

# **Book of Abstracts**

## **ECSWR 2014**

**15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

**Free University of Bozen – Bolzano**

# **SYMPOSIUM**

# **Symposium**

## **Can we get close to reality? Critical realism and empirical research in social work**

**Monica Kjorstad  
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**Oslo and Akershus University College. Faculty of Social Sciences**

Multifacetedness and complexity are common features of social work, presenting challenges to researchers and practitioners. The aim of this symposium is to bring together researchers from different methodological backgrounds to discuss the issue of reality, and how a critical realist framework may contribute to reflect on this dilemma of evidence and uncertainty. How can critical realism contribute to make better theoretical and methodological choices in social work research? Is it possible to achieve anti-oppressive social work practices based on the concept of stratified reality offered in critical realism? As a philosophy of science, critical realism has become a strong contender to other ontological frameworks in the discipline of social work. In social work research and practice a holistic worldview needs to be equipped with an ability to see the stratified and complicated nature of reality. Critical realism offers a number of intermediary conceptual tools for narrowing the gap between socially produced experiences and physically existing reality. This symposium will follow up the experiences from the previous symposium that was held at ECSWR 2013: 'Critical realism and social work research', where the main focus was on generative mechanisms and explanations based on generative mechanisms. The symposium will have two presentations and a short introduction. The contributions represent different approaches but have a clear cohesiveness. The combination of philosophy and method is a central feature of the two presentations and illuminates the processes shaping outcomes in program evaluations. Another feature is an emphasis on social interaction and the reality of relational elements. By limiting the number of contributions, it will be possible to concentrate on a few of the most interesting research issues. In the introduction we will briefly reflect on the main frameworks of the philosophy of critical realism and their possible significance to social work research and practice. \* Professor Stanley Houston will make a case for adopting critical realism as a philosophical position in qualitative social work research, claiming that there is a concordance between critical realist premises and action research with its cyclical inquiry and advancement of social change. His presentation underscores the importance of 'depth' in qualitative inquiry by conceiving the social world in terms of five interlacing, social domains (abstract 1). \* The presentation of Harry Lunabba (abstract 2) draws upon an ethnographic study showing how the conditions of practitioner's and service user's social relationships can be analyzed through a reflective process. The metatheoretical framework used is based on critical realist philosophy and Thomas J. Scheff's theory on social bonds and Layder's domain theory.

Chairs will be: Associate professor Monica Kjørstad, Oslo and Akershus University College Post-doctoral researcher Elina Pekkarinen, Finnish Youth Research Society

Key words: critical realism, social work, philosophy and method, action research

## **CARE DECISIONS IN CHILD PROTECTION**

**Elina Pekkarinen**

**Finnish Youth Research Network**

Symposium: Can we get close to reality? Critical realism and empirical research in social work

This presentation gives an example of how critical realist approach can be applied in empirical social work research. It is based on a research project, which aims at developing Roy Bhaskar's idea of position-practice -system to a positioning model that could be applied as an analytical tool in social work research and practice. Position is defined as a point of convergence of agency and structure, in which an individual is defined by the dynamic social relations. This presentation illustrates one part of the research, which uses child protection care decisions as an empirical data for analyzing positions. Thus the study contributes not only to the theoretical discussion, but produces practical knowledge of the care decisions in child protection as well.

The data of the study consists of child protection case files of children that were taken into care in two Finnish cities during a period of six months in the larger (n=22), and eight months (n=15) in the smaller in year 2013 (n=37). The case files consist of out-of-home-care decisions, other social work decisions, child protection care plans and summaries of the children from the beginning of their clienthood in child protection agencies. At the moment of taking into care, almost half of the children (n=17) were 16 to 17 years old.

The study analyses, how the positions of the children in different communities and institutions, such as families, peer groups, and day care or school institutions, are described in the child protection documents. It shows how the positions of children change in the different social contexts in the different phases of the process. Due to the two-fold nature of the documents - illustrating and constructing reality - the analysis also seeks to find out, how the positions of children vary in different child protection documents. Primary analysis implicates that the positions of children vary significantly not only in different social contexts, but in different phases of the process, and in the different documents written in the process as well. This observation underlines the importance of developing a theoretical tool for qualitatively analyzing the positions of human agents in various social situations.

Key concepts: Critical realism, position, child protection.

# **The reality of relational elements in social encounters**

**Harry Lunabba**

**University of Helsinki  
Swedish School of Social Science**

## *Background*

My presentation draws upon an ethnographic study conducted in two upper-level compulsory schools in Helsinki, where I explored teenage boys' encounters with adults in school. In my thesis I present, how encounters between teenaged boys and adults are conditioned by adult-boy relationships. The foundational thought is that encounters between adults and young persons, as any situational activity between humans in general, involve complex relational elements.

My aim is to show, how the conditions of practitioner's and service user's social relationships can be analyzed through a reflective process. The meta-theoretical framework of the presented reflective model is based on critical realist philosophy as well as on implementation of Thomas J. Scheff's theory on social bonds and Derek Layder's domain theory.

## *Conclusions*

I claim that the quality of a relationship can be critically analysed by exploring three elements in the interplay between the practitioner and the service user: (1.) The level of insight refers to the extent of knowledge that the practitioner has of the service users life career, (2.) the level of influence refers to the extent to which the service user recognizes the practitioner's initiatives as meaningful, and (3.) the emotional atmosphere refers to the quality of emotions that derives from the interplay between the practitioner and the service user.

## *Realising Conference Aims and Themes*

Recognition of relational aspect adds complexity for the evaluation of social work practices, but from a realist point of view, it is necessary when assessing the adequacy of social work methods. Referring to the work of Gillian Ruch I suggest that it is essential that social work practitioners recognize the reality of relational elements when addressing unique individuals in unique circumstances.

Key words: relationships, social bonds, critical realism, social work practices.

# **Symposium Multi-Perspective Research – Chances and Challenges**

**Peter Rieker**

**University of Zurich, Institute of Education**

Research on social affairs in general and in the field of social work in particular usually is confronted with a broad spectrum of interests, positions, and views, since various actors are involved and concerned. Furthermore, research faces complex processes of interaction between these various interests, positions, and views. One dimension of this complexity is represented through various subjective perspectives which come together in social life. In social research, we are confronted with the question how to handle this challenge. One solution that has become quite popular in recent years consists of considering subjective perspectives of various participants through multi-perspective approaches. Approaches of multi-perspective research try to consider the views of various actors in a given context in order to get more appropriate and extensive information. Thereby the complexity of research is increased and specific questions are raised. How do we conceptualize the relation of the various subjective perspectives that are studied in a research project? What sort of knowledge can we gain from multi-perspective research? What can we learn from congruent and discrepant information? How can we handle congruence, discrepancies, and differences in our analysis in a constructive way? In our session, these questions should be regarded and reflected upon from the perspective of some research projects which try to integrate various subjective perspectives. Furthermore, experiences in realizing multi-perspective research should be analyzed and finally chances and challenges of multi-perspective research should be brought together.

# **Participation of Children – Children Participating: A Multi-Perspective Research Project**

**Anna Schnitzer  
Rebecca Mörjen**

**University of Zurich**

Participation of adolescents and children is an upcoming topic in municipalities, schools as well as in social work projects. As many of the possibilities of participation are created by adults, the question of our on-going research project is how children see their possibilities to participate in everyday life and how their point of view matches the forms of participation created by adults, such as children's or youth parliaments and other "adult oriented" forms of participation. In this contribution, the focus lies on the tension between adult created forms of participation and their use and development by children, adult accompaniment of children as well as self-organized forms of participation by children. Children need the company and supervision of adults to be heard in a given community. But if adults do so, it is not sure that they know adequate forms of participation besides the very adult life oriented ones. In the context of the project on "Participation of adolescents and children in Switzerland," we conducted extensive qualitative interviews with a) children participating in different ways, b) parents of these children, and c) professionals who work with children in schools and in contexts of social work projects. Beside the interviews, we also did ethnographic field work to learn more about the practices of children and their adult companions. Through the design of our research project, the combined analyses of different perspectives (of children participating in different ways, their friends, their parents, and of professionals) is therefore possible and should be considered in the presentation. New approaches in the everyday life of children can be gathered and it becomes clear that there are numerous occasions for dilemma and tensions in regard to participation processes and programmes for children because of their dominant adult perspective.

Keywords: Participation of children; combined analyses of perspectives

# **Exit from Right Wing Extremism as Seen by Youths, Parents and Professionals**

**Peter Rieker**

**University of Zurich, Institute of Education**

Professional support in the process of leaving right wing extremist groups has become a prominent field of work in various European countries. Measures and projects that offer specialized support to youth members of the far right were established by the police and secret services as well as by educational and social work projects. The contribution sketched here focuses on a social work project in Germany that offers support to adolescents who want to leave right wing extremist contexts as well as to families of adolescent members of far right groups. For professionals in this field, the involvement of the families means an important help in re-integrating the youths. On the other hand, it became clear that adolescents and their families (especially parents) have different interests and needs and their relations are often quite conflictual. In this contribution, the perspectives of adolescents leaving the far right, of their parents, and of professionals, who work with adolescents and parents, should be analyzed. In the context of the evaluation of the "Thuringian Counseling Service for Parents, Children, and Adolescents," we conducted extensive qualitative interviews with a) adolescents leaving the far right, b) parents of youth members of right wing extremist groups, and c) professionals who work with adolescents and parents. Analyses of these interviews give insights into the special interests, needs, and evaluations of these various actors and allow identifying conflicts and discrepancies in the views of the members of different groups that make exit processes from the far right very difficult. Finally, this analysis allows to determine the scope of multi-perspective research and to identify challenges of such research.

# **'from boys to men - two perspectives on initiation'**

**Wegel Melanie, Humm Jakob**

**University of Zurich, Institute of Education**

In the years 2011/12, an accompanying scientific study regarding the implementation of a mentoring project was conducted at the University of Zurich. The aim of this project is to offer adolescents support in questions of becoming a man by providing them with adult men as mentors; at the centre of this stood the act of male initiation in the form of a ritualized adventure weekend. On the basis of qualitative interviews that have been conducted with adolescents and mentors alike, it has been shown that this act of initiation is attributed with different meaning. From the mentors' point of view, the initiation is an important starting point for dealing with your biography, with structuring your reality and with your weaknesses and strengths. With the adolescents, on the other hand, it became mainly evident that becoming a man was regarded less as an act, i.e. the initiation, but rather as a process. Although, the initiation is regarded as important by the men primarily, the interview material makes it most evident that these adult men as well question their being-male constantly and possibly even more so than the adolescents, who would like to take more time for themselves in their development. These different perspectives demonstrate impressively how the same conceptions and processes are regarded and evaluated controversially in regard to a prospective and a retrospective viewpoint, respectively. There should be a critical analysis, if one and the same topic can be examined against the background of different generations meaningfully.

# **Symposium**

## **Knowledge Production and Utilization in Europe and the US**

**Jeanne Marsh**

**University of Chicago/SSA**

Knowledge production and utilization in social work is significantly influenced by historical, political and institutional context. Although social work researchers in both Europe and the US have been consistently committed to the utilization of research to improve practice and increase public accountability, approaches to knowledge production and utilization are a function of context, and, as a result, are different on two sides of the Atlantic. The focus on a comparative analysis of social work knowledge production and utilization offers unprecedented opportunities to understand and improve the integration of research and practice in Europe and the US. This symposium will bring together analyses of practice research scholarship examining the relative emphasis on theory and empirical evidence. It is designed to articulate distinctions between practice research scholarship in Europe and the US and to identify practice research approaches that may have the greatest impact on client outcomes, service delivery and public accountability.

The symposium will examine approaches to social work practice research via three analyses:

- (1) an empirical analysis of 100 most highly cited (using citation as a proxy for utilization) articles in European and US social work journals to evaluate differences in content and methodology;
- (2) a presentation of a randomized control trial of the impact of a bullying prevention program with public school students and the translation of findings to social work practice and policy;
- (3) an overview of discourses developed in Europe calling for research to be more flexible, transformative and connected to social work practice.

All papers in the symposium will address the following three questions:

- (a) What are implications of findings for building the evidence-base for social work practice?
- (b) How do findings contribute to the development of practice research with greatest impact on client outcomes, service delivery and public accountability;
- (c) What are implications of the findings for understanding the historical, political and institutional drivers of social work practice research?

# **Useful Knowledge, Research, and Innovation in Social Work Practice: Comparing Europe and the US**

**Jeanne C. Marsh, PhD & Nicole Kreisberg, MA**

**University of Chicago/SSA**

The social work profession has a long-standing commitment to social innovation and to the production and utilization of knowledge to improve social work processes, practices, interventions and social welfare policy. To extend understanding of knowledge utilization in social work, this study compares the most highly cited U.S. and European social work articles in their contributions to a cumulative body of research and scholarship that is contributing to knowledge development and innovation in the field. Two notions guide the analysis: 1) that cross-national research and development in the social and hard sciences is flourishing, and 2) that there is little understanding of the types of research that meets the needs of social work practitioners. One hundred English-language articles were analyzed from a previous study, 69 U.S. articles and 31 European articles. To assess the types of knowledge social work readers and writers find most important, the articles were first classified by content. They were then categorized into non-research or research articles, with the research articles further delineated by their potential contribution to practice decision-making. The results show the majority of European articles were about the profession of social work itself or theory while U.S. articles report widely on populations, research, and intervention effectiveness. The majority of articles in Europe were non-research articles, whereas the majority of articles in the U.S. were research articles. Among research articles, 15% of U.S. articles report on intervention effectiveness, while 3% of European articles report on intervention effectiveness. Results are considered in terms of the historical, political and institutional contexts and in terms of the development of practice research in Europe and the US.

# **Intervention Research in the Emerging Science of Social Work in the US**

**Jeff Jenson, PhD**

**University of Denver**

In the US, intervention research conducted using a randomized controlled trial methodology is considered the most rigorous form of practice research, and therefore some would argue the most useful and relevant to practice. The history and evolution of intervention research in social work and related fields is described. Methodological and analytical advances in conducting intervention trials are noted in the context of producing knowledge for practice and policy. The *Youth Matters* (YM) Denver Public Schools Prevention Project, a randomized group trial assessing the effects of a structured curriculum on bullying and victimization among 2,000 students in 28 elementary schools, is used as an example of recent intervention research in the US. Twenty-eight elementary schools were randomly assigned to receive selected modules of YM, a skills-training curriculum that targets bullying and victimization, or to a no-treatment control group. Linear growth models were fitted to five waves of data collected over three years to test the effect of the intervention on the rate of change in self-reported bullying and victimization. Students in the YM condition reported significantly less bully victimization than students in the control group. Self-reported acts of bullying behavior were also lower among students who received the YM intervention. Findings from latent transition analyses revealed that YM students were significantly more likely than control group students to remain uninvolved in bullying behavior during the transition from elementary to middle school. Examples of how study findings were used to inform school district policies aimed at preventing bullying and victimization are illustrated. The utility of school-based intervention research for advancing science and increasing the utilization of research findings in practice and policy is explored.

# **Converging theory, research and practice: Forms of Social Work Practice Research in Europe**

**Daniel Gredig, PhD**

**University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland**

In the European context, actual discourses on utilization of research and practice research prove a deep commitment to converging social theory, research and social work practice. Models conceptualizing the interconnection of research and practice are marked by the claim to make research relevant for social work practice: They call social work research to become (more) "useful", "meaningful", "transformative", "local" and connected to practice in order to be enabling and supportive to social work professionals. This becomes apparent in the discourses about different concepts of practice research that have evolved in Europe and are quite intensively discussed for example in the United Kingdom, the Nordic countries and Switzerland. Recently, the discussion about practice research gained momentum by the Salsbury Statement developed by a trans-European group of social work scholars. This paper outlines different models of practice research and how they conceptualize the interrelation of theory, research and social work practice and how research and theory is thought to impact on social service delivery and user outcomes. Further it offers reflections on the contribution practice research makes to building an evidence-base for social work practice and on drivers of social work practice research.

# **Symposium**

## **Reinterpreting the history of social work –Standing up to complexity in the history of social work**

**Stefan Koengeter**  
**Christian Reutlinger, Gisela Hauss, Francisco Branco, Susanne Maurer**

**University of Hildesheim**

This symposium emanates from a critique of historical research in social work that often implicitly follows a “disciplinary illusion”. In this illusion boundaries of the discipline are taken for granted and linear developments are constructed, often by focusing on classics of social work that were coopted for specific standpoints in social work. Instead the presented papers start with the assumption of a dual historicity of researchers and the studied phenomena in accord with the work of the anthropologist and educational philosopher Christoph Wulf. Therefore, history is no longer perceived as stable, but as a process referring to selective memories and moving with generations and standpoints. The consideration of historical complexity enables social work to engage with the ambivalence of inclusion and exclusion, with ruptures, and the question of power and conflicts in history of social work. Boundaries between welfare and abuse (Hauss), community work and social case work (Koengeter/Reutlinger), and social policy and social work (Branco) dissolve and show the contestations, struggles, ambivalences in positions but also interconnections and collaborations among actors in the field. The symposium refers to history in times of the so called crises of the welfare states. Researchers, scholars, and practitioners in social work are affected by and involved in the current transformations of social policies emphasizing activation strategies and the social investment paradigm. The proposed historical perspective can reveal the various positions and the ongoing struggles of the emergence and development of social work as a profession that contributes to solidarity and social justice. In this situation historical knowledge and consciousness about the dynamics of (re)defining professional autonomy and the broad transnational and transdisciplinary collaborations as well as the interplay of social reform and academic developments could inform the discourses of identity which are widely apparent in the discussions in the field of social work. The reflective historical stance of the presented papers enhances these discussions by showing up the multifarious legacy of social work on both sides of the Atlantic and at different times. The orientation is not toward a coherent and unifying master narrative about developing a Social Work profession; instead the papers emphasize the contradictions and contestations as well as the interconnections between different standpoints and strands. Reinterpreting the history of Social Work this way, historical research can serve as a critical backdrop for examine current intersections and tensions in the field of social work. Referring to Walter Lorenz’ book “Perspectives in European Social Work” the presented historical research encourages to turn contradictions and intersections into a project for the deliberate shaping of the ‘in-between-spaces’ in which Social Work is located. The research enables to raise new questions in the

fields of residential child care, community orientation and social work orientated to social policy which are three hotbeds of social work controversies in the last hundred years and provide new insights into these core issues of social work in order to develop a critical view on the identity and autonomy of social work today.

