Susanne Maria	University of Marburg	Germany
Shaw	Ian	York	United Kingdom



## Pre-conference - Social Work with Children and Families Across Europe

Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
Allain	Lucille	Middlesex University	United Kingdom
Andersen	Nina Helene	Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences	Norway
Bywaters	Paul	Coventry University	United Kingdom
De Pourcq	Lynn	Karel de Grote University college	Belgium
Eerdeken	Wendy	Artevelde University College	Belgium
Fargion	Silvia	Trento University	Italy
Fauske	Halvor	Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences	Norway
Hettinga	Ali	Windsheim	The Netherlands
Krumer-Nevo	Michal	Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	Israel
Lefevre	Michelle	University of Sussex	United Kingdom
Melis	Bie	Karel de Grote-Hogeschool vzw	Belgium
Palmer	Emma	Lancaster University	United Kingdom
Ruch	Gillian	University of Sussex	United Kingdom
Schnurr	Stefan	School of Social Work FHNW	Switzerland
Sharland	Elaine	University of Sussex	United Kingdom
Søvdde	Tordis Kristine	UIT, The University of the Arctic	Norway
Van Haute	Dorien	Ghent University	Belgium
Verhauwert	Sandra	Public centre of social welfare	Belgium
Winter	Karen	Queen's University Belfast	United Kingdom

## Pre-conference - Social work extreme events + Social Work Research on Integration Policies with Migrants and refugees

Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
Ciriano	Emilio Jose Gomez	Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.	Spain
Daliken	Colletta	Dundalk Institute of Technology	Ireland
Foreman	Maeve	Trinity College, Dublin	Ireland
Garcia	Ma Jesús Morata	Facultad Educación Social y Trabajo Social Pere Tarrés- Universidad Ramon Llull	Spain
Goetzoe	Monika	ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences	Switzerland
Heilmann	Katharina	University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt (FHWS)	Germany
Maglajlic	Reima Ana	University of Sussex	United Kingdom
Theocharidou	Vasiliki	University of Edinburgh	Greece
Trebunia	Sandra	University of Lincoln	United Kingdom
Van Robaeys	Bea	Karel de Grote University College	Belgium

## Pre-conference - Doctoral and Early Career Researchers

Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
Arendt	Ines	Koblenz University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Blake-Holmes	Kate	University of East Anglia	United Kingdom
Brandt	Steven	University College Ghent	Belgium
Daly	Maura	Glasgow Caledonian University	United Kingdom
Dedotsi	Sofia	Technological Educational Institute of Athens	Greece
Dvalishvili	Darejan	Washington University in Saint Louis	USA
Escribano	Xavier	Facultad educación social y trabajo social Pere Tarrés	Spain
Fan	Qingyun	University of Jyväskylä	Finland
Fellmann	Lukas	University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northweste	Switzerland
Geoghegan	Luke	British Association of Social Workers	United Kingdom
Harbo	Lotte Junker	Aalborg University Institut for Kommunikation	Denmark
Hardal	Hozam	Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Israel
Higgins	Martyn	London South Bnak University	United Kingdom
Isham	Louise	University of Birmingham	United Kingdom
Johnstone	Leah	Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sc	Norway
Jones	Tiffany	University of Washington	USA
Lorenz	Friederike	University of Duisburg-Essen	Germany
Mason	Karl	Royal Holloway, University of London	United Kingdom
Mercer	Fiona	Glasgow Caledonian University	United Kingdom
Mitchell	Mary	University of Edinburgh	United Kingdom
Naessens	Liesbeth	University College Odisee Brussels	Belgium
Nurius	Paula	University of Washington	USA
Palmer	Claire	Cardiff University	United Kingdom
Panic	Gorana	University of Jyväskylä/KYC	Finland
Preston-Shoot	Michael	University of Bedfordshire	United Kingdom
Roy	Jessica	University of Bristol	United Kingdom
Rumping	Sanne	Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University for applied sciences	The Netherlands
Sach	Andrew	CRCF, University of East Anglia	United Kingdom
Saitadze	Inga	City University of New York	USA
Salisu	Margaret	Silberman School of Social Welfare, City University of New York, Graduate Center	USA
Symonds	Jon	University of Bristol	United Kingdom
Syrstad	Ellen	VID Specialized University	Norway
Tryggvason	Nina	University of Gothenburg	Sweden
Vinck	Julie	Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy (University of Antwerp)	Belgium
Wisti	Pernille	Aalborg University	Denmark
Aaslund	Håvard	Oslo and Akershus University	Norway

## Pre-conference - Art-Based Research in Social Work

<b>Family name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation/University</b>	<b>Nation</b>
Bell	Linda Ann	Middlesex University	United Kingdom
Bos	Eltje	University of applied science Amsterdam	The Netherlands
de Kreek	Mike	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
Gair	Susan	James Cook university	Australia
Karadzhev	Dimitar	University of Strathclyde	United Kingdom
Levy	Susan	University of Dundee	United Kingdom
Mulders	Tamara	Windsheim	The Netherlands
Nachtergaele	Siebre	University College Ghent	Belgium
Yoshihama	Mieko	University of Michigan	USA