Commentator of the three papers: Susanne Maurer

# **Negotiating the History of Residential Child Care - A Research Approach**

**Gisela Hauss**

**University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland**

In my paper I will realize this complexity of the research approach, drawing upon our ongoing research project in the area of residential childcare in Switzerland ([www.placing-children-in-care](http://www.placing-children-in-care)). It is conducted in a research network, composed of three subprojects located at five universities in different regions in Switzerland. The goal of the project is to create an empirical and analytic framework to critically understand and contextualize the politics and practices of outplacement of children and youth in Switzerland from 1940 to 1990. During the 20th century, tens of thousands of children and adolescents in Switzerland were placed in foster families and residential care. Recent research indicates that these placements in out-of-home care were often associated with social isolation, compulsory work or even with sexual or physical abuse. Switzerland is starting to reappraise this past and is discussing about reparations. Questions of political, professional and legal responsibility arise. In my paper I will focus on the ambivalence of history writing in this conflictive political and scientific context. I will point out to traps and risks, like repeating stigmata, subordinating the "victims" under a psychiatric perspective, or just excluding the groups of service users who have no voice and lobby. Approaching history reveals that research as well as Social Work practices are placed in manifold social contradictions. In my paper I will discuss how to face up to this complexity.

Keywords: Residential Care, Switzerland, conflictive contexts, complexity

# **Neighborhood and Community – Emerging Problems and Recollecting Solutions in the National Conferences of Charities and Corrections (US) from 1880 to 1935**

**Stefan Köngeter & Christian Reutlinger**

**University of Hildesheim, University of Applied Sciences St. Gallen**

Community organization is regarded as one of the foundational methods and theoretical strands in social work. Roots of community organization are typically searched and found in the settlement house movement which emerged in the 1880s in the industrial capitals of the Western world. A detailed analysis of the settlement house approach and the contributions of the National Conferences of Charity and Corrections (NCCC) reveal a different picture. Before the establishment of the classic four pillars of U.S. social work (social case work, social group work, community organization and social action) within the NCCC in 1935, an analysis of the organization of panels and of talks displays the interconnection of several discourses and approaches that discuss the meaning of neighborhood and community for social work. Our analyses of appearances of key terms and topics in focal papers are able to show why communities and neighborhoods appear both as emerging problems in big cities of the industrialized world, but also as centers of the solutions. Against the background of these results this presentation makes a case for a non-linear perspective on historical developments in social work that is able to illuminate interconnections and interferences of seemingly disparate strands in social work. This results in new perspectives on today's community and neighborhood work and opens up discussions about future developments in this field.

Keywords: community organization, neighborhood, interconnections, USA

# **The circle of social reform - The relationship Social Work: Social Policy in Addams and Richmond**

**Francisco Branco**

**Universidade Católica Portuguesa**

An assumption strongly anchored in the social work literature, not only in primary sources, but often in secondary literature, is that social work was developed according to two major traditions, the social case work (or psychosocial approach) and the social reform (or socio-political approach) founded by two of the most influential pioneers of Social Work: Mary Richmond and Jane Addams. By taking up a term from Mary Richmond we could name these two traditions: "sociatries" (Richmond, 1920: 478), two different visions how to deal professionally with social and urban questions that the social worker and social reformer were facing at the time. These two traditions were often considered as irreconcilable approaches. Despite their different ideological roots and trajectories, the classic writings and the less well-known papers reveal many points of convergence in their thought and action. Particularly, the different standpoints on social policy were emphasized. Considering Richmond's image of the "circle of social reform", this presentation focuses on the inseparable relationship between Social Policy and Social Work, clearly present in the thought and action of these seminal authors of Social Work. These insights will shed new light on ongoing debates and the disputed role of social policy perspectives within professionalized social work and the articulation between micro and macro level approaches, direct intervention with individual, groups and communities and social policy practice.

Keywords: Social Work, Social Policy, Jane Addams, Mary Richmond.

# **Symposium**

## **Knowledge production and knowledge use through cooperation between science and professional practice**

**Peter Sommerfeld**

**University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland**

The cooperation between science and professional practice is regarded as a key concept for a better use of research findings in the everyday work of practitioners. For instance, the upcoming concept of "translational research" and accordingly "research translation" (Palinkas & Soydan, 2012) broaches this issue. Furthermore cooperation is not only considered promising for the amelioration of making use of scientific knowledge in professional practice, cooperation is also conceived as being of great value for the generation of new, practical, problem solving knowledge. The "new forms of knowledge production", labeled as "mode 2" (Gibbons et al., 1994), or the model of "cooperative knowledge production" (Gredig & Sommerfeld, 2008) point into this direction. Additionally to these approaches a variety of conceptions on cooperation between science and practice have been identified (Gray, Schubert, & Heinsch, 2012), "practice research" being a prominent but diversely constructed one (Pain, 2011). Collaboration of different partners is established in natural sciences and technology as well as in the medical field. In social work collaborative projects of researchers and professional practitioners are widespread, too. However, it can be stated that there is a lack of empirical evidence on the extent, as well as the forms and effectiveness of such cooperation. The key objectives for this symposium therefore are: 1) Bringing together researchers who are exploring cooperative forms of knowledge production and knowledge use in the domain of social work, in order to discuss the similarities and differences of the concepts on an empirical and theoretical base. 2) A second objective, building on the first one, is to explore the significance of cooperative approaches for the development of accountability and legitimacy of professional and also scientific practice in social work. The leading questions for both objectives are: What types of cooperation can be described? And how do these different forms of cooperation prove productive? What factors influence the process as well as the outcome for the good or the bad? How can the impact of the cooperation be measured or at least estimated? Are there examples or even best practices of how accountability and legitimacy can be produced in cooperative projects?

The symposium will encourage debate and provide a substantial empirical foundation on the relationship between science and professional practice. The existing models of cooperation between science and practice will be discussed in regard of their potential to improve research use and knowledge production in practice and in science. By offering relevant information on

the conditions of successful cooperation in knowledge production, the results will stimulate reflections on the further development of social work as well as on necessities for promoting cooperative research and development in the field of social work. And finally it will be of interest how far concepts of cooperation address or even improve accountability.

Keywords: research and development, knowledge use and knowledge transfer, professionalization, including accountability

# **Knowledge production through cooperation: empirical grounds for a conceptual debate**

**Matthias Hüttemann**

**University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland**

**Background and purpose:** This contribution is based on a research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. The leading research question of this still ongoing project is: What forms of cooperation between science and practice can be described in the area of social work and do these forms prove to be productive in terms of knowledge production and knowledge transfer?

**Methods:**

The sample of the study was built on the basis of a search in different research data-bases. A total of 89 projects that had been labeled as cooperative by the researchers were included. The aim is to build a Grounded Theory of cooperative knowledge production. Therefore the methodology of Grounded Theory is the main reference for the study design and the methods for data-gathering and analysis. An analysis of documents served as basis for a first process of purposeful sampling following the strategy of maximizing contrasts. 8 projects were selected and studied in depth, using problem-centered interviews with researchers and their respective partners in professional practice, complemented by an analysis of documents produced in these projects reflecting the process of co-operation as well as describing the outcome of the project. The results of this first round served for a second sampling. Another 9 projects were selected. The main criterion was intensive cooperation.

**Results:**

The outline of the grounded theory to be developed will be presented, including a typology of different forms of cooperation with different grades of intensity, different outcomes and different forms of knowledge use. This typology includes a deep understanding of the underlying factors and mechanisms that foster productive and in this sense successful cooperation and those who hinder these developments.

**Conclusions and implications:**

The conclusions, still to be worked out, will aim on the discussion of conceptual frameworks. The implications will raise questions concerning first the conditions of successful cooperation and second the support of cooperative research and development by (research) funding organizations.

# **An actor-relational approach on new forms of collaboration between research, practice, service users and education**

**Ilse Julkunen**

**Helsinki University, Department of social research, social work**

## Background and purpose:

Much attention has focused on the disconnection between research, practice, and policies, especially the limited use of research findings by practitioners and policy makers who fail to see how research can contribute to the development of practices and policies. In welfare policies and social work it is not only a question of studying how things have evolved or how they work but also how they can be improved and under what conditions in order to ensure improvements that can also impact the space, the affected actors and their networks. By involving the relational complexities within practice and by strengthening the relational and organizational linkage between research and practice the relevance of research may transcend the process of generalizing and disseminating research findings.

## Methods:

The study draws on the works of Luuk Boelens and his actor-relational approach (ARA) based on a relational understanding of space and derived from an intensive interchange between practice and theory building up the knowledge base in planning where different actors, as well as the civil community, are integrated into a research design. In this analysis, the theoretical approach developed by Boelens is used to analyze two cases of knowledge development in welfare services. The focus is on the relational elements in terms of how issues are identified, problematized, interpreted, and anchored within a research process. The two selected cases represent university based research that focus on reinforcing the use of knowledge as the basis for practical application. They were selected to illustrate and scrutinize the importance of identifying focal actors involved in the issue, the importance of negotiations between different levels of actors throughout the research process and the democratic anchoring of the thematic issue.

## Results:

The outline of the actor relational approach will be presented, including a typology of the two cases of how problems and focal actors are identified and how they are anchored in the knowledge development process. The analysis show that more attention is needed to identify potential conflicts between the different actors involved in knowledge development. Dialogues and negotiations between different actors throughout the process enhance knowledge building and changes at the individual and organizational level. Reflexive analysis and deliberation about

values and interests related to praxis seem to be essential to understanding societal issues related to social and economic development as well as social work. The relationship between the individual and the collective is also a crucial building block that opens up for broader visions of change.

# **Translation and Implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions in Social Work**

**Haluk Soydan and Lawrence Palinkas**

**University of Southern California, School of Social Work**

## Background and Purpose:

Translational and implementation research has (re)emerged over the last years as a mainstream research track in the human services. However, the feasibility as well as desirability of what should be implemented and how remains in doubt. This presentation addresses these issues, based on our publications including the 2012 Oxford University Press book, *Translation and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practice* and our years of experience publishing and co-publishing on evidence-based practices and their application in real life settings.

## Methods:

Our joint publications, in particular the 2012 book, are basically presentations of the state-of-the-art in translational and implementation research. Those publications often include results of mix-method (experimental and qualitative designs) empirical studies (in many of which Palinkas has been involved) of translation and implementation demonstration projects.

## Results:

We have been able to empirically identify barriers and facilitators of implementation of evidence-based practices in organizational and community settings. Cutting-edge research provides examples of tested methods of translation and implementation, including strategies for ensuring successful implementation of innovative programs and practices. These efforts continue. However, successful scaling-up of evidence-based practices remains limited.

## Conclusions:

Translational and implementation research is now establishing itself as a mainstream research field. It is a promising field in understanding and determining barriers and facilitators of successful implementation, in scaling-up evidence-based practices, and transferring knowledge across cultures and nations.

# **Symposium**

## **Welfare under pressure: Shifting roles of government, social professionals and citizens**

**Eltje Bos**

**Univerity of Applied Sciences Amsterdam**

The welfare state and its social services and programs are under pressure in the Netherlands as in other western welfare states. In the Netherlands central government decided to delegate some of its social welfare programs to the municipalities, while the available budgets were cut. This implies municipalities have to incorporate new tasks and find ways to provide more or less the same type of services with less means. In the mean time there is a growing number of initiatives by citizens/inhabitants who start -small scale- initiatives and activities that contribute in a positive way to the liveability of their neighbourhood /community and theirs and other peoples life's, e.g. by organizing social and cultural services and events. These developments are accompanied by a public and policy discourse on the shifting roles of government, citizens and social professionals. We like to offer a symposium, that addresses some of these issues as they recently were addressed in our research. In the symposium the more theoretical dilemma's are scetched, and recent practical research results are presented and discussed. The research is about the use of social media in an Amsterdam neighbouhood, the role of citizens and social professionals; about neighbourhood management bij citizens in three neighbourhoods in Amsterdam and the role of social professionals, and (succesfull) communities and the role of social professionals in Amsterdam.

# **What are we working for?" How community professionals are handling challenges of professional legitimacy in the context of shifting professional responsibilities**

**Jeroen Gradener**

**Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences**

## *Background*

In Dutch community-development practices, a major shift has been manifesting itself the last five years, whereby practitioners are pushed towards more instrumental community-based approaches. In practice, the professional mission of community work has thus evolved from supporting the social and cultural literacy of disadvantaged social groups into stimulating voluntary involvement of citizens, for instance in providing concrete social support of vulnerable people.

## *Research/method*

Currently, a study combining field research with action research is being conducted in Bos en Lommer, an active, culturally diverse neighbourhood in Amsterdam. The focus is on the daily practices of nine community-development professionals: their interaction with neighbourhood representatives, active citizens, local officials and other professionals such as social work, care, and safety.

Firstly, this study is exploring the challenges these community professionals are facing, now that their traditional professional position is being scrutinized. For instance, the question is being addressed how community practitioners are redefining their position in communities from a profession representing government interest in empowering vulnerable citizens towards a profession that functions as a broker between local supply and demand in social support. This shift in professional position is being framed as a problem of 'strategic professional legitimacy', a concept derived from legitimacy theory. Based on an extensive study of the community-development literature regarding similar processes in other Western welfare states (2008-2013), the expectation is that issues will arise with regard to firstly establishing professional credibility and secondly securing continuity in active as well as in passive support. These challenges will become visible as they are forced to develop new forms of partnerships with active citizens and practitioners in care and welfare at a neighborhood level.

Secondly, a study actively involving the aforementioned community practitioners is running along with the field study. Hereby the focus is on developing theory-based reflective strategies that could support community workers to establishing new professional mandates in Bos en Lommer. A series of six theory-based reflective sessions is being organized, applying as

theoretical framework the Capabilities Approach, a social development theory founded by the Indian economist Amartya Sen.

What is expected is that the use of theory as reflective-discursive tool will be supporting community professionals into adopting a more discursive and dialogical attitude in situations of challenged professional legitimacy. The analysis of the data will be based on the qualitative and quantitative evaluations of these reflective sessions and their impact on daily practice.

# **Power to the people; practice of shifts in role taking by local government, citizens and government**

**Mike de Kreek, Pieter van Vliet, Martin Stam, Eltje Bos**

**Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences**

## *Background and purpose*

Research of new practices and the role of social professionals in the city of Amsterdam; local government is searching for alternatives of social work practices. A variety of angles is explored. The University of applied sciences is researching these practices.

## *Research projects/methods to be presented:*

*The role of social media in neighbourhoods/communities and the role of social professionals in a shifting social environment.*

An exemplary case where new balances are being explored and found between citizens, Professionals and the local government, is the Memory of East community in Amsterdam. This group has been collecting local memories online for 10 years, which has generated many online comments from other neighbourhood residents and all kinds of real life encounters between them. Research shows that the involved processes are able to empower individuals, groups and the community as a whole. Outreach professionals from the Amsterdam Museum have been involved in various roles during this period, forced by a changing role of the museum, but also by the growing agency of the active group of citizens. The local government has subsidized the initiative early in its life and still is very closely related to the community, although also in a more equal relation. We will look back on these aspects by sharing some highlights of the Memory of East during its existence and elaborate on its future together with the audience.

## *Citizen Driven Neighbourhood management*

The University of Applied Science in Amsterdam was asked by local government to monitor 3 pilot projects of 'Citizen Driven Neighbourhood management'. The concrete aim was to develop neighbourhood enterprises. A methodology was designed to enhance the participation of citizens in neighbourhood management. The methodology consisted of three phases: community mapping, a 'Plugging the Leaks workshop' and an organisation workshop. These were followed by further meetings to realize an enterprise. The research was aimed at monitoring and evaluating the methodology. More over the intention was to measure whether there was a change in attitude among both professionals and inhabitants of the various neighbourhoods; Bos en Lommer( Amsterdam West), Plan van Gool (Amsterdam Noord) , Osdorp (Amsterdam

Nieuw- West) during the 9 month pilot. It turned out to be a most challenging enterprise. In the process it turned out hard to reach the citizens; the social workers of various institutions, and the various government tiers involved didn't always seem to cooperate, and to incorporate vulnerable citizens was an extra challenge. However, some progress was made; we like to share our methodology, the challenges and the findings.

#### *Communities of success*

Our findings of the Civic Driven Change research led to another approach of looking at Civic driven change and the role of social professionals. We decided to start with existing communities and to find out whether they are success full and why. We are looking at organizational, juridical, and social psychological variables: Why are people participating. And what is the role of social professionals in these. We started of the research with existing neighbourhood enterprises. We use depth interviews and a gathering of neighbourhood entrepreneurs to gather our data, and to refine our research. We like to share our research design and our first findings. In the near future we intend not only to look at neighbourhood enterprises but at various types of communities. More so we like to start an international research group to conduct this research in various European cities and apply together for the European Union Research program Horizon 2020

# **Symposium**

## **Making the Invisible Visible – The relationship of knowledge and power and how it is made visible in research and practice**

**Janis Fook**  
**Johanna Hefel, Davina Höblich, Heidrun Schulze**

**School of Social Work, Dalhousie University**

Chair: Prof. Jan Fook: Jan Fook is currently Professor and Director of the School of Social Work, Dalhousie University Presenters: Prof. Johanna Hefel, Prof. Davina Höblich, Prof. Heidrun Schulze “A culture which denies micro-politics has evolved over the years.” This argument about the relationship between political and personal issues was brought forward by Jan Fook and forms a good starting point for the discussion (cf. Fook 2001). Following Fook’s conclusions we could sum up the implications of constructing the different worlds of theory, practice and research as follows: The “personal (does not match) the structural, and the structural (matches) the political and therefore the personal, by definition (does not match) the political. However, this relationship implies that the personal is, in some way or another, less valuable” (Fook 2001). Basically, one aim of the symposium is to make visible the intersubjective processes that are typically involved in social work practice. It is about making visible the concrete interaction and construction processes that form our society. The symposium focuses on three different target groups and behavioural contexts: traumatised children in the context of domestic violence based on Schulze’s “Narrative Therapy” and “Children’s Rights” approaches (Prof. Dr. Heidrun Schulze), de-normalisation practices in institutions when dealing with LGBT1-persons (Prof. Dr. Davina Höblich) and repeatedly disadvantaged youths and young adults with migration backgrounds in the course of an institutional initiative to (re)integrate them into the labour market (Prof. Johanna Hefel). All three contributions are about creating, or constructing, social reality and the ability to normalise, moderate or balance personal experiences. According to Foucault, everything “that can be observed by human beings within a particular time frame and a particular space, depends on the then valid organisation of knowledge” (Mesquita 2008:132). The reconstruction of things (not) observed and the ways they are observed may evolve critical potential towards power and thus reveal hegemonic thinking, perceptions and behaviour. Based on the panel’s title “Making the Invisible Visible”, we concentrate on a hermeneutic approach which can therefore be incorporated into both research and the practical processes of social work. In particular, we will focus on the types of images that are dominantly used by or refer to different “actors” and are produced, reproduced and transformed in interactions. Additionally, we focus on the contents which are represented in these narrations; the contents that remain invisible or can be made visible if the listener engages in those lived and narrated experiences. The symposium therefore focuses on the relationship between the

political and personal; how this relationship might be incorporated into the scientific world, and how the different worlds of theory, practice and research have been constructed by practitioners. Beyond that, we emphasize how important it is to conceptualise the links between theory, practice and research, because it "... has relevance for the understandings of the ethical role of social work, especially the social justice foundations of our profession" (cf. Fook 2001)

# **Who's got the say? Experiences and Agency in Stories of Traumatized Children.**

**Heidrun Schulze**

**University RheinMain Wiesbaden**

Please note that this abstract is part of the symposium 1869 Making the Invisible Visible Children

traumatized due to domestic violence are part of our societal reality. So far children had to take the back seat behind their mothers and the harm done to them. But these things that are happening "privately" are of a political significance: On behalf of children's rights, justice for children and equality to adults, it is about "to give children a voice (back)". Another aim is to enable subject-based and children related research and politics and not to see children (as in previous programs) as educational and care objects only. All this involves a critical assessment of the power balances between adults and children, and based on the approaches of "narrative practice" we aim at creating links between theory, practice and research and methodology. In detail, we aim at implementing the concepts of narrative practice based on an approach on appreciation.

Background: Qualitative research in the context of family violence, new childhood research and children's rights.

Problem: Denying the children's perspective in child protection, pathologizing and reductionism in victim reduced discourse.

Research question(s): How can we create interventions based on appreciative and supportive view and Communication? How can we educate the professionals for reflexive practice in the field of child protection?

Methods : Narrative Interviews with children, using also visual material. The research has been done in a teaching-research seminar. Students who were educated in narrative inquiry conducted interviews with children in some shelters.

Results, Conclusions and Implications: The research shows how children create agency and how important it is to appreciate the children's construction of their reality in the professional interaction. Furthermore the research shows how important it is to make research with children to fulfill the challenges of children's right in the field of child protection and how important it is for a subject orientated children policy.

# **“I can see something you can’t see”: perception and misperception of migrant clients in Austria**

**Johanna Hefel**

**University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg, Austria**

Background: Society’s attitude towards people with migration backgrounds often implies that they are inadequately educated. This perspective emphasises a deficits discourse rather than an approach which focuses on strengths. This research project aimed to shed some light on the latter strengths-based approach. The inter-disciplinary issues of gender and culture are often insufficiently addressed within society and contribute to societal marginalisation and stigmatisation of immigrants. Social workers need to continuously reflect on their own biographically-formed attitudes and blind spots towards gender and culture.

Only by going through a process of having knowledge of these issues, being willing and able to act on them and having permission to do so helps to make “the Invisible Visible” (cf. Exenberger et al. 2007). Social workers’ conceptualisations and attributions of gender and culture within their implementation of a pilot scheme for young migrant adults were explored. The scheme aimed to re-integrate young adults sustainably into the labour market and focused on their self-development over this process. The social workers’ views were compared to the client’s self-perceptions.

Methods: 36 semi-structured interviews were carried out with young migrant adults, aged 17 to 22 and 13 semi-structured interviews with social workers. Thematic analysis was undertaken, and two focus groups were held with professionals in order to present initial findings and gain their feedback.

Results, conclusion and implications: The findings highlight the gap between the self-perception of the young immigrants and how they are seen by professionals - visible through the professionals’ prejudiced attitudes in their treatment of the young immigrants and how they spoke about them. The necessity of a reflexive education and practice as well as a professional framework within social work is highlighted.

Keywords: migration, gender, culture, professional Social Work

# **That's so gay! Institutions and Social Work: How they deal with LGBT-youths.**

**Davina Höblich**

**Hochschule RheinMain**

In the course of their identity development, approximately 5-10 % of all people regard themselves as being lesbians, gay, bisexuals or transidents, thereby opposing the concept of heteronormativity. Often, LGBT-youths are not or hardly supported by their social environment and are frequently discriminated as others bully them, make fun of them or even lay violent hands on them. Both schools and social work institutions are required to consider the situations of LGBT-youths adequately and look at them without any prejudices. So far, institutions providing social work did hardly make adequate allowance for the needs and living situations of LGBT-youths (Perels 2006; Rommelspacher 2007). In the first step the aim is to reconstruct and analyze everyday microaggressions and prejudices amongst social workers towards LGBT-youths and reveal the paradoxes between normative (ethical) standards typically associated with practical social work and structural discrimination via "Othering" processes and ignored LGBT-identities. In the second step we ask how social workers can be educated for a non-discriminating practice with LGBT-youth.

Background: Qualitative Research in the context of youth welfare, profession and LGBT;

Problem: Othering of LGBT-youths by social workers in youth welfare, attributions and stereotypes of social workers towards LGBT-persons (microaggressions); structural discrimination via "Othering" processes by professional social workers and ignored (invisible) LGBT-identities;

Research question(s): How can we make an adequate allowance for the needs and living situations of LGBT-youths in youth welfare? How can we educate the professionals for reflexive practice, that prevents microaggressions towards LGBT-youths?; Methods: Group discussions with teams of social workers.

The research has been conducted in a teaching-research seminar. Students who were educated in group discussion conducted group discussions with teams of social workers in several institutions in the youth welfare system;

Results, Conclusions and Implications: The research shows the power of stereotypes and microaggressions of social workers and their impact in dealing with LGBT-youths. Furthermore the research shows how important a reflexive education is, that provides social workers with knowledge and skills to work with LGBT-youths.

# **Symposium**

## **International Mental Health Social Work Research: Knowledge Production and Transfer**

**Martin Webber**  
**Hannah Jobling, Mark Hardy, Meredith Newlin, Charlotte Scott, David Morris,**  
**Lynette Joubert**

**University of York**

Symposium abstract Mental health problems affect one in four of us during our lifetime and they present a significant global economic and social burden. Treatment for conditions such as severe depression, bi-polar affective disorder or psychosis usually comprises medication or psychological therapy. However, these are either unavailable (especially in many low or middle income countries) or unable to address social problems which contribute to the cause or continuation of serious mental health problems. Evidence of the effectiveness of social interventions which tackle common problems such as inadequate social support is emerging, but research is hampered by the limited integration of insights from social science into mental health research. Social workers in multi-disciplinary mental health services bring knowledge derived from social sciences as diverse as sociology, social psychology, anthropology, social policy and law into their practice. However, social work is occasionally characterised by colleagues from the leading mental health professionals of psychiatry and psychology as lacking in definition and being uncertain about what constitutes knowledge. Social workers find it difficult to articulate their knowledge in ways understood through the empirical world-view of their colleagues, maintaining their marginalisation within many mental health services around the world. It is increasingly important for social work as a discipline to be able to define its unique contribution to mental health services, not least because intense pressure on public expenditure has heightened the importance of evidencing outcomes. Commissioners of mental health social work services need to ensure that public resources are utilised effectively and people who receive services need to know that interventions are likely to produce beneficial outcomes for them. Social work researchers therefore have an important role to play in helping to articulate and evidence mental health social work practice to meet the needs of multiple stakeholders. A degree of methodological pragmatism is required to answer today's important mental health social work research questions, whilst considering the need to generate knowledge which can meaningfully impact upon both policy and practice both nationally and internationally. This symposium presents five mental health social work studies from Europe, Africa and Australia which adopt different methodologies but all consider the complex relationship between research, practice and policy. Firstly, we will draw upon UK qualitative research on Community Treatment Orders to explore policy formulation and the ensuing relationship between policy and practice. Next, we discuss a feasibility study that used ethnographic methods in Sierra Leone to explore the potential for developing culturally-

appropriate social interventions for mental health workers to use in their routine practice. This will be followed by a study using multiple methods to explore decision making in assessments. Finally, two papers report the findings of mental health social work intervention studies. One is a UK multi-site quasi-experimental study where an intervention framework guiding practice in supporting people to enhance their social networks was piloted. The other is an Australian randomised controlled trial of a social work intervention to reduce re-presentations with self-harm. Together, the papers explore knowledge production in mental health social work and the importance of research in helping the discipline to maintain its public accountability. The 5 papers for the symposium are submitted separately with consecutive reference numbers from 2100-2104.

# **Beyond Foucault – mapping international knowledge transfer in mental health social work**

**Hannah Jobling  
Mark Hardy**

**University of York**

Knowledge Production and Transfer' (Webber et al, submission no. 2099) How are different 'forms' of knowledge developed, transmitted and institutionalised in mental health social work? Foucault's concept of 'power/knowledge' famously enabled us to understand developments of knowledge via the evolving methodological approach he variously referred to as archaeology, genealogy and governmentality. In this presentation, we will use this and other conceptual resources as the basis for advocating an adapted and flexible methodological framework which constitutes knowledge in mental health social work as local, situated and embedded, but also dynamic, interactive and 'flowing' between actors, institutions and jurisdictions at an international level. The model integrates two distinct cross-disciplinary approaches: firstly, 'an analytics of government', specified by Dean (1999) as particularly useful in addressing 'how' questions; and secondly, the potentially complementary approach known as historical political sociology (Hay 2002, Loader and Sparks 2005, 2012, Melossi, Sozzo and Sparks 2011) which seeks to integrate explanatory and descriptive causal formulations. Together, these act as a basis for extending Foucault's relatively 'static' formulation of power/knowledge to accommodate the dynamic nature of trans-disciplinary, intercontinental knowledge flow. We will illustrate the potential relevance and utility of the model using the example of how one 'form' of knowledge, in this case, policy knowledge, has developed in regards to a particular approach in mental health social work practice - supervised community treatment. We will conclude by drawing on the findings of an English qualitative case study, to illustrate how policy formulations on supervised community treatment have then been translated into mental health practice.

# **An evaluation of CHIERS : a consumer focused and social network response to deliberate self harm**

**Lynette Joubert**

**University of Melbourne**

Knowledge Production and Transfer' (Webber et al, submission no. 2099)Background: A conceptual issue identified in suicide prevention is that distinctions are made between reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. It has been argued this distinction alone is meaningless. A preferred model acknowledges an additional mediating factor as being involved i.e. the causal relationship between the two factors under study. The assertion of the ecosystems perspective is that only by addressing an entire community's interactions and evaluating the needs of a system, can a complex behavioural issue such as suicide and self-harm be reduced. This presentation will report on the SPED study which evaluated a social work intervention to reduce suicidal ideation and deliberate self-harm. The aim of the research was to evaluate the efficacy of a single session and phone based assertive linkage service model to support consumers for up to six weeks post presentation to emergency. The intervention is structured around the completion of a baseline ecosystemic map (CHIERS), brief solution focused counseling and identification of consumer problem definition and referral priorities.Method: A randomized controlled trial methodology was implemented comparing the outcomes for the randomly selected intervention group with the control group (service as usual) recruited from Sunshine Hospital emergency mental health service.Results: The intervention made a statistically significant difference on re-presentation rates for both individual re-presenters and overall re-presentation numbers. There was a significant reduction in re-presentations for those in the intervention group at the 6, 12 and 24 -month time points. For example there was a 13.5% re-presentation rate for the intervention sample compared to a 25 representation rate for the control group at the 12 month time point. The results suggest the importance of integrating community networks in assessment, intervention and as an outcome measure in responding to the complex psychosocial issues experienced by consumers presenting with deliberate self-harm.

# **What's at stake in stakeholder research? The challenge of knowledge synthesis in making sense of practitioner decision making**

**Charlotte Scott**

**University of Leeds**

Knowledge Production and Transfer' (Webber et al, submission no. 2099) In the UK, the recent trend of year on year increases in admissions under the Mental Health Act has been linked to a reduction in inpatient beds, plus changes to the nature of community based mental health services. Demand for inpatient beds outstrips supply, while anecdotal evidence from both service users and practitioners suggests that some decisions to compulsorily detain have been made solely in order to secure access to a bed. If this is the case, then it suggests that the contemporary mental health system is not functioning as intended, as well as potentially representing a breach of Article 5 (ECHR). This paper provides an overview of on-going doctoral research concerning decision making by Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs). The study utilises both survey and interview methods to specify and make sense of the impact that available resources have on the outcome of Mental Health Act assessments in the UK. Pawson et al (2003) identify the sources of knowledge that high quality social care research should incorporate, closely mirroring generic categories of stakeholders in any given domain of practice. In a study concerning the operation of the Mental Health Act, these include policy makers, managers of health services, bed managers, psychiatrists, AMHPs, and service users and carers. How can the variable views and perspectives of this diverse array of individuals and groups be synthesised in ways which produce meaningful and reliable findings? This paper will explore the practical and ethical implications of knowledge synthesis, and whether in the mental health context we should privilege some sources of knowledge ahead of others. In doing so it will contribute to the conference theme of increasing public accountability by producing a transparent and honest account of the challenges individual researchers face in navigating such tensions, which is relevant to AMHP practice, social work more generally, and the wider arena of emancipatory research.

# **Social intervention development and evaluation in Sierra Leone: A feasibility study**

**Meredith Newlin  
Martin Webber**

**University of York**

Knowledge Production and Transfer' (Webber et al, submission no. 2099)Background: World Health Organisation reports that around only one in five people experiencing mental distress in low and middle-income countries receive any formal support. In Sierra Leone this is as low as 2%, but it is possible that social interventions can help to fill this treatment gap. However, these need to be context specific and 'socially robust' to account for the nature of wider communities, and to be informed by rigorous research. We aimed to convene people from the UK and Sierra Leone to co-produce innovative and locally appropriate approaches to addressing those problems.Method: In collaboration with partners from King's Centre for Global Health and Enabling Access to Mental Health we conducted a feasibility study in Sierra Leone using ethnographic methodology. Combining interviews, focus groups and researcher observations with a variety of stakeholders in the mental health sector, we explored existing practice and identified service needs. Data collected from multiple sources was transcribed and triangulated using comparative method of grounded theory to analyse the applicability of social work models and concepts within the context of Sierra Leone.Results: Findings from the feasibility study indicate partners are enthusiastic about the potential of social interventions to connect individuals and enhance community engagement, thus reducing stigma of mental illness. Data points to a significant need for training in low-cost psychosocial approaches to mental health care at both the district and community levels. Feedback from stakeholders on the creation of an intervention framework was positive, highlighting specific elements of social capital within the cultural context.Conclusions: Results highlight the importance of translating locally adapted social interventions to a low-income country. The long-term aim of this project is to adapt evidence-based models of practice and training materials to meet the needs of other countries facing a similar treatment gap.

# **The Connecting People Intervention: Findings of a quasi-experimental pilot study**

**Martin Webber  
Meredith Newlin, David Morris, Sharon Howarth**

**University of York**

Knowledge Production and Transfer' (Webber et al, submission no. 2099)Background: The orientation of mental health services in Europe, Australia and the US towards a recovery paradigm requires social workers to engage with an individual's social network or community to enhance their connectivity and access to social capital. However, there is little research evidence about effective approaches to enhancing individuals' social connections. This paper presents the findings of a multi-site pilot of the Connecting People Intervention (CPI) in England which provides an intervention framework and practice guidance for practitioners.Method: The CPI was piloted in 14 agencies across England working either with adults (working age and above working age) with mental health problems or adults with a learning disability. A quasi-experimental study design was used where increased fidelity to the CPI was hypothesised to be correlated with increased access to social capital and well-being over a 9-month follow-up period for the 155 participants. Process data was collected through qualitative interviews with service users, practitioners and agency managers.Results: Findings reveal patchy implementation of the CPI in the agencies, for a variety of logistical and practice-related reasons, which impacted upon its effectiveness. Full findings from the pilot study and economic evaluation will be presented.Conclusions: Quasi-experimental designs help to produce valid and reliable evidence to inform social work practice. Using both longitudinal quantitative data and findings from qualitative interviews can help to enhance our understanding about how to best enhance individuals' social connections. However, challenges in implementing interventions in resource-constrained agencies need to be overcome in order to improve outcomes and ensure mental health social work practice is as effective as possible.

# **Symposium**

## **The Challenges and Opportunities in Communicating with Children and their Families**

**Gillian Ruch**  
**Sally Holland, Sophie Hallett, Viv Cree, Karen Winter, Michelle Lefevre, Marit  
Skivenes, Tarja Poso**

**University of Sussex**

Creating meaningful and appropriate spaces to communicate with children is a daunting prospect, whether it is in the context of social work interventions or preventative welfare projects. A substantial body of knowledge exists that addresses the circumstances surrounding social workers' communications with children in the extraordinary contexts of children being seriously harmed or killed. In comparison far less is known about how social workers communicate with children in ordinary, everyday practice, the challenges they encounter in this process and the sense social workers and children make of these interactions. This symposium draws together three papers with a common focus on the complexities of communicating and engaging with children in diverse but routine contexts – in families, in schools and in welfare decision-making forums. The Talking and Listening to Children Project (TLC) is an ESRC funded UK wide project researching how social workers communicate with children in everyday social work contexts. A UK study funded by the Office for the Children's Commissioner in England has provided insight into how secondary schools create contexts conducive for children to communicate with staff about child protection concerns. Finally, a research study conducted in Norway and Finland surfaces the complex ways in which child-centric practice is understood and operationalised by social workers. Questioning how child-centred practice is configured raises fundamental questions of relevance for social work practice with children across settings and national contexts. Interwoven in all three papers are two overarching themes: firstly, social workers' commitment to establishing meaningful relationships with children and secondly, the significance of power dynamics in practice and importance of power being exercised in respectful and ethical ways. Each of the papers grapples with these challenges and the subtle dimensions and dynamics of practice that determine how children relate to and experience social workers.

Key words: communication, relationships, child protection, child-centred.

# **Intimacy and Distance in Social Workers' Communication with Children**

**Sally Holland and Sophie Hallett, Cardiff University, Wales**

**Viv Cree , Edinburgh University, Scotland**

**Gillian Ruch, University of Sussex, England**

**Karen Winter, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland**

This presentation reports early findings from a study that spans the four nations of the United Kingdom. The research aims to explore how social workers communicate with children in their everyday practice and how the social workers and children involved in these encounters experience and understand them.

The research is taking place in, firstly, frontline referral and assessment teams, where relationships with children may have to be developed rapidly, and secondly, looked after children's teams, where there is the potential for longer term relationships. Research methods include participant observation of social workers at work in their office, families' homes and on the move in-between settings and semi-structured, narrative and video stimulated recall interviews. By the end of the project detailed observations will have taken place of at least 80 social worker-child meetings and 12-16 children will have been involved in reflecting on their experiences.