## Pre-conference - Service User Involvement

Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
Askheim	Ole Petter	Inland Norway University of Applied Science	Norway
de Waal	Vincent	University Applied Sciences Utrecht	The Netherlands
Driessens	Kristel	Karel de Grote University College	Belgium
Fouche	Christa	University of Auckland	New Zealand
Heremans	Fauve	Karel de Grote University College	Belgium
Hollinrake	Susan	University of Suffolk	United Kingdom
Lyssens-Danneboom	Vicky	Karel de Grote University college	Belgium
McLaughlin	Hugh	Manchester Metropolitan University	United Kingdom
Mejlvig	Kirsten	Aalborg University	Denmark
Nielsen	Helle Schjellerup	Metropolitan University College	Denmark
Nordstoga	Sigrid	University of Agder	Norway
Panciroli	Chiara	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano	Italy
Postma	Dirk	NHL University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
Taplin	Sue	Anglia Ruskin University	United Kingdom
Thommesen	Hanne	Nord University	Norway
van Gijzel	Sascha	University of applied sciences Utrecht	The Netherlands
Wilken	Jean Pierre	Utrecht University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands

## Pre-conference - The Decisions Assessment and Risk Special Interest Group

<b>Family name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation/University</b>	<b>Nation</b>
Bastian	Pascal	Mainz University	Germany
Becker-Lenz	Roland	UAS Northwestern Switzerland	Switzerland
Bertotti	Teresa	University of Milano Bicocca	Italy
Cook	Laura	University of East Anglia	United Kingdom
Freres	Katharina	Mainz University	Germany
Gautschi	Joel	UAS Northwestern Switzerland	Switzerland
Ghanem	Christian	Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München	Germany
Hardy	Mark	University of York	United Kingdom
Hietamäki	Johanna	National Institute for Health and Welfare	Finland
Kettle	Martin	Glasgow Caledonian University	United Kingdom
Killick	Campbell	South Eastern H&SC Trust	United Kingdom
Leonard	Kate	Royal Holloway, University of London	United Kingdom
Leth	Idamarie Svendsen	Copenhagen Metropolitan University College	Denmark
Magnussen	Jacob	Metropol University College, Copenhagen	Denmark
O'Connor	Louise	Royal Holloway	United Kingdom
Schrödter	Mark	Kassel University	Germany
Sicora	Alessandro	University of Calabria	Italy
Taylor	Brian	Ulster University	United Kingdom
Whittaker	Andrew	London South Bank University	United Kingdom



## Pre-conference - Gerontological Social Work

<b>Family name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation/University</b>	<b>Nation</b>
Anand	Janet	University of Eastern Finland	Finland
Avancini	Giulia	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC)	Italy
Bauters	Valerie	Ghent University	Belgium
Donen	Yuki	Sophia University	Japan
Donnelly	Sarah	University College Dublin	Ireland
Duff	Daniela	Hes-So Valais/Wallis	Switzerland
Harnett	Tove	Lund University	Sweden
Jönson	Håkan	Lund University	Sweden
Larsson	Annika Taghizadeh	Linköping University	Sweden
MacKay	Kathryn	University of Stirling	United Kingdom
Olaison	Anna	Linköping University	Sweden
Seppänen	Marjaana	University of Helsinki	Finland
Sherwood-Johnson	Fiona	University of Stirling	United Kingdom

## Pre-conference - Research on Social Work Education

<b>Family name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation/University</b>	<b>Nation</b>
Bartelsen	Annabelle	University of Applied Science and Arts Northwester	Switzerland
Cabiati	Elena	Catholic University of Milan	Italy
Farmer	Antoinette	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey	USA
Halton	Carmel	University College Cork	Ireland
Haunberger	Sigrid	University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland	Switzerland
Henriksen	Øystein	Nord University	Norway
Laidlaw	Kirsteen	University of Cumbria	United Kingdom
Mullineux	Judith	Ulster University	United Kingdom
Nieuwenboom	Jan Willem	University of Applied Sciences NW Switzerland	Switzerland
Segev	Einav	Sapir college	Israel
Smith	Roger	Durham University	United Kingdom

## List of participants ECSWR conference

Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
Abbott	Simon	Kingston University & St George's University of London	United Kingdom
Aharonov	Yosef	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Services	Israel
Alcantud	Patricia Melgar	University of Girona	Spain
Allain	Lucille	Middlesex University	United Kingdom
Almeida	Helena Neves	University of Coimbra	Portugal
Amaro	Maria Inês	ISCTE-IUL	Portugal
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Becker-Lenz	Roland	UAS Northwestern Switzerland	Switzerland
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Branco	Francisco	Catholic University of Portugal	Portugal
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Buck	Gillian	University of Chester	United Kingdom
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Buschmann	Britta	Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz	Germany
Bywaters	Paul	Coventry University	United Kingdom
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Cheng	Yi-Shih	Tunghai University	Taiwan
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Claassens	Hanneke	Fontys	The Netherlands
Cohen	Edith Blit	Hebrew University	Israel
Cook	Laura	University of East Anglia	United Kingdom
Cree	Vivienne	The University of Edinburgh	United Kingdom
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Daly	Maura	Glasgow Caledonian University	United Kingdom
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Depauw	Jan	Karel de Grote University College	Belgium
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Ellingsen	Ingunn T.	University of Stavanger	Norway
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Family name	First name	Organisation/University	Nation
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Fellmann	Lukas	University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northweste	Switzerland
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Nielsen	Uffe Vester	UCN	Denmark
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Nissen	Maria Appel	Aalborg University	Denmark
Njøs	Berit Marie	Western Norway University of Applied Sciences	Norway
Nordstoga	Sigrid	University of Agder	Norway
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Thommesen	Hanne	Nord University	Norway
Treburnia	Sandra	University of Lincoln	United Kingdom
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Aaslund	Håvard	Oslo and Akershus University	Norway