This paper draws on the observational stage of the research and includes observations from a team for disabled children and a child protection team. We explore how practitioners, children and their carers navigate intimacy and distance in social workers' relationships with children, some of which may be fleeting encounters. Distance is seen to be created by administrative and temporal constraints and, at times, lack of confidence of practitioners in communicating in particular situations. Intimacy is sometimes achieved by touch and by verbal and non-verbal communication that allows the child's interests and concerns to be noticed before the 'business' of the visit is turned to. The adult members of the child's family may facilitate closeness or be perceived as acting as barriers.

Overall, we will reflect on the skills required, and professional dilemmas inherent, in the contemporary climate of child protection social work in the UK.

Key Words: communication, intimacy, distance, relationships

# **'Someone to talk to': safeguarding in schools through everyday contact**

**Michelle Lefevre**

**University of Sussex**

The understanding and identification of child protection needs among young people in their secondary school years has been well documented as a matter for concern. Young people are often unable to let others know of the harm or risks they are facing and it is essential that those around them not only create a safe environment which encourages the confiding of concerns but are in a position to identify where young people's demeanour or behaviour is indicative of things awry in their lives. The secondary school environment is uniquely well placed to assist in both respects due to the everyday contact and on-going relationships staff have with their students.

This paper draws on findings from a study funded by the Office for the Children's Commissioner in England which researched systems and policies developed by secondary schools to provide effective support and protection to their students. Six schools within four contrasting local authorities were selected as case studies of well-developed practice. Data collection included documentary analysis, focus groups with students and interviews with local authority managers, school staff, and school governors.

A key finding, emphasised by both staff and students, was the importance of creating a school environment where young people feel comfortable to reveal their safeguarding concerns – either to staff or to fellow students – and where students are known well enough for undisclosed concerns to be recognised by adults. Systems which enable staff to have regular formal and informal contact with students facilitate this. Protection needs can be obscured if staff focus on presenting problems, for example with behaviour or school attendance, without considering the underlying issues which might be provoking this. Schools must build students' awareness of, and language for talking about, child protection risks. Student-centred and participatory approaches are central to success.

Keywords: child protection, communication, young people, schools

# **Children as stakeholders in decision-making: contested issue, diverse practices**

**Tarja Pösö, University of Tampere, Finland**

**Marit Skivenes, University of Bergen, Norway**

Children's participation is a contested issue in the child welfare area in which children are in a vulnerable situation with possible exposure of abuse, neglect and removal from their biological parents or other custodians. We depart from a position in which all children should be involved in matters concerning them based on the simple premise that children in all ages should be recognized as individual persons. By proxy or by person, children should be informed, spoken with and addressed as an important person that is concerned about the situation. Such an approach would mean that children are considered to be a stakeholder in the case or the situation that has occurred and thus cannot be overlooked. However, this does not necessarily include an idea that the child should be directly involved in decision making for a situation that needs to be solved.

In this paper we explore the ways and attitudes employed by child welfare workers to manage the contested issue of children as stakeholders in child welfare decision-making. The study is located in Finland and Norway, both countries with child welfare policy and legislation directed towards child-centrism. Based on vignettes addressed to child welfare workers, we will analyse the ways that child welfare workers recognise children in the decision-making process and what the arguments are for including and excluding children from a stakeholder position. We are especially interested in the attitude of 'protection' as an argument for excluding children from agency in decision-making.

**Key Words:** child-centred, participation, decision-making, protection

# **Symposium**

## **The implications of media representation of social work and social workers**

**Ria Puhl**  
**Klara-Marie Niermann, Yelena Turski**

**Katholische Hochschule Nordrhein-Westfalen**

The implications of media representation of social work and social workers Prof. Dr. Ria Puhl, Prof. Dr. Armin Wildfeuer, Prof. Dr. Heinz Theisen, Louisa Beckmann, Saskia Comes, Rabea Franken, Svenja Gres, Sarah-Lena Kurdts, Nathalie Mazurek, Lena Mischkin, Klara-Marie Niermann, Maria Schute, Jelena Turski Catholic University of Applied Sciences Cologne, Germany This paper presents preliminary data from a small-scale research project on the representation of social work in the media. The project aims at understanding the normative impact of the media representation on social matters. Considering that public opinion of the professional interventions of social workers has an extensive effect on the social position of its service users, the project focuses on the presentation of people in need of care. Complementary to how the service users are perceived by the general public, the project, under guidance of Prof. R. Puhl, explores service users' wishes from social work. Furthermore it will analyze whether the potential negative media representation of service users prevents some people in need of care from obtaining social work support. This study builds on Prof. Puhl's early research on the role and outlook of public relations (in its broader sense) of social work. Within the framework of qualitative research methods, the present project aims to focus on the perspective of the service users of social work. The research team includes both lecturers and students from the Catholic University of Applied Sciences Cologne. The project is part of the wider research goal to build an international comparative perspective of the media representation of social work. Three research teams (University of Hertfordshire, UK; University of Piemonte Orientale, Italy; Catholic University of Applied Sciences Cologne, Germany) will merge their research results to form an understanding of the impact of the media's portrayal of social work. This understanding can lead to effective innovations and an increased awareness of the significance of media representations and public relations in social work education.

# **Implications of Media Representation of Social Work and Social Workers (films and novels)**

**ELENA ALLEGRI**

**Università del Piemonte Orientale Amedeo Avogadro**

This paper aims to present reflections based on empirical evidence coming from a study on social representations of social workers in the films and novels. This fictional material is an ideal and natural habitat for observing construction and re-construction mechanisms not only of representations, but also of inequalities and stereotypes present in welfare policies, especially in this period characterized by economic and social crisis. The findings of the empirical research highlight that films and novels produce reciprocal images between a profession, which plays the role of taking care of "Others", and the rest of society. The research is focused on media representations of social care professional identities, especially social workers, in a sample of 22 films and 20 novels. Applying a content thematic analysis, analytical categories included the significance of figures within the plot, professional capability, degree of empathy, and attributes of social workers. Categories related to the style and format of presentation also formed part of the analysis. A purposeful sampling procedure was followed, focused on the significance of the material for social work. The conclusions of research led to the construction of three ideal types of social workers represented, highlighted social work activities which did not attract media representation, and the possible steps that could enable the production of a more accurate reflection of the profession and its clients. These results can be utilised to actively influence the improvement of public perceptions of social workers and of their clients.

# **Lessons from media representation of social work and social problems**

**Shulamit Ramon**

**University of Hertfordshire**

Given the role played by the media in shaping and reflecting public opinion on uncomfortable and contested issues, it is important to know how social work, social workers, clients and social problems are represented by the media. This paper will look at how two UK newspapers represent domestic violence towards women and child protection, related social work activities, social work clients, and social workers at two points in time, applying a content thematic analysis to these representations. The key findings highlight that the media coverage depends largely on the ideological stance take by the newspapers' editors, and the specific style of the newspapers. By and large social workers are portrayed as ineffective and uncaring, clients as either exploitative and manipulative, or lacking in strength, with some exceptions. The social problems are depicted mainly through personalised stories, at times sensationalised. When sensationalised, women victims of domestic violence are portrayed in an unflattering way, while the perpetrators are glorified; children victims of abuse are portrayed only as innocent victims while their parents are described as perpetrators of their abuse. These representations are taking place within a context in which people living in poverty are perceived as "scroungers" by the more right wing newspaper. The more left wing newspaper adopts a more respectful approach to social work clients rather than to social workers, while being critical of government welfare policies. The media representations will be analysed in terms of the values and action messages sent to the lay public and to politicians about social work, and their location in the current prevailing approaches to welfare policies.

keywords: social work, media representation, domestic violence to women and children

# **Symposium**

## **Who advocates for parents in child protection processes (and why)? Perspectives from England**

**Brigid Featherstone, Sue White**

**The Open University**

This presentation draws on the authors' experience of working with organizations who campaign on behalf of parents in England and research with those who provide advocates to support parents going through the child protection process. It traces the history of parents' organizations in England in recent decades locating their development within the emergence of a set of concerns around the role of the state, the child as the object of concern and family change. The evidence that coercive state action is disproportionately focused on families who are socially and economically marginalized has provided fuel historically for those constituencies concerned with social justice. However, it is generally a confusing landscape with organizations occupying very diverse terrain from those advocating a return to patriarchal authority to libertarianism to social democracy. This terrain is mapped in order to support a social work project committed to dialogic processes in the advancing of social justice.

# **Who advocates for parents in child protection processes (and why)? A perspective from Australia**

**Elizabeth Reimer**

**Southern Cross University**

The primary rhetoric throughout Australia's history regarding parents who struggle to adequately care for their children, to the extent that they are deemed neglectful, has been one of blame; where parents have been either considered immoral or psychological reprobates (Jamrozik & Sweeney 1996; Dickey 1987). Despite this, a small number of parent advocates have continued to speak out on behalf of these parents. These advocates have included workers involved in family work, especially in family service agencies established nationally in the late-1970s to provide professional home-based intervention to struggling families (Wolcott 1989). This paper reports on doctoral research that utilised hermeneutic methodology to explore relationships between parents and family workers in four rurally based family services agencies in New South Wales, Australia. The parents, workers and supervisors involved in these relationships engaged in semi-structured in-depth interviews to "tell the story" of their relationship. This presentation aims to explore the variety of ways in which these family workers utilised the working relationship to advocate for parents where child neglect is an issue, and why they did this. Implications for practice and policy will be developed, both for the local Australian context (in light of an increasingly child rights-focused approach to service delivery in child protection work) and more broadly for the development of appropriate advocacy skills for professionals working with parents where children have been removed. References: Dickey, B. (1987). *No charity there: A short history of social welfare in Australia*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin. Jamrozik, A., & Sweeney, T. (1996). *Children and society: The family, the state, and social parenthood*. South Melbourne: Macmillan Education. Wolcott, I. (1989). *Family support services: A review of the literature and selected annotated bibliography*. Melbourne: Australian Institute for Family Studies.

Keywords: family support, parent advocacy

# **Who advocates for parents in child protection processes and why? An Irish perspective**

**Trish Walsh**

**School of Social Work and Social Policy**

Historically the legal framework for Irish state interventions into family life was the 1908 Children Act. Under this legislation, child welfare bodies could apply for an order placing the child in the care of state agencies under a range of moral, physical and/or welfare grounds. With the establishment of a child and family social work service within the health board structures from the 1970's, the processes governing the interactions between troubled families and social workers became formalised, with the court system taking a more central role. Early advocacy services for parents were established by voluntary organisations which brought together concerned advocates from social work, community work, family law and women's organisations and provided support and information for parents caught in child welfare proceedings (Family Link, 1987). In more recent times the landscape has changed considerably in three ways: (i) a more authoritarian interventionist system has been established and legislation 'updated' with the 1991 Child Care Act. (ii) The traditional family-centred ethos of the Irish constitution is in the process of being reformulated with the passing of a 'children's rights' referendum, albeit itself now subject to a legal challenge from conservative family rights petitioners who object to increased state involvement in family matters. (iii) The complexity of legal proceedings has intensified and increased in expense. Central to the new order is the widespread use of an unregulated Guardian Ad Litem system which with unrestricted powers has significantly affected the balance of power between statutory authorities, parents and children in child welfare cases. Given this evolving situation and the return to action of some far-right conservative 'family rights' groups, it is timely to document and analyse the evolution of advocacy for parents in Irish child protection processes.

# **Who advocates for parents in child protection processes and why? Perspectives from Australia, England, Ireland and Norway**

**Trish Walsh**

**School of Social Work and Social Policy**

In this symposium, we report on the initial phase of an international research project into the issue of advocacy for parents in child protection processes. Researchers from England, Norway, Australia and Ireland will present on the history and contemporary practices in parents' advocacy in each national context. The broad question to be addressed is: Who advocates for parents in child protection processes (and why)? We aim to explore further the different policies and practices in place in each of the four countries with a view to developing parameters for phase two of the project in which empirical research will be gathered on this topic in each of the four sites. Gilbert et al (2011) note in their review of ten differing welfare regimes a transnational child-focused orientation. This orientation concentrates on the child as an individual with an independent relation to the state with particular implications, therefore, for parents.. It is not simply restricted to concerns about harm and abuse; rather the object of concern is the child's overall development and well-being and programs seek to go beyond protecting children from risk to promoting children's welfare. Within a child-focused orientation, the state takes on a growing role for itself in terms of providing a wide range of early intervention and preventive services. This symposium is important and unique in its concern to explore who speaks for parents in such a context. This is a universal theme of relevance but one which is both culturally defined and locally grounded.

Gilbert, N., Parton, N., & Skivenes, M. (2011) *Child Protection Systems: International trends and Orientations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# **Who advocates for parents in child protection processes and why? Perspectives from Australia, England, Ireland and Norway**

**Tor Slettebø**

**Diakonia University College**

A Norwegian perspective The paper presentation is based on research on parent's experiences with the child protection services (Slettebø, 2011, Seim & Slettebø, 2010), but also advocacy work in supporting parents in Norway to organize an interest and support group for these group of parents. The majority of families involved in child protection experience multiple chronic stressors. Research has demonstrated the intense emotions parents feel when a child is placed in care. The parents experience powerlessness, neglect and a lack of information, especially after the child has been removed. The local authorities have unsatisfactory follow up services to the parents, and they are often left to themselves. A variety of factors may contribute to the difficulties in advocating for the parents in child protection. One of the most obvious reasons is that parents, in the proceedings up to the placement, do have a greater voice in the decision-making processes than their children. Supporting the parents may therefore be regarded as ethically incorrect since the voice of children is often overlooked. Another explanation is that this group of parents is often difficult to work with in practice. Due to lack of resources social workers need to make priorities, and they pay more attention to the children's needs than their parents after the placement. Much of the literature in child protection is based on traditional psychodynamic theories where parents are regarded as the causes of the children's problems. Parents who are not capable of looking after their children are also often exposed to stigma because they challenge a central value in our society, that children should be brought up with their parents. Finally, to advocate for parents could be seen as counteractive to the ideology of a child centered welfare state.

Seim, S. and T. Slettebø (2011) Collective Participation in Child Protection Services: Partnership or Tokenism? *European Journal of Social Work*. Nr.1, s.1-16. Slettebø, T. (2011), Partnership with parents without custody. *British Journal of Social Work*. p 1-17, doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcr188.

# **Symposium**

## **„Transdisciplinary and participative Research for eco-social Development“**

**Susanne Elsen**  
**Claudia Lintner, Michael Gasser, Anja Salzer, Judith Schicklinski**

**Free University of Bozen - Bolzano**

The ability to accomplish the challenges of climate change, new social situations or the aftermath of modifications in worldwide economy, requires the strengthening of the capability of local people to act and the defense and preservation of their means of livelihood . The pursuit of sustainable problem solving strategy emphasizes this importance of “the local” (in juxtaposition to “the global”), local capacity vs. global dependency, embedded economic circularity and local conservation of resources. Research for eco-social development has to integrate the main dimensions of sustainability, i.e. the ecological, the social and the economic dimensions and depends on the partnership between local people and scientists. The challenge of this kind of so called “Transformative Research”, which can be seen as an advancement of the tradition of participatory action research in community development, is to create settings of cooperative knowledge production and research-based social change, involving actors of different disciplines and particularly local people in egalitarian way. This Symposium will present and discuss four running research projects in and outside the territory of South Tyrol.

# **Creating new knowledge with migrant entrepreneurs**

**Claudia Lintner**

**Free University of Bozen - Bolzano**

The abstract is based on an on-going qualitative PhD project which deals with migrant entrepreneurship in the South Tyrol of Italy. The paper concentrates on the generation of new knowledge within minority research. Self-organization among migrants is perceived as a bottom-up strategy, which secures not only the material basis for existence, but also promotes active participation in the community and the capacity to become actors of their own development. It is argued that migrant economies cannot be defined neither as capitalized arenas nor as a pocket of resistance, but that they have to be realized in their hybridity at the borderline between „Life-world and System“. The research project is based on a qualitative approach which makes use of expert interviews, narrative interviews, participant observation and document analyze. Moreover, the research is following a vision of the nature of humanity which sees the individual not as passive being, who is entirely formed by society, but as an active human being who is certainly able to influence society. This argumentation line is based on the assumption that every person is capable of shaping their own life. The research process is perceived as a participate one, which is based on the assumption that migrant entrepreneurs become active co-constructors of new knowledge. This argumentation follows the principle of transformative science where a new understanding of the relation of science and society is center staged. In order to develop more real opportunities or positive freedom of choice there is a significant need to rethink migrant's role in society. In addition, increasing awareness of the positive part that migrants can play could contribute to a more sensible public discourse on the phenomenon and lead to recognize migrant economic activities as an important part of territorial development rather than a personal struggle and as a survival strategy.

# **Towards a participatory vision of a sustainable local future: Challenges of a transdisciplinary research-project with multi-ethnic actors in the South Caucasus/ Georgia**

**Anja Salzer**

**Free University of Bozen - Bolzano**

As the access to natural resources but also strategies of securing livelihood have received diversification during the processes of socio-economical and political transformation in the former Soviet republics of the Caucasus new challenges for the local eco-social systems arise. In transforming these challenges into sustainable action, a vision of a "sustainable local future" among the respective stakeholders is seen as a key. This "future knowledge" about desirable and sustainable futures is explicitly part of transformative research. Research and development for sustainability require comprehensive and integrated approaches. Hence the common mode of scientific knowledge production, the so-called "system knowledge", is being expanded by "future knowledge" and "transformation knowledge", that build on experiences, motivations and values of the specific actors involved in the transformation process. In doing so transformative research is combining understanding and action in a participatory way. The transdisciplinary project (BIOMAN) is working on the interrelation of local land-use practice (mainly pasturing) with the sensitive biodiversity of alpine steppe-ecosystems of the Javakheti region in Southern Georgia targeted on transforming its findings into sustainable practice. Drawing on the example of the research project in Javakheti the question is to be developed how transformative research towards local sustainability could be tackled. This also implies the questioning of the role of research and research-practice as such. The paper will provide insights into the ongoing empirical research process and critically discuss some challenges in terms of knowledge production, cooperation and integration that arise from transdisciplinary work on sustainable transition processes with multi-ethnic actors in Georgia.

# **New social contracts across European cities against the background of the socio-ecological transition? Looking at citizens' participation in the governance of green spaces**

**Judith Schicklinski**

**Free University of Bozen - Bolzano**

The on-going destruction of humanities' livelihoods in a dis-embedded economy highly jeopardizes the idea of a more ecological, economic and social sustainable Europe and asks for (a) new European social contract(s), in which individuals collectively assume responsibility for future generations without neglecting their own right on a good life.

How must such (a) new contract(s) look like today against the background of the socio-ecological transition (SET)?

The theoretical part of this research project is twofold. Firstly, it displays the current state of the art on the linkage between classical and modern social contract theory and the SET to show the unsustainability of previous social contracts. Secondly, it asks about the role of new social contracts on the local level across Europe, keeping in mind that, according to the slogan "think globally, act locally", the local level is paramount for sustainable development. Following the necessity of local re-embedding processes, numerous "small social contracts" (von Winterfeld / Biesecker) have emerged. How must they be designed to reach sustainable local/regional development? What are the roles of the involved parties/actors coming from the interacting and overlapping spheres of the state, the market and civil society? Which contract components are necessary, and how are they shaped (gender, generations, work, citizens' participation...)?

All over Europe self-organized civil society movements are emerging on the grassroots level to tackle local challenges, becoming active players in local governance processes, practising an active citizenship. These social experiments have even been intensified as a result of tight public local budgets. Their activities contribute to the functioning and well-being of a European society aiming for sustainability. For their development, an enabling, innovative and fostering local policy framework is necessary, allowing for constructive interaction with local politics and administration.

The empirical part of the project will examine in a case study approach the institutional preconditions of a new interplay between state, market and civil society in the local governance of green spaces in different European cities to gain a deepened understanding of one of the fundamental contract components. For that, it will be drawn on qualitative data from a sample compiled in the scope of the project [wwwforEurope](http://wwwforEurope.eu)<sup>1</sup> (interviews and case study reports). This data will be supplemented with expert interviews with scholars and with actors

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<sup>1</sup> Workpackage 5 of this project examines the state of the SET in 40 cities across Europe ([www.foreurope.eu](http://www.foreurope.eu)) .

from a reduced sample of best practice cities to answer the following three key questions: What factors determine the existence of self-organized entities which cooperatively manage resources like green spaces in European cities, does a high autonomy of local government favour their existence and emergence? How do outcomes of local self-organized and cooperative management of green spaces compare with provisions by the market-based or the government? Is self-organization a transition driver in the field of green spaces?

# **Traditional and scientific knowledge for a sustainable management of alpine pastures**

**Michael Gasser**

**Free University of Bozen - Bolzano**

There exists a rich research-knowledge how traditional pastures ("Almen") in the Alps influence the environment (vegetation, biodiversity, soil, water balance etc.) of the alpine and subalpine Region. Recent studies concentrate on the influence of changing climate and changing agricultural activities in that region. Aims of the research project are: (1) to give an overview of important scientific results concerning this topic, (2) to investigate on the practical knowledge, which enabled people to maintain the productivity of alpine pastures for many centuries, (3) to find out, whether or how much management of alpine pastures is influenced by scientific knowledge and suggestions of authorities. Methods applied are to interview local actors and stakeholders, and to create settings of cooperative knowledge production, which could enable people to manage the challenge of the current changes of their world, economy and society.

# **Symposium**

## **Perceptions and attitudes of professional social workers in different welfare systems: determining factors and implications for practice**

**Blomberg, Helena**

**University of Helsinki**

The purpose of the symposium is to bring together researchers from various countries active in research based on a common, unique international empirical set of data on social workers' perceptions and attitudes, and other interested researchers, practitioners and educators in order to discuss, on the basis of new findings from the individual papers presented, what can be learned more generally from (comparative) attitude research on social workers' views on various issues of social work and related social policies.

The individual papers presented will provide a basis for symposium participants to reflect on issues regarding various specific problems, but also on general issues related to the importance of (the knowledge of) practitioners' attitudes for social work practice and education, including the question of the role of individual social workers' views on the services provided to clients. The papers, taken together, also provide a fresh perspective to the discussion on what contributes to the formation of the social work profession in general. Thereby, the symposium touches upon several of the key themes of the conference, including, e.g., issues of complexity and universality, as well as issues of social work as political action.

One common point of departure for the papers in the Symposium is the assumption that social workers can be considered important actors affecting, in various ways, the implementation and thereby also the legitimacy of national and local welfare policies in general and among some groups of clients of the welfare state in particular. Their role is believed to have been enhanced by the fact that, throughout Europe, there has been growing involvement of social workers as implementers for new types of social policy measures in the last decades, directed at the growing populations of poor and long term unemployed, for instance. This development highlights the general question regarding the relationships between (varying) dominating normative mind-sets and official policy goals in different systems and the views among members of the social work profession.

The individual papers investigate and compare the attitudes among social workers in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) and in Italy. One central issue investigated is thus whether and to what extent the radically diverging welfare policy traditions and system-designs of these countries' welfare states are reflected in the views of social workers, as compared to the importance of other variables at individual (micro) level, such as education and

work experience and at the meso-level, such as type of social work tasks and sector of employment (public/private/voluntary) as well as regional and local conditions. Such analysis will contribute to answering the question of whether perceptions and attitudes towards social problems and social policies are related to national normative and institutional factors or whether, instead a (possibly internationally embraced) professional way of thinking, results in more commonly accepted ways of viewing social problems and social policies.

# **Italian social workers' opinions on their margins of discretion and power towards clients**

**Paolo Guidi, Silvana Mordeglia**

**Università degli studi di Genova**

This paper aims at exploring the issue of social worker's power in their relation with clients in the opinion of the social workers themselves. The theme is relevant as professional social workers are involved with clients on a day-to-day basis. They implement social services and sometimes even compulsory measures representing the interface between the welfare state and citizens' needs and problems. Accordingly they often have to balance and mediate between public welfare and politics and the uniqueness of every human situation, and they do it with a considerable margin of discretion.

The following research questions will be answered:  
1) How do Italian social workers view their margins of discretion and power towards clients?  
2) What explains similarities and differences among Italian social workers and which role does the welfare model play?

By including a comparison with social workers in the Nordic countries the relevance of welfare regimes can be explored. Other factors explored are age and education of the social workers, the field of specialisation (e.g. child protection, disability and addiction), the working sector and more general values such as views on the causes of poverty. The paper presents results from a survey directed towards social workers in four Nordic countries and Italy. The survey was answered by in total 7 569 social workers (Sweden N= 2809, Norway N= 703, Denmark N=743, Finland N= 1299 and Italy N=2718).

Preliminary results indicate important differences between Italian and Nordic social workers. For example, 45 per cent of the Italian social workers express that they do not have great power towards clients compared to less than 20 per cent for the Nordic social workers.

Key words: social work, attitudes, margins of discretion, power

# **For-profit vs. Non-profit? Attitudes towards privatisation among social workers in five countries**

**Johanna Kallio  
Anna Meeuwisse, Roberto Scaramuzzino**

**University of Turku**

Symposium: Perceptions and attitudes of professional social workers in different welfare systems: determining factors and implications for practice European welfare states have been subject to significant restructuring since the 1990s. In welfare state research, terms like subsidiarisation, privatization or marketization are used to grasp a general trend towards downsizing the role of the state, and to a greater extent engage other actors in the designing, managing and implementation of social policy. Private actors, both for-profit and non-profit organizations, are gaining new roles in social services. While comparative welfare research often overlooks the distinction between for-profit and non-profit actors, third sector research emphasizes the different logics underlying these two types of non-state actors. The purpose of this paper is to analyse Nordic and Italian social worker's attitudes towards a greater involvement of for-profit and non-profit actors in social work. The empirical base for the study is nation-wide surveys among social workers in four Nordic countries and in Italy. The survey was answered by in total 7 569 social workers (Sweden N= 2809, Norway N= 703, Denmark N=743, Finland N= 1299 and Italy N=2718). The study shows that most social workers in all countries are negative towards a stronger role for non-state actors in social work. But their attitudes towards privatisation are only partly connected to which welfare model they work within. Age and working sector of the respondents are other factors of significance. An important finding is that there are different explanatory factors behind positive attitudes towards for-profit and non-profit privatisation, which indicate that social workers do not interpret the role of for-profit and non-profit organisations in the same way.

Key words: privatisation, social worker, attitudes, survey

# **Regional contexts and professional values as determinants of social workers' views towards vulnerable groups and related policy measures: Italy compared to the Nordic countries**

**Helena Blomberg  
Christian Kroll**

**University of Helsinki**

Symposium: Perceptions and attitudes of professional social workers in different welfare systems: determining factors and implications for practice In most European countries, social programs directed at vulnerable groups are the responsibility of one or more sub-national, regional and/or local, administrative levels. Various differences in local contexts might also affect, or interact with, the views of the implementers of the programs (often social workers), potentially affecting actual provision and use of services, since implementers exercise some discretion regarding individual cases. These views might either advance or counteract differences in official policies. On the other hand, social workers are often considered to constitute a profession, characterized by (internationally accepted) ethical guidelines and core professional values. If this factor is central to the reasoning of social workers, more universal and commonly accepted ways of perceiving vulnerable groups and preferred policies among this group could be expected, regardless of local contexts. Based on large national surveys in Italy(N=2718), Sweden(N=2809), Norway(N= 703), Denmark(N=743), Finland(N=1299), we examine the perceptions regarding economically and socially vulnerable groups, and attitudes to related policy strategies, among professional social workers with a main focus on regional contexts in Italy. Italy makes an interesting case in this respect, since it is characterized by substantial regional differences in issues of social assistance. Since not only intra-national, but also international differences in welfare policies have been assumed important, we also compare the Italian results with data on the views of Nordic social workers, which represent a different welfare regime as well as a system of less varying (although locally administered) system of social assistance. Preliminary results indicate a substantially larger intra-country variation in views Italy, especially regarding more concrete policy measures.

Keywords: Regional contexts, professional values, views on clients

# **Different logics? Attitudes of Nordic and Italian social workers in the public, private and the voluntary sector**

**Anna Meeuwisse  
Roberto Scaramuzzino**

**Lund University**

Symposium: Perceptions and attitudes of professional social workers in different welfare systems: determining factors and implications for practice Terms like subsidiarization, privatization and marketization are often used to characterize the institutional change towards the involvement of a multiplicity of actors in the production of social welfare services. This development has been more prominent in certain countries than in others but with the general consequence that social workers' labour market has become more diversified encompassing not only the public sector but to a greater extent also the private and the voluntary sector. Organisations from different institutional sectors differ in aspects such as ownership, governance, operational priorities, human and material resources, and also in overall logics. Does this also mean that social workers working in different institutional sectors differ in their attitudes and professional roles? Previous research on this topic has often been conducted in single countries and on small numbers of social workers. This paper presents results from a survey directed towards social workers in four Nordic countries and Italy. The survey was answered by in total 7 569 social workers (Sweden N= 2809, Norway N= 703, Denmark N=743, Finland N= 1299 and Italy N=2718). The paper explores similarities and differences between social workers working in the public, voluntary and private sector regarding their opinions on working conditions, professional role and general social values. The meso-level institutional and organizational context is also tested as explanatory variables for social workers attitudes against macro-level factors such as national context and welfare model, and individual level factors such as age and position of responsibility. The results show that there are differences in attitudes among social workers in all countries that seem to be linked to the different organizational logics of the sectors.

Key words: social workers, attitudes, institutional sector, survey

# **WORKSHOP**

# **'Practice-based Research' and 'Research-based Practice' - Lessons learned from a Practice - Research Collaborative**

**Sigrid James**

**University of Kassel**

## Background and Workshop Objectives:

Despite efforts to explicitly integrate social work practice and research this goal often remains elusive or mere lip-service. Practitioners and researchers seldom speak the “same language,” and despite good intentions efforts of integration are often marred by different values, agendas, and distinct knowledge and skill sets. In the current evidence-based practice climate, the integration of practice and research are no longer optional. They are an explicit part of the steps outlined in the evidence-based model. Treatments, interventions, and programs are expected to be evaluated, and findings are to be “fed back” in order to inform and shape practice. Yet, it is unlikely that social work practitioners have either the time, the resources or the skills to formally evaluate complex social work interventions and programs, necessitating the need for researchers who are trained in the gathering and evaluation of data. On the other hand, social work researchers often have little knowledge about the issues and challenges of social work practice, may not be interested in conducting research in practice settings, or in many cases, may not have access to such settings.- Translational research and implementation models tend to be one-directional and primarily concerned about how current research findings can more quickly be disseminated to practice communities or how evidence-based interventions can be transported into a practice community. Yet, models of practice-research collaboratives assume bi-directionality, with practice informing research agendas and methods, and research findings, in turn, informing practice. The broad aim of this workshop is to lead the audience into a discussion about the benefits and challenges of practice-research collaboratives in social work, and to present and discuss factors that can promote or hinder such efforts.

## Methods:

To accomplish the workshop objectives the following methods will be used: Illustration, presentation, (small) group discussion, and 'Question and Answer.' Handouts and other written materials will be passed out.

### 1. Illustration:

The workshop will begin with a presentation and review of a specific effort within a traditionally practice-oriented multidisciplinary psychiatric setting (including social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, and public health professionals) that had been striving to address a growing community problem, namely the rise of deliberate self-harm (DSH) among its youth. This part of the workshop will include a presentation and review of: the setting and practice

context; the decision to adopt a promising intervention approach (Dialectical Behavior Therapy [DBT]) to address DSH among youth referred to the agency; the steps involved in the implementation of the intervention (training, choice of model, adaptation, etc.); the factors leading up to the integration of researchers as part of the team; the practitioner-researcher team building phase; the implications for clinical practice; clinical outcomes of the program; the dissemination of outcomes to practice and research communities; remaining challenges; lessons learned.

## 2. Presentation/Integration with Literature:

Key lessons learned from this specific effort will be placed within the context of the existing knowledge base on practice – research collaboratives. This will include a brief review of primary models and known successful collaboratives. This part will also draw on the collaboration literature and identify different models of collaboration along with barriers and facilitators to collaboration.

## 3. Group Discussion and Q&A:

Using small group discussion and subsequent discussion, audience members will be asked to share their own experiences with practice-research collaboratives, to identify the biggest barriers to successful practice-research collaboratives, and to identify concrete implications for social work education, practice, and research.

# Decisions and Use of Knowledge

**Brian Taylor  
Campbell Killick**

**University of Ulster**

## WORKSHOP PROPOSAL:

Social work involves making decisions such as judgements about suitable interventions; recommendations about prioritising use of public and charitable resources; and protecting the vulnerable on behalf of society. Such decisions may involve high risks such as continued abuse or death of a child or a vulnerable adult, continuing neglect or suicide. In order to improve these decisions we need to understand better the professional judgement processes, including how the decision is conceptualised and how knowledge (evidence) is used. There are increasing demands – from the public, politicians, the media and Inquiries into tragedies - for social work judgements and decision processes to be more accountable. This Workshop will build on the very successful Symposium at the first European Conference on Social Work Research in Oxford in 2010, and a paper produced from that (Taylor, 2012). The Workshop will build on research on risk and decision making in child care, elder care, dementia, mental health, disability and criminal justice undertaken by staff and students linked to the University of Ulster Social Work Research Cluster on Decision, Assessment, Risk and Evidence Studies ([www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/irss/decisionmakinginsocialwork.html](http://www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/irss/decisionmakinginsocialwork.html)).

The presentation of material from empirical studies rooted in social work practice will be complemented by consideration of theoretical models that might be used to conceptualise social work decisions in uncertainty (risk) that must demonstrate use of 'evidence' and 'logical' decision making processes in a coherent way.

Key points of the presentation will include:

- \* A typology of social work decision types.
- \* Consideration of using knowledge (evidence) within decision making.
- \* Considering the possible application of analytic (statistical) and heuristic (intuitive) models to social work decision making.

Questions will be posed for small group discussion at appropriate points during the Workshop, with general feedback and discussion at the end.

1. How does the typology of decisions fit your experience of social work?
2. How is knowledge (evidence) used within these decisions?
3. What are the parameters that distinguish types of social work decisions and the types of models that may be useful for understanding them?

This Workshop will accord with the aim of the European Conference on Social Work Research in strengthening the scientific basis for social work by developing our empirical and theoretical understanding of a crucial social work practice task: decision making with and in relation to clients and families. The workshop will be jointly presented by an academic and an employee of a service delivery organisation, and will balance academic rigour with practice issues throughout.

This workshop will contribute to the theme Evidence and Uncertainty: Pathways to Accountable Social Work Research and Practice in considering the ways that knowledge (evidence) is used in social work decisions. Professional judgement and decision making processes are a key aspect of social work practice, where the demands for accountability are intense and the use of knowledge (evidence) must be clearly articulated. This Workshop will enable participants to have a better understanding of research on decision making, and to explore ways of conceptualising social work decisions. The Workshop aims to contribute to improving social work practice in decision making, and to forming the research agenda on this topic. Reference Taylor BJ (2012) Models for professional judgement in social work. *European Journal of Social Work*, 15(4), 546-562.

Key words: Decision making; evidence based practice; professional judgement; risk.

# **Reciprocal Relationships and Social Work**

**Maritta Törrönen**

**Carol Munn-Giddings, Darren Sharpe, Kimiko Tanaka, Olga Borodkina, Claire Cameron, Riitta Vornanen, Pirjo Korvela, Bernhard Babic, Eveliina Heino, Tarja Juvonen, Minna Veistilä**

**University of Helsinki**

The aim of this international and multidisciplinary workshop is to generate discussion on the concept of Reciprocity in order to enhance our understanding of this idea as a universally recognized phenomenon and promote future collaboration around this theme. We the authors share the belief that personal experience of social and societal reciprocity has profound ontological significance for individuals and is one of the most important factors in creating well-being. In order to have a full understanding of how well-being can be created and supported from a citizen-orientated point of view, we need a thorough analysis of how experiences of reciprocity are generated in the twenty-first century.

The Finnish Academy-funded project, Reciprocal Relationships and the Construction of Well-being during Critical Periods of Everyday Life (RePro) , invites other researchers, teachers, service users and practitioners to join in this conceptual and hopefully practical effort to open reciprocity to such perspectives as immigration, childhood and youth or ageing research and to the sharing of interest in social capital, for instance, in relation to social bonds, relationships, trust, social support, solidarity and well-being, either on the micro-, meso- and/or macro-levels. The main objective of the RePro-project is to produce knowledge about individual well-being and how it is constructed, created and maintained during critical periods of everyday life. The critical periods are understood as life phases during which the need for support and care grows considerably. These periods provide clear vantage points from which to view the interplay between public and private sector behaviour and how these sectors function together in vulnerable life situations.

Research into reciprocity can be seen as a contribution to international social welfare research, where attention is focused on well-being and the communities that hold people together (see Becker 1986; Bruni 2008; Ostrom & Walker 2003). Our workshop will combine both 'public issues' and 'private troubles', as the title of the conference suggests.

We intend to use interactive means to enhance reciprocal learning during our workshop, which we hope to hold for an hour and a half on two successive days. The pedagogical method used in our workshop is that of a Reciprocal Round Table . Briefly, this means that we have two different subthemes derived from our project. The time is divided equally between the two. All participants are seated around a 'round table' for discussion, which starts with a short introduction of the subtheme in question. Active participation and idea development is encouraged. RePro team members serve as predetermined chairs during the workshop. All collaborative ideas that emerge during the workshop will nourish the creativity of participants in their research and studies.

The idea of this workshop comes very close to the conference theme 3, Standing up to complexity: Specific and universal issues in social work .

The workshop themes will be:

Day 1: Reciprocal Relationships in Changing Societies

Day 2: Reciprocal Relationships in Different Life Situations

Keywords: reciprocity, well-being, social work research, critical periods of everyday life

For more on the RePro-project, please see our website: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/relationships/>

#### References:

Becker, Lawrence C (1986) Reciprocity. New York: Routledge.

Bruni, Luigino (2008) Reciprocity, Altruism and the Civil Society. In praise of heterogeneity. London and New York: Routledge.

Ostrom, Elinor & Walker, James (2003) Trust and Reciprocity. Interdisciplinary Lessons from Experimental Research. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

# **Workshop on Developments and Applications in Archival Research in Social Work**

**John Gal**

**Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

Archives provide a rich source of data for scholars seeking to better understand historical developments and diverse aspects of social history.

However the use of archival data has tended to be very limited within social work and the focus of research has tended to be on the present rather than the past. As a result, we lack sufficient knowledge of the history of the profession, its values, practices, and its nexus with services users, decision makers and other professionals. The goal of this workshop is to explore the use of archival research as a means of furthering research on the history of social work and social welfare and of providing an historical perspective on the development of the profession in diverse contexts. The workshop will be based upon three presentations of findings of studies undertaken in Canada, Israel and the United States.

The studies employ different types of archival data and diverse methodological and theoretical approaches to the use of this type of data. Participants in the workshop will be encouraged to experience the analysis of archival sources, their advantages and limitations, and to discuss their possible contribution to social work scholarship. Adrienne Chambon will employ photographic and written records of a City archive that brings up contradictory readings of the social organization and use of public space and of the nature of social relations related to the changing policy of public space.

Her claim will be that a close-up look at a series of photographs of children in public spaces in early 20th century Toronto, taken by different photographers, and by the same photographer based on different commissions raises different questions about the social place/location of children, and different groups of children, of polarized representations of social divides; or more nuanced juxtapositions. John Gal will present findings from a study that analysed case reports and historical documents relating to soup kitchens, which operated in Jerusalem between 1912 and 1933. The presentation traces the construction of poverty in case reports produced by social workers, who investigated the needs of nearly 500 families, all clients of the soup kitchen, during the early 1930s.

A content analysis of the case reports offers rich evidence of the ways in which notions about the poor, poverty and the role of social workers were constructed and designed. The Zionist ideology that motivated the immigration of the social workers to Palestine and dominant social work thinking in the Weimar Republic, where most of the social workers were trained, are reflected in the case reports. As such, these reports provide a unique perspective on the manner in which political ideologies and professional approaches impact upon social work at a specific historical point in time.

Ian Shaw will draw on fieldwork in the University of Chicago Special Collections to suggest an archival framework for understanding disparate but related objects, statements and themes in social work research practices at Chicago in the third and fourth decades of the last century. He will distinguish between methodology as professional model; research practices as selective accountability and claims-making; methodology as reported practice; and research practices in their relation to a vision for social service and reform. These four accounts rest in uneasy and sometimes oppositional tension to one another, and also in relation to wider contemporary images and practices of social work research. He will note how the rhetoric of professional autonomy submerged some accounts and emphasized others, and suggest how such an understanding of the archive unsettles subsequent and current ways of deploying visions for social work and applied research, and for the relationship between social work and sociology.

# **Social work professionalism and the politics of knowledge generation, dissemination and implementation: exploring the current contours**

**Elizabeth Harlow**

**University of Chester**

The international community of social workers has recently been attempting to construct a definition of its practice that is acceptable across a range of regional contexts. In consequence, the topic of social work professionalism may be particularly apposite.

The topic of professionalism draws into focus the question of foundational knowledge. Furthermore, the European economic context of neoliberal austerity may demand the increased justification of social work in the form of 'evidence' of its efficacy.

Social work debates on knowledge and 'evidence' (including its generation and dissemination) have been extensive and developmental (see for example: Glasby and Beresford 2005; Shaw and Lunt 2012; Wilkinson et al. 2012). But despite these developments controversy continues: from the scientific community who reject the value of service user led research (Beresford 2007) or radical dissenters who reject the idea that social work depends upon a specialist body of knowledge (Jordan and Drake 2010). Jordan and Drake (2010) argue for a return of power and responsibility for problem resolution and growth to local groups and communities.

Arguing that social workers perform roles once undertaken by family and community they ask: Can what appeared to be a spontaneous evolution of societies towards larger-scale organisation – the professionalisation of services and the power of bureaucrats and managers – be turned around, to allow greater participation by and accountability to citizens? (Jordan and Drake 2010: 107).

In many countries social work has been consolidated as a profession by means of requirements for graduate education and registration to practice. However, the Frontline initiative in England offers a shortened educational pathway that relies on the increased influence of practice agencies. In consequence, this initiative might be seen as indicating scepticism towards the academic discipline and evidence informed teaching associated with University led education. At addition, Universities that are aiming to compete globally for their share of business, require social work academics to demonstrate adequately the significance, reach and impact of their research activity. In terms of social and organizational politics, what are the implications of these recent developments and in particular the systems of performance management (such as the Research Effectiveness Framework in England) for the profession of social work?

Finally, what might be the consequences for social work knowledge and accountability (if any) of global information and communication technologies and developments such as open access publishing? The proposed workshop aims to identify and explore the competing political influences on the knowledge foundations of social work and their implications for its status as a 'profession'.

Following a brief introduction on the topic (as indicated above) participants will be encouraged to share their perspectives. This will be a fully interactive event with the opportunity for all to make a contribution.

Notes will be taken and a summary of the key points raised will be circulated. Participants will have the opportunity to form a special interest group and continue their collaboration.

# Researching Moral Panics: Issues for Social Work Practice and Research

**Vivienne Cree  
Gary Clapton, Mark Smith**

**The University of Edinburgh**

## Background & Purpose

This workshop emanates from a two-year, cross-disciplinary study of current social issues and anxieties, studied through the lens of 'moral panic' theory (Cohen, 2002).

The project has a number of component parts:

- An ESRC-sponsored research seminar series on moral panics, running from September 2012 to April 2014, with seminars in Edinburgh, Bath and Cardiff.
- Empirical research and academic writing on topics that have been identified within this 'moral panic' discourse, including historical abuse in residential childcare, child trafficking, pornography, social work and the media and child protection.
- Blogging and tweeting on all aspects of current social concerns that might be perceived to be moral panics, including child sexual abuse and the so-called 'Jimmy Savile affair', young people and sexuality, the 2012 UK riots, the killing of Lee Rigby, to name just a few.
- More information can be found at [moralpanicseminars.wordpress.com/](http://moralpanicseminars.wordpress.com/)

The purpose of the workshop is to share some of our experiences (uncomfortable and exhilarating in equal measure) with participants and then to find out firstly, what counts as a moral panic in other country-contexts and secondly, to explore with others the difficult issues of carrying out sensitive research which, at times, may challenge commonly-held views and ideas in social work.

## Methods

We will begin with an introduction to some of our own research findings in relation to the moral panic project. In doing so, we will draw attention to social work's propensity to be involved in or influenced by moral panics, especially those surrounding the endangerment of children, often leading to over-reaction, calls for increased intervention and a growth in all-encompassing child protection 'radar' that seeks to include any and every new anxiety. The result of this process, we will argue, is the replacement of optimistic, preventative and supportive work with suspicion-based monitoring and surveillance practice. We will conclude that many of the anxieties that have led to UK moral panics are mirrored elsewhere in Europe, e.g. the internet-related behaviour of children and young people, youth crime and people trafficking.

Summary of the main points of the presentation:

- Social work is historically susceptible to moral panics
- Recent and contemporary moral panics have led to an increase in the 'reach' of the child protection 'radar' in which, increasingly, child protection social workers find themselves policing poor and disenfranchised families
- The growth of an unhelpful dichotomy between not only children and their families, but also between social workers and their clients
- It is not only UK social work that has found itself caught up in moral panics.

Following the presentation, participants will be invited to break up into small groups to discuss the resonance of this for social work in their own countries.

We will end with a plenary discussion in which participants will share ideas and also consider the difficulties of conducting research on tricky subjects such as this.

#### Connection to conference aims and themes

The workshop will address many of the conference themes, but in particular, will provide an arena for the dissemination and discussion of knowledge relevant to social work research, policy and practice with the specific theme of 'standing up to complexity'.

#### Conclusions & implications

We hope that the workshop will stimulate critical awareness and encourage participants to think more reflectively about the role of social work in their own countries. Beyond this, we hope to identify researchers who are interested in taking our project forward, looking to cross-national collaboration for future seminars and research.

#### Reference

Cohen, S. (2002) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics. 30th Anniversary Edition*, London: Routledge.

# **Giving participants a voice?**

**Julia Franz**  
**Kimq Strom-Gottfried, Ana Sobocan, Teresa Bertotti**

**Hochschule Neubrandenburg**

This workshop is an open forum to exchange perspectives. We invite the workshop attendees to consider ethical issues connected to participatory research and representation of vulnerable groups. In recent years, in social work research, members of vulnerable groups (e.g. children and youth, people with disabilities, migrants and asylum seekers, survivors of violence etc.) are being recognized as subjects and partners whose voices are epistemologically and ontologically of central importance to the reliability, purpose and ethics of research. Social work researchers, who are in collaboration with research participants, might consider a number of ethical issues: from the definition of the problem to be studied or the intervention to be tested, to methodological, sampling and publication choices, researchers may face confounding challenges and pressures.

We would like to address some of them in this workshop:

- We will consider the process of identification of research participants: Who represents a vulnerable group? Who can represent, who is being seen as representative?
- Concepts of "children's voices", "refugees' voices" or "voices" of disadvantaged people will be analyzed and reflected: How do we understand authenticity of utterances? How do researchers get involved with children instead of having them act and talk according to the researchers' expectations?
- We will ask whether participatory research premises social groups out of which research participants are recruited. Does this reaffirm identity constructions?
- Has the attention to human subjects' protections led to often obscuring other significant ethical dilemmas imbedded in social service research?
- Another issue is the impact of research involvement in people's lives. We will put this question relating to participative research in evaluation of services and professionals.

The session will thus address the overt and hidden ethical dilemmas in research, the factors that contribute to such dilemmas, the consequences for the populations being studied or served, and the resources professionals may bring to bear to address these issues in an effective and socially just manner.

Structurally, the workshop will consist of presenters' short introductory presentations from different research backgrounds and country specificities (Germany, Slovenia, Italy and USA); these will also offer examples and questions to discuss. Then, the attendees will be invited to discuss these inputs, examples and share their own research experiences and reflections. We the workshop leaders see ourselves not as trainers, but as starters of a common discussion and as moderators. We want to open the space for experiences and considerations regarding participatory approaches in social works research and to create a platform to consider establishing a network for social work research ethics.

# **Social work as a human rights profession: discussions and tensions**

**Didier Reynaert**

**Rudi Roose, Hildegard Gobeyn, Nadine De Stercke, Siebren Nachtergaele**

**University College Ghent**

According to the international definition of social work, human rights are a fundamental frame of reference for social work. Some even argue that social work is pre-eminently a 'human rights profession'. The development of a human rights based approach in social work is generally considered as a paradigm shift. This new paradigm can be characterised at different levels. First, care is considered as an enforceable right by which the 'charity character' of care practices is abandoned. Second, care is no longer considered as a practice that needs to pursue an external goal (e.g. social control, law enforcement etc.). Instead, care practices aim at realizing human dignity, an objective that essentially needs to be fulfilled in dialogue. Third, the agency and participation of service users is of key importance, recognizing them as subjects rather than objects of care. Fourth, selective social policies are abandoned in favor of universal approaches. Fifth, A human rights based approach does not start from a 'deficit thinking', but attempts to link up with the capabilities and opportunities of people. Finally, practices of care are no longer merely a matter of the private sphere, but have become a collective responsibility of society in the public sphere. Notwithstanding the positive evaluation that is granted to a human rights based approach in social work, human rights are under discussion on several grounds. A first issue is related to the conditionality of human rights in social work. In a broader societal context of 'no rights without responsibilities', the entitlement to human rights is linked to numerous conditions. In practice, conditionality can result in new dynamics of social exclusion. A second issue concerns the matter of the absolute character of human rights in social work. In a broader context of individualization, human rights are increasingly translated as individual entitlements. This often results in competing rights claims. At the same time, processes of individualization go together with an increasing tendency to 'rights talk', often resulting in a profound 'de-solidarisation' of social relations. A third issue is about the dynamic of social control, something that even in a human rights based approach in social work seems to be unavoidable. This appears especially at stake in the case of so-called anti-social behavior, specifically in a societal context of 'being tough on crime' and 'moral panic'. What is striking in the debate on social work and human rights is that social work is mostly considered as a 'victim' rather than a co-constructer of these tendencies. Generally, human rights based social work is understood as a counter-movement for these broader societal developments and a solution for the excesses of the neo-liberal welfare state. In this presentation, we argue that social work should be more aware of her social role in relation to the realization of human rights and the struggle for human dignity. To develop our argument, we make use of empirical data of a PhD study on children's rights in Belgium. Two particular issues will be analyzed to show the role of social work in developing a human rights based approach. The first one is the plea of social

work services to reform the system of child benefits from a parental right towards a right of the child. The second case is the discussion on the reform of the youth justice system from a protection model towards a sanction model. In our concluding remarks, we will make a case for social work as a human rights profession where realizing human dignity is considered as an individual and collective learning process.

# **Reclaiming Gerontological Social Work (aka Social Work with Older People): Developing a European Research Agenda**

**Alisoun Milne  
Ylva Krokfors**

**University of Kent**

Across Europe social work with older people is under threat from market driven policy changes, erosion of specialism in social work education & practice, austerity measures, & a weak evidence base. The almost (bar safeguarding) wholesale substitution of social work with social care taking place in some countries e.g. England, is a primary threat to its continued existence.

The ageing populations in all European countries offer an opportunity for social work. They demand an articulation of the role that social workers do - & could - play in addressing a wide range of socio-political, economic & health related challenges. All European countries are facing an increased need for: integrated sustainable community based care for older people with complex needs, innovative support for families, the development of cost effective & high quality long term care, & creative ways to address the needs of people with dementia, people with intersecting conditions, & people experiencing disadvantage & marginalisation. That all these populations are not only growing but are increasingly diverse & heterogeneous & that a significant minority will not be able to make use of self directed care is also relevant to social work's value base & aims.

A fundamental deficit relates to the limited evidence base that social work has relating to its role, effectiveness & outcomes in work with older people & to its confusion about who does & what is 'social work research'. In some places e.g. England - mirroring the practice shift - social work research has been eclipsed by 'social care research'. For social work research with older people to have a future it not only needs to (re)define its position, aims, distinctive skill set, & its contribution to inter-disciplinary research but also (re)claim specific fields of enquiry, groups, & methodologies.

The workshop aims are to:

- Generate and capture an interest in social work research with older people & their families
- Explore & share information about existing research related initiatives and research EG: The Gerontological Social Work Academic Special Interest Group in England & Wales
- Learn from - research related - initiatives re GSW from other countries (e.g. Canada & US) which have been successful
- Establish pan European & country wide networks of GSW researchers & explore funding for sustaining these

- Develop a plan for collaborative research in Europe and/or within countries/regions e.g. the UK, & identify possible funding sources

#### Process of Workshop

- Introduction of workshop aims
- Set of short papers (10") on the 'state of play' in different European countries, including:
  - o Any GSW related research that is happening
  - o Any networks they are part of &
  - o Some key data about the 'size' & specific nature of the challenges facing GSW e.g. demographic issues, LT care, in that country
- Discuss common issues, specific country issues, cross cutting themes (e.g. complexity, diversity) & topics relevant to GSW
- Break into sub groups 'owning' 2/3 of the themes e.g. elder abuse, long term care, & explore:
  - o What are key questions we need to address re these themes?
  - o How/what can GSW distinctively contribute to knowledge generation & exchange?
  - o What are the mechanisms for collaboration?
  - o What are the potential sources of funding?
- Discuss 'next steps' to take forward collaborative research in relation to GSW.

Contributors include: Professor Brian Taylor (Northern Ireland); Professor Alisoun Milne, Dr Mary Pat Sullivan, & Dr Mo Ray (England), Christian Beech (Wales); Professor Tim Kelly (Scotland); Dr Eleanor Bantry White (Republic of Ireland); Professor Marjaana Seppanen, Professor Sari Rissanen & Ylva Krokfors (Finland); and, Professor Sandra Torres & Professor Marta Szebehely (Sweden).

# **Presentations**

# **Ideologies and professional preferences of Latin-American social work students**

**Gisela Negron**

**University of Puerto Rico**

Little is known about what are the common grounds of social work education for Latin American countries and what are the basic differences among them. Driven by the need to begin establishing ground data on this topic, a study was carried out in eight Latin American countries to examine the attitude of social work students about a diversity of social issues relevant to the profession, including their attitude towards poverty, ways of dealing with poverty, and goals of the social work profession. The study also examined social work students' professional preferences. Using a quantitative, transnational-comparative design, the study was conducted in Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Honduras, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and Argentina. A sample of 525 students non-randomly selected responded to a self-administered questionnaire. Regarding students' ideologies toward poverty, we found an individualistic approach to understand and deal with poverty. The social causes of poverty emerged as the least accepted explanation for this social problem. These variables were measured using Likert type scales. With regards to professional preferences, students were more inclined to support the micro rather than the macro level of practice, and they rather work with children and families instead of the elderly. Although the findings may not be generalized, they are worrisome. They also reflect the contradictory nature of existing paradigms to deal with multiple and complex social problems in Latin America and around the world. The identified professional trends must be addressed in the praxis, and in higher education scenarios. Descriptive statistics, multivariate procedures, and factor analyses facilitated the validation of the scales and provided data to improve our understanding of professional trends among contemporary generations of social workers.

# **The potential for social change in social work. Starting BaSW-students' commitment to social change**

**Dries Van den Bosch  
Koen Hermans**

**Centre for Sociological Research - University of Leuven**

Since social work is a value-based profession committed to principles of human rights and social justice (Hare, 2001), it is assumed that a certain 'ideological infrastructure' is required of individuals seeking to join the profession (Weiss et al., 2005; Biggerstaff, 2000). In this regard, several scholars attribute a principal role to the process of professional socialization by social work education (e.g. Ryan et al., 1995; Weiss et al., 2004). As yet, a number of studies suggest that values and attitudes of social work students are somewhat at odds with the principles of the profession. One concern is the rather weak commitment of students to the 'social change/action' and macro-oriented practice (e.g. Weiss, 2006). Also, scant attention has been addressed to the question whether social work students entering the programmes have different values and attitudes, compared to their peers. In this presentation, we look at the potential for social change/action in social work, by investigating starting BaSW-students' involvement in voluntary work, their history of and willingness to undertake social and political actions, and their willingness to achieve the profession's goals (in short: micro- vs. macro-oriented goals). Based on quantitative survey-data collected on 960 starting BaSW-students during Wave 1 of a longitudinal cohort study in Flemish university colleges, findings indicate rather low rates of involvement in voluntary work and of the willingness to undertake social and political actions – although a comparison with their peers on these indicators turns out slightly in favour of the SW-students. Furthermore, in line with previous research (e.g. Weiss et al., 2002), social work students prefer individual-oriented (including the control function) over macro-practice goals of social work. Further multivariate analyses show significant differences within the student population and show a significant effect of the level of secondary education on the students' commitment to macro-practice.

# **Social work education in a time of national crisis: educating the workforce to combat inequalities**

**SOFIA DEDOTSI**  
**Alys Young, Karen Broadhurst**

**University of Manchester**

**Title:** Social work education in a time of national crisis: educating the workforce to combat inequalities  
**Authors:** Sofia Dedotsi, Alys Young, PhD and Karen Broadhurst, PhD.  
**Presenter:** Sofia Dedotsi (MSc, PhD Student University of Manchester, UK. Academic Fellow, Department of Social Work, Patras.)  
**Contact:** sofia.dedotsi@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk  
**Background:** Greek society since 2010 is experiencing an unprecedented economic and humanitarian crisis with tremendous social impact: 43% rise of suicides (NSS, 2013), unemployment in 27,4% (NSS, 2013) and rise of oppressive even brutal attacks in minorities at an everyday basis. Austerity measures and policy cuts have included a dis-investment in social work and social care and more recently the abolition of one of the four national Social Work Departments. In this context, it is crucial than ever for an anti-oppressive practice in social work protesting the principles of human rights and equality through the promotion of social justice and social change. Reflecting on this need, a social work doctoral research project was carried out asking the critical question: What is the role of social work education in influencing students' ability to manage value tensions in relation to anti-oppressive practice within the current context of social work education in Greece?  
**Methods:** The qualitative study using a grounded theory approach was based in one of the four national Departments of Social Work. Data were collected from social work students pre and post professional education by means of semi-structured interviews (n=32), academic staff/placement supervisors (n=10) and by means of documentary analysis of curricula and teaching material.  
**Results:** This presentation will focus on the following key findings: (i) the role of research in developing social work education in times of crisis (ii) how does understanding of diversity and oppression change through the course of social work education.  
**Conclusions and Implications:** Social work has a key role to play in the current crisis in Greece and in its future recovery. Adopting an anti-oppressive approach to social work practice is beyond practice "by the book" but a service to people and society that promotes empowerment, social justice and social change even in times of crisis.

**Keywords:** anti-oppressive practice, social work education, social work research, Greece

# **Researching Supervision: a participative learning process for knowledge production in social work?**

**Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski  
Liz Beddoe, Gillian Ruch, Ming-sum Tsui**

**University of Helsinki**

Supervision is recognised as a prerequisite for good practice and development in social work but may be considered inadequately researched (Carpenter et al. SCIE Briefing 43, 2012; O'Donoghue & Tsui, BJSW 2013, 1-18). Whilst threats and challenges to supervision persist, associated with the colonisation of the human service professions by New Public Management practices (Maidment & Beddoe ASW, 2012 65.2; Ruch 2012, BJSW 42.7) it can still be understood as a factor for promoting excellence, productivity and practitioner retention as an essential part of social work practice (Yliruka & Karvinen-Niinikoski, 2013 JSWP 27.2). Looking at social work across the globe in specific national settings supervision is likely to be very different across diverse contexts. The absence of an international consensus about what constitutes good supervision suggests it is timely to map supervisory practices. Given the complexity it is imperative that research be undertaken to explore how supervision is understood and operationalized in different settings. To realise this, a Delphi Survey has been devised as an initial research strategy, based on the following research question: Is there an international consensus on what should be on the agenda for research and development of supervision in social work? The Delphi study method can be utilised for establishing a consensus - specialist / regional / international - on subjects such as research priorities and best practice guidelines. Essentially a multi-phase project the study involves two or more questionnaires given to "experts" or important stakeholders, in which each iteration produces clearly ranked research or other priorities. This current study aims to recruit 50 or more participants in 15 countries. This paper will outline the processes engaged with to design and conduct the study and will report on early findings from the first phase of the project.

Keywords: supervision, delphi study, international social work, knowledge production.

# **Participatory action research (PAR) as knowledge production in social work.**

**Sissel Seim**

**Oslo and Akershus University College**

4. European Conference for Social Work Research "Private troubles or public issues? Challenges for social work research" 15 – 17 April 2014, Free University of Bolzano, Italy Abstract Author: Sissel Seim, Oslo and Akershus University College of applied sciences (HIOA) Title: Participatory action research (PAR) as knowledge production in social work. The topic to be discussed in this paper is Participatory action research as an approach for developing knowledge in social work. The project Research circles to promote children's participation in child welfare, will be used as a case for the discussion. In this project social work practitioners and academic researchers have been engaged in continuing dialogue, aiming to produce knowledge relevant to the practices involved. The research questions to be discussed in this paper are: \* Have the activities lead to development of new understanding of children's participation in child welfare? \* Have the activities lead to knowledge about implementing children's participation? \* PAR as a suitable approach for developing understanding and knowledge of children's participation The project Research circles has chosen participatory action research (PAR) as an approach aimed simultaneously at enhancing the understanding of children's participation, making changes in the involved practices, and at production of knowledge. The empirical basis for the discussion is the research activities in the project conducted at two colleges, Diakonhjemmet University College, and Oslo and Akershus University College, in close cooperation with ten child protection/child welfare centres in Oslo and Akershus County. The project has been financed by the County Governor of Oslo and Akershus. The two research circles, consisting of two social workers from each of the centres, and two academic researchers from the colleges have met regularly for 18 months from August 2012 till January 2014. The activities in the circles are based on dialogue between researchers and practitioners, reflections on cases from the practices, interviews with children and young people and of theoretical studies. The discussion in the paper will also be based on focus group interviews in at the end of the period January 2014, and on written material from all participants. As the project is not yet finished, it is too early to conclude about results or implications of the activities. So far the participants, both practitioners and the researchers, as well as the County governor see this as an interesting approach to develop understanding and knowledge about practicing children's participation in child welfare/child protection services. The project will therefore continue with two new research circles starting in February 2014.

Keywords: Participatory action research, Research circle, children's participation, child welfare.

# **Participatory research - a contribution to learning in innovation processes?**

**Solveig Sagatun**

**University of Agder**

This paper is about participatory research and learning in organizations. It addresses a critical and analytical view of how collaboration between researchers, practitioners and users can contribute to learning and innovation in social work in Social Services / NAV office. Innovation in public services is now on the agenda in different contexts in Norway. Innovation processes can be on different levels. It can be about changes in service practice in relation to the users and the structural changes in the organizations services are rooted in. Major reorganizations affecting many businesses, like the creation of Nav and Coordination Reform in Norway can be understood as examples of a third level that can be described as social innovation. Based on experiences from two sub-projects implemented in HUSK- Agder, are the first two levels, service innovation and organizational innovation central in this paper. The sub- projects; "The Conceptual Project" and "On the trail of user involvement", were inspired by action research where learning processes is central. The main question is if these projects have helped to initiate learning processes. In the first project the group of community between staff from both the public service and the municipal social services was arena for individual learning processes. Also in the second project the individual learning takes place in dialogue with others. Here the learning takes place in dialogue with users. In line with action research thinking the researchers took the initiative to bring the experience and knowledge to all employees of the participating services. A closer cooperation with the nearest management services on the specific work of the sub-projects could facilitate that the learning processes could give a more permanent nature in the organizations.

Keywords: participatory research learning processes innovation

# **Moving the fences: the complexities of Service User participation in supervision research**

**Tish Marrable  
Sharon Lambley**

**University of Sussex**

Keywords: supervision, service user involvement, adult care, service user research Beresford (2000) has argued that there is a strong case for including the knowledges and theories of service users in research, which grows out of their direct experiences of services. This paper focuses on the benefits and challenges of service users' involvement in research into supervision. It is drawn from the only known research to have done so, a gap identified in several recent reviews of the evidence (Goldman 2013; O'Donoghue and Tsui 2013). The research focused on supervision in adult care services (Lambley and Marrable 2013) utilising a systemic approach to locate 'good practice' whilst seeking evidence of improved outcomes for service users and staff. Respondents included commissioners, managers, professional and non-professional workers from health and social care, and two service user groups who contributed 'customer' and 'co-producer' perspectives to the findings. Data was gathered through a mixed methods on-line survey, with 136 respondents from 28 service sites who self-selected to take part, followed by 19 in-depth interviews with supervisors and supervisees across four case study sites to explore the themes that arose from the survey. While practitioner and organisational replies highlighted examples of the direct impact of supervision on outcomes for those receiving services, the service user groups offered new perspectives on the purposes and practices of supervision. Using Simmonds' (2009) model, the paper will reflect on the ethical and methodological challenges of gaining service user perspectives on supervision when service users are not formally involved. The research findings call for a movement of the parameters around supervision practices so that, while practitioners remain supported, service users gain more control over the decisions currently being made about them without their direct input.

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# **The involvement of service users and carers in social work education-a case example.**

**Valerie Gant**

**Edge Hill University**

**Abstract:** In the UK participatory social work education involving service users and carers with the support of academic staff is an initiative that has developed in recent years. The involvement of service users and carers in education mirrors similar initiatives in health where patient involvement is a growing area of policy and practice. The need for service users and carers to participate in and make decisions about their care has gained consensus among professionals in recent times. This need has been fuelled by drivers which include the emergence of the service user movement, socio-political, ethical and empirical views as well as public mistrust of professionals. Social work practice is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. Social work education needs to respond to the emerging needs for user and carer involvement. This abstract highlights an initiative which was to explore the motivations of service users and carers involved in student social work education and to incorporate the voices of those directly involved. Participative research between academic staff, students and service users and carers highlighted some of the challenges of maintaining meaningful involvement and the learning this produced. There is pressure from service user and carer action groups for professionals to change from holding a paternalistic view of service delivery to one in which there is choice, autonomy and empowerment. This shift away from a medical model of care and support, where service user are seen as passive recipients of services towards a more empowered approach where service users are involved in decision making; has been marked by a range of U.K Government legislation, which encourages greater inclusion of service users. The learning process brought about by the involvement of service users and carers has provided a link between theory and practice for students who believe they are able to practice from a carer and user focused perspective.

# **Participatory action research scenarios promoting changes in private and public elderly care organizations**

**Rasa Naujaniene  
Natalija Mazeikiene, Jonas Ruskus, Roberta Motieciene**

**Vytautas Magnus University**

The aim of presentation is to discuss the nature of participatory action research (PAR) in different types of elderly care organizations – private and public sectors. Participatory action research in organization is considered as interpretative qualitative research method for empowering and emancipation of managers and employees, promoting reflection and critical consciousness. The research is aimed to initiate changes of different directions in organizations fostering humanization approach in private organizations and commercial approach in public organizations. Public elderly care sector in Lithuania is characterized by critical shortage of services. As consequence, not publicly funded and profit-oriented private providers of elderly care emerged in the sector. In the context of enhancement of neoliberal social policy these two types of organizations face challenges to meet needs of users. Private organizations are fostered to promote values based on critical humanistic theory. Public organizations are fostered to introduce neoliberal concept of empowerment. Methodology of PAR is designed implementing several stages of research in private and public elderly care organizations to meet current challenges. The first stage of research project involved explorative focus groups in four organizations (two private and two public) seeking to reveal needs for change in elderly care organizations and to create scenarios for implementation of these changes. The second stage implies practical realization of scenarios in organizations what will be led by reflections and critical group discussions with managers and employees. The last stage concludes the process of research by providing methodological guidance for promoting changes in organizations of different sectors and produce knowledge on development of practice in elderly care. The paper presents results of explorative focus groups analysis that enabled researchers and research participants to build scenarios for promoting change.

# **RIGHTS AND WRONGS IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: WHO GETS TO SAY?**

**Ana Marija Sobocan**

**University of Ljubljana, Faculty for Social Work**

In a recent research on ethical decision-making in social work, five determinants that influence decision-making were identified and this presentation will discuss one of them: that decisions are defined by the effectiveness of legitimation of choices. In her research, the author aimed to explore, how social workers in Slovenian statutory social work services make decisions and what is considered to be ethical social work practice from the perspective of practitioners. The main question to be answered was not what do social workers do, but how they do it and why they choose to do it as they do. The study combined 15 half-structured interviews, participant observations, online questionnaire (N=412) and 30 narrative interviews. The core collected data (narrative interviews) were analysed with documentary method which made it possible to distinguish between theories, norms and intentions, between acts and practices, which are habitualized and not intentional. The analysis showed that decision-making in social work practice is not a predominantly rational or rule-based endeavour, where choices are a result of the calculation of the best options (for the 'recipient' of the decision), but a continued negotiation process – between different voices, interests, powers, and values. The main concern of the decision-maker is usually not whether the decision is ethical or not, but whether it is 'right' from the perspective of acceptability, implementation, and legitimation. Building on moral intuitions, judgements, and emotions, social workers enter relationships and negotiation processes (entailing different uncertainties, as well as different interests) with service users and authorities (managers, other professionals, legislation, resources), and make choices based on the optimal combination of possibilities and consequences. For ethical practice and accountability in social work, education approaches and support in practice are of crucial importance, as this presentation will also aim to show.

# **Agency in shaping social work service concept**

**Heidi Muurinen**

**Univeristy of Helsinki**

The purpose of the research is to study human and non-human agency in the adaptation process of a new social work service concept. The case study is located in a city where adult social work offices were merged into two service centers and to open-plan offices which is a new concept in the Finnish social sector. The research is based on Actor-Network Theory (ANT). The research question is how the different actors participate in the shaping of social work practices in the open-plan office? In ANT, the translations the idea undergoes in others' hands are followed. Therefore, the research starts before the transformation with the analysis of political decision making (public documents) and seven employees' group discussions concerning the ongoing process. The data collected after the reform, consists in the first case of three employees' group interviews and eight service-users interviews. In the second case, the data consists of two employees' group interviews six months apart and interviews of ten service-users. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed with content analysis. The idea of the new service concept, generated by the management and supported by the local politicians, was reasoned to reach the criteria of better and cost-effective social work practice. The social work professionals objected the idea as they considered the stakeholders not understanding the practice. The sense of their exclusion weakened the idea. In the first office, the space and technology had also agency in translating the idea by making the adaptation and reaching the goals of the reform hard. The knowledge gained was, however, utilized in the second office which turned out more functional. The main outcome of the study is that in developing better practice, the different actors cannot be overlooked as they are participating in translating the idea.

Key concepts: Social welfare office, agency, network, space.

# **Standardisation- the end of uncertainty?**

**Kerstin Svensson  
Lina Ponnert**

**Lund University**

Background and purpose of the proposed presentation: The well-spread idea of evidence based practice has resulted in an increased use of manuals and standardised tools in social work. Manuals are associated with certainty, which is appealing to organisations as well as professionals in social work, since aiming for certainty is perceived as "good practice" today. Yet standardisation might be a threat to professionalism since social workers need reflexive uncertainty in order to make autonomous discretionary decisions.

A summary of the main points: With examples from core practices in social work, child protection and care for drug abusers, we show that: - Organisations implement manual based work in order to extinguish uncertainty and receive legitimacy. - Professions use manuals for claiming expertise and service orientation and to receive recognition. - Manual based work influence how client orientated work and professionalism are perceived. How the proposed presentation addresses one or more of the conference aims and themes This presentation is mainly and directly connected to theme 4) Evidence and uncertainty – pathways to accountable social work research and practice. It also relates to theme 1) as it concerns knowledge production and public accountability in social work. In a wide sense it could also be seen as associated to theme 3) Standing up to complexity, since it focuses multiple perspectives on social work practice.

Conclusions from and implications of your presentation for practice, policy, or subsequent research: This presentation points at possible ways to understand how manual based work influences social work practice, which provides understanding that could be useful in practice. It also gives perspectives that could promote research and understanding of the intersection of professions and organisations.

Keywords Uncertainty, professionalism, organisations, manual based work.

# **Researching Professional Development of Early Career Social Workers**

**Steven M Shardlow  
John Carpenter, James Blewett**

**University of Keele**

Background: The implementation of major national change in social work provision presents significant challenges. In 2008, the UK Government, following the death of child (Baby Peter) introduced, in England, two national professional development programmes for early career social workers working with children and families. These programmes applied to year one (The Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme – NQSW) and years two and three (Early Professional Development Programme – EPD) after professional qualification. Core aims of these programmes were to: improve recruitment and retention; enhance the professional skills and establish a recognised career path. Research Design Three Universities conducted a large-scale longitudinal mixed methods study to explore the impact of the NQSW & EPD programmes.

The methods included national surveys of social workers, team managers and programme co-ordinators and various time points over 3.5 years. A number of case studies NQSW (20) & EPD (14) of organisations that had implemented the programmes were conducted. These case studies, the focus of this presentation, comprised interviews and focus groups with senior managers, team managers, and programme co-ordinators (total NQSW/EPD n=125 + 78): organisations were visited on a number of occasions to gain an impression of the implementation and change process over time.

Findings: A number of factors were associated with successful implementation of these programmes, including: engagement by senior managers; alignment of programme and organizational objectives; commitment of managers to provide supervision for both case management and also profession development supervision. Organisations that were ultimately successful were not necessary problem free: response to encountered problems that was crucial. Implications for the professional development of early career social workers are explored.

# **Social Work: Barriers and Opportunities**

**Carmel Halton**

**University College Cork**

## **Background:**

This paper will present the findings of a national study completed in Ireland (2011-2012) on the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of social workers.

Over the last decade CPD has come to be seen as an important part of the professional life of social workers in a number of countries. In Ireland, the setting up of the regulatory body, CORU, in 2010 is particularly significant, as social workers will henceforth be required to undertake CPD in order to renew their registration.

## **Methods:**

The overall project is based on the results of a survey of IASW members was carried out during June/July 2011 and in addition interviews and focus group discussion completed with social workers, managers and policy makers.

## **Results:**

While acknowledging the importance of CPD the paper will elaborate on the findings of the research, identifying the barriers and challenges to CPD participation.

## **Conclusions:**

The research identified barriers to participation related to issues of funding and difficulties in getting time off work to attend courses. An analysis of the data suggests that these are inter-related issues. A lack of funding, whether for training costs or staff cover, is therefore a central barrier to participation identified by survey respondents.

# **Professionalization by academization among teachers, nurses and social workers**

**Staffan Höjer**

**University of Gothenburg**

A significant feature of our modern knowledge-based society is the gradual academicisation and professionalization of a growing numbers of occupations. This academicisation has lead to the establishment of profession-based university disciplines, with professors and doctoral education, in order to develop and reinforce a scientific base for professional practice and education. A crucial element in this process has been that professional practitioners are expected to seek admission to these doctoral programs, and thereby choose a career as a researcher. As a consequence, these researchers will have a key function in the development of the relations between research and professional practice, and will be an important prerequisite for science-based professional practice. The aim with this project is to describe, analyse and compare some common and central aspects of professionalization by academisation within three profession-research-complexes (teaching, nursing and social work), namely (1) the recruitment of researchers via PhD-education, (2) the socialisation from professional practitioner to researcher and member of faculty and research community, and their trajectories and further research activities. The theoretical frame of reference for this project contains elements and concepts from theory of professions, theory of science and sociology of science. The project combines different research methods. In this paper the results are presented from a survey aimed at everyone who has an academic degree as a teacher, nurse or social worker and who has written a doctoral dissertation in pedagogics/education/didactics, nursing or social work at a Swedish university or university college between 1990 and 2012, over 1000 persons. In the results different degree of freedom when it comes to choice of subject matter, research methods and theories are discussed. Also the differences in trajectories in relation to the professional field, where for instance nurses with a PhD has a stronger link to professional practice than social workers.

# **Managers in social work – on becoming a manager and learning to lead**

**Emelie Shanks**

**Stockholm university**

In Sweden, as in many other countries, most social work managers are drawn from the ranks of practitioners, and many are promoted on basis of their skills as social workers. There are no established paths of management training for these managers, and few schools of social work offer comprehensive postgraduate education in management/administration. In this paper, I intend to discuss how managers in the Swedish personal social services (PSS) describe their promotion to management positions, whether they have received post-qualifying training, their opinions on this training and how they value other ways of gaining managerial competences. The managers in focus are those who have the everyday responsibility for child protection, social assistance and treatment of substance abusers within the PSS in Sweden. The empirical material consists of (a) qualitative interviews with 24 managers in six Swedish municipalities and (b) questionnaires distributed to a random selection of 900 managers around Sweden. The results from the survey indicate that most managers are experienced social workers. Several interviewed managers describe that they have attained managerial positions as a result of circumstance rather than as a consequence of an active choice. In-service training (organised/paid for by the local government administration) is provided for a majority of the managers. Often, the in-service training focuses on generic leadership skills and is delivered by private management consultants. Although the majority of managers have undertaken in-service training, they tend to prefer other, practice oriented, sources of knowledge for attaining managerial competences (e.g. experience and skills gained through colleagues/superiors). This will be discussed in relation to the character of the in-service training, the lack of academic alternatives and the knowledge base of social work.

# **Who is 'taken into care?': Knowledge production through dialogue with social workers**

**Alastair Christie  
Donna O'Leary, Tony Fitzgerald**

**University College Cork**

While social workers are increasingly asked to develop evidence-based/informed practice, what do they know about the number and characteristics of children entering care and the outcomes for these children and how this information can be used to generate new practice knowledge? This paper analyses data held on children who enter the State child care system (residential and foster care) via four social work teams over a ten-year period (2002-2012). An administrative database of information routinely collected has been adapted to provide information on the 3063 children who have entered the child care system on 15450 occasions over this period. Analysis of this database identifies specific patterns in relation to referrals and admissions into care as percentage of the total population of children in Cork and Kerry. These incidence rates have then been analysed in relation to the four social work teams on the basis of the type of admissions, number of admissions per child and the characteristics of children (e.g. age and gender). The research highlights difference similarities between the four social work teams in relation to the age of children coming into care; the length of time in care; the number of episodes of care; and the growing disparity between the referral rate to social workers and the number of child coming in to care. A series of meetings were held with the social work teams to discuss the findings of the research and to generate more nuanced understandings of children's pathways into and out of care. The meetings were particularly useful in generating new research questions and developing methodologies for the collection and analysis of further data on pathways of children into/out of care. The research raises questions about what 'counts' as practice knowledge and what roles can social work have in data collection and the analysis of data?

# The Use of Peer-Reviewed Journals on Finnish Social Work Research

**Mikko Mäntysaari**

**University of Jyväskylä**

Background and purpose: Knowledge production in social work is partly based on empirical research. While there are other forms of knowledge (professional experiences, tacit knowledge and so on), the scientific empirical research is still considered very important part of professional knowledge. Although there is a growing literature about social work research in USA, there is actually very little empirical research about European social work research. The sociology of science and bibliometric studies are both established and growing research fields, but their impact on European social work studies are still quite limited. My interest is in published PhD:s, especially on the question of empirical articles in the bibliographies.\* Research question What is the proportion of peer reviewed journals in the bibliographies of Finnish social work dissertations. Which journals are being read in Finland, and what is the proportion of original research of all used research in Finnish PhD dissertations? My hypothesis is that the proportion of research articles in bibliographies gives us an estimate about the empirical orientation of the research.

Methods: To answer these questions, a bibliometric analysis of used literature was conducted about all Finnish social work dissertations from 2000 to 2010 (N=85). There were a total number of 1558 references to different journal articles.

Results: The results show that proportion of sources coming from referee-based publications is rather limited, although there is variation between research topics, traditions, and even universities. The variety of used journals is large which is understandable because the topics of PhD dissertations are so different. There is a slight tendency of increase in the use of original research articles.

Conclusions and implications The results of this research are important because there is a research-policy change happening in Finland. The starting PhD students are encouraged to report the findings in scientific journals and publish their PhD theses in article-collections and discouraged to use traditional monographs as publishing format. Reading and publishing go together – reading original research articles supports the idea of publishing research results in article format. This might have a negative effect on theoretically-oriented analysis. On the other hand, the limited use of research articles might indicate about problems in the supervision in PhD research process.

Keywords research on research, knowledge production, dissertations

# **Methodological principles in girl's work: using a master class of social work professionals and interviews to identify their practice based method**

**Judith Metz, Noor de Boer**

**Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences**

## *Background and purpose*

Amsterdam girl's workers ask for an evidence-supported method to empower girls and young women. Reason is three fold: to improve the quality and effectiveness of their work, to be accountable and final as recognition of the need of gender specific social work with girls. Problem is that gender specific social work with girls is practiced by a broad variety of specializations within the field of welfare work (social work; youth work; community work; streetcornerwork; youth care). Also the intervention is used both individual as well as in groups, take place in different contexts and are focused on target groups with different problems and divers personal backgrounds (age; class; sexuality; ethnicity;). Question is: how to develop a method that is supported by evidence and is useful for a diversity of specializations in the field of welfare work, target groups and contexts?

## *Method*

A master class of girl's workers, lecturer's social work and researchers perform the research. Further, ten in depth-interviews have been held in which the girl's workers individually have been questioned to explicate their practice (tacit) knowledge. To validate the outcomes for urban social work, ten supplementary interviews are held with girl's workers outside Amsterdam.

## *Results*

Preliminary results are the identification of nine methodological principles of gender specific social work with girls. For each principle, it is established what the function is, how it contributes to the goals of the intervention and what the share of the professional is in the performance of the principle.

## *Conclusion and implications*

Strength of this approach is that it articulates the tacit knowledge of girls' workers. This gives social professionals the possibility to legitimize their work as well as to reflect on what they are doing to further enhance their work. Still, further research is necessary to support the method with evidence.

## **Keywords:**

Social work methods; master class; tacit knowledge; core principles of interventions

# **Learning from Roma minority youth about their needs**

**Roth Maria  
Sergiu Raiu, Florina Pop, Anna Bernath**

**Babes-Bolyai University**

Based on the testimonials collected from 30 Roma youth, the aim of the present study is to understand the resources and barriers that adolescents identify as influencing their occupational aspirations. We look at the future orientation construction process of Roma adolescents who were interviewed in diverse social contexts: some were met in high schools, others in vocational schools for special needs youth; some in foster-care, others in prisons; most of them were living with their own families, either out or in poor Roma communities. In our analysis, we followed three directions: (1) how do Roma children view themselves in relation with the others; (2) how do they describe their occupational aspirations; (3) how they express their needs and what resources and respectively barriers do they perceive in career aspirations. In order to gather testimonials of youth individual and focus group methods were used. In order to stimulate participation in the research we asked participants to draw their social atom and explain where they see barriers and resources for their future orientation. Results showed that Roma adolescents who were enrolled in high-school believed in their own personal characteristics, abilities and strengths to fulfil their aspirations in spite of being aware of discrimination and the scarcity of resources in their own environment. Most of the interviewed youth mentioned financial concerns and the need to provide for one's family, which hampered in the past and will continue to affect their access to the desired educational and subsequently occupational path. Some girls are marked by traditional family models, and some testimonials showed that teenagers lack options for the future, especially when they were aware of their disadvantages. On the other side, several others were also aware of their capabilities and were committed to school. Although some high-school students talked about the discrimination, they expect in the future employment, testimonials also showed that the main resource they had was self-confidence in their own personality, but they were not equipped with information on where and how they can get social and legal help. Perhaps acknowledging this finding could open new paths to social programs oriented to career development of Roma youth.

Keywords: future orientation, youth, testimonials.

# **Disability studies and crip theory from Eastern Europe: radicalizing social work**

**Darja Zavirsek**

**University of Ljubljana**

In recent years the disability studies have gained an increased attention in the countries of post-communist Eastern Europe. There are many conceptual differences of what disability studies are: from rehabilitation to crip theory. In some countries the disability studies have been developed in social work while in some others in the educational sciences. In medically and pathology/biology-driven helping professions across Eastern Europe, disability studies contributed towards critical and historical understanding of the normatively constructed normality that causes »difference«, disablement and consequently social inequalities, exclusion and outcast. For social work in Central and Eastern Europe disability studies brought a radically new understanding that social suffering is not primarily caused by bodily, sensory or intellectual impairments, ethnic background and gender, but by the normative construction of the "normal" and desirable in the context of post-communist neoliberal societies dominated by economic competition, able-bodyism, age-ism, individualism, the gendered norm of the beautiful body, the non-interactive schooling, the lack of the awareness of human rights issues and equality, gender normativity and nationalism. Only in few countries disability studies are linked with critical post-colonial and queer studies which analyse the phenomena of civic disablement with a common structure of exclusion, violence and discipline. Academics that developed disability studies make alliances with the disability activists in order to fight disablement and challenge the oppressive structure. As such, disability studies have a major impact on social work and educational professionals' interventions, diagnosis, and help and have challenged the very essence of these practices. Disability studies and crip theory contributed towards "human rights from-bellow" understanding of human rights and the importance of collective struggle for societal and individual changes and the democratisation of everyday life.

# **DETAINED! A study of the role of social workers in the admission of young people to psychiatric hospitals in a county in England.**

**Jane Shears**

**British Association of Social Workers**

Changing Minds Enterprise

The Mental Health Act (1983) in England and Wales provides the statutory framework for the assessment and admission of people experiencing mental health distress. It is now recognized that the onset of mental health distress occurs much earlier in life than previously thought and the peak risk period for first onset psychosis is from the age of 14 years.

In England, social workers make applications for people to be detained in hospital based on the recommendations of two doctors.

They cannot be over-ruled by medics and make independent decisions about whether to accept the recommendations made by doctors. Therefore social workers occupy a very powerful position. Compulsory detention under the Mental Health Act (1983) overrides the Human Rights Act (1998) with potentially life changing consequences for the young people (and others).

This paper presents research on the use, by social workers, of the Mental Health Act (1983) in the assessment and admission of children and young people (17 years and below) to psychiatric hospitals in a county in England within a 24-month timescale (January 2012 – December 2013).

The research aimed to answer what clinical and social issues social workers need to consider when working within a statutory framework.

The methodology includes documentary analysis of social workers' reports regarding the referral, assessment and outcome for the young person. Methodological triangulation is achieved using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with a sample of social workers that have assessed and admitted young people.

The results indicate a significant increase in the number of young people being assessed.

Self-harm and suicidal ideation are the most common presenting clinical issues, with social issues including loss, previous and current abuse, and substance misuse.

The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and the challenges for social workers in balancing risk with promoting human rights.

Keywords: mental health social work

# **The Abuse of Older People: To Legislate or not to Legislate?**

**Janet Anand**

**Queen's University Belfast**

Elder abuse legislation, policy and practice varies significantly across national borders (Penhale et. al, 2008; WHO, 2002) reflecting local cultural, social and economic differences. Harbison and Morrow's (1989) model of elder abuse provides a useful framework from which to order and understand the diverse approaches that different jurisdictions have adopted including paternalism, protectionism, legal/rights and empowerment. Whatever approach is favoured it must address the growing vulnerability of older people and address their growing fear of losing self-determination and basic human rights (van Bavel et al. 2010; Dow and Joosten, 2012). The current national and international trend appears to be towards legislation for the protection of older people although this is approached is subject critique. The argument for adopting legislation focuses on the need for specialist laws to protect older people, similar to the protection accorded to children under social welfare legislation. Legislation offers the potential for increased awareness, status and resources for adult services, a sector generally underfunded in the United Kingdom. In line with this trend, Scotland has recently introduced Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 for the purposes of protecting adults from harm. Most states of the USA have adopted specific elder laws and professionals work under a framework of mandatory reporting. The state of Pennsylvania's for example requires each county agency to receive and investigate reports of older adults in need of protective services 24 hours a day, seven days a week targeting abuse, neglect or self-neglect exploitation, and abandonment of older people (Pearson, 2013). Alternatively the argument against legislation highlights the negative and often traumatic impact of criminalizing low levels of abuse for the older person and their family. It is often argued that the law on its own is not a panacea to guaranteeing safeguarding in each and every situation and instead of adult protection being confined to social care and criminal justice services alone, abuse should be seen as everybody's business. Countries such as Ireland and Australia have opted not to adopt specialist adult protection legislation relying instead on existing state legislation and options such as guardianship, advocacy, family mediation and service coordination in response to elder abuse as a community issue. The introduction of a policy framework for safeguarding vulnerable people in 2006, an ageing demographic profile and a significant increase in the number of reported cases of adult abuse have contributed to public debate as to the benefits of adopting a legalistic approach to adult protection in Northern Ireland, UK. A team of Belfast social work and legal academics were commissioned to review factors facilitating or acting as barriers to adult protection legislation in Northern Ireland. The study involved a community scoping exercise to identify current issues not addressed by the existing policy based framework and an international literature review of possible legal options and remedies for the gaps identified. This presentation summarizes the key findings from the review and critiques the usefulness of

legislation in defining elder abuse, determining thresholds for intervention, calculating the proportionality of intervention, promoting greater awareness of the issue and promoting the rights of older people. The review offers researcher, practitioner and social policy maker's further insight as to complexity of promoting human rights for older people across national and international contexts.

# **Living with HIV in Romania and the impact of stigma**

**Florin Lazar**

**University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work**

A generation of 7,000 children infected in 1988-1990 in hospital settings survived with HIV for over 25 years. At the beginning of the epidemic the medical aspects prevailed, the social aspects being neglected. As a result of perceived and enacted stigma many families chose or were forced to withdraw their children from school and refused to register with the public social services to receive social entitlements. After 2000 social programs diversified and the legislative framework encouraged people living with HIV (PLHIV) to come out of the silence. A National Federation of Organizations of PLHIV was created (in 2000) and between 2004-2010 the Global Fund Against HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria financed many social integration programs. Based on administrative data on access to social entitlements, programmatic data from social work practice and data from two cross-sectional clinic-based studies (R1, n=835; R2, n=618), the aim of the paper is to highlight the long-term effects of the stigma faced by PLHIV in the context of increased life expectancy. Administrative data reveal a peak increase of those availing of social entitlements (30% in 2004 to 63% in 2013), with a higher proportion receiving cash benefits that ensures greater confidentiality. Programmatic data from a vocational training program implemented between 2007-2010 showed that just around 15% of those counseled also registered for a course and found employment. Research data suggest a very low percentage of those legally employed (10% in R1, 9.3% in R2) more than 50% being unemployed. The main source of income is represented by social entitlements (over 80%). Since HIV became chronic disease social programs for young people living with HIV/AIDS need to address stigma and discrimination and improve school participation in order to increase their chances of social integration and not favor a biological citizenship.

Keywords: HIV; stigma; Romania; social services.

# **Economic and social injustice and its relationships to psychological wellbeing, happiness and shame**

**Ulla Rantakeisu  
Ingrid Rystedt, Bengt Starrin**

**Karlstad University**

At least two perceptions of injustice contribute to the distribution of psychological wellbeing in the population: economic injustice, with roots in economic structures, and social injustice, with roots in patterns of social status. The range of psychological suffering in relation to the economic structure has been explained by consequences of financial marginalization and deprivation. Studies regarding social injustice include aspects of social bonds and transference of stigma. Drawing on the two perceptions of injustice, the disrespect/financial strain-model was developed to be tested in a population-based data set. In this model, injustice was composed of two dimensions: (a) distribution of (a) disrespect and (b) financial strain. The model assumes that differences in wellbeing were related to these dimensions. The data analysis utilized a random populations survey "Life and Health 2008", with responses from 6475 adults (18-84 years) in the county council of Varmland, Sweden. The survey (response rate 55%) investigated aspects of self-reported living conditions. In our model, distribution of disrespect was approximated by a survey item targeting whether 'someone has treated you in a derogatory manner in the past three months', whereas distribution of financial strain was approximated by an item targeting availability of a cash margin (approx. 2,000 euro) in the event of an emergency. The analysis revealed that high degrees of the two injustice dimensions were statistically related to reduced psychological wellbeing, less happiness and more shame. The statistical relationships with these variables were most pronounced when disrespect and financial strain co-occurred. In fact, psychological wellbeing was 7 times more likely to be reduced among individuals who experienced concurrent disrespect and financial strain, compared to individuals who experienced less of both of these dimensions. Our results highlight the importance of health and emotional manifestations of inadequate respect and financial security.

Keywords: Psychological wellbeing, Financial strain, Disrespect, Happiness, Shame

# **Poverty aware social work practice: A new paradigm**

**Michal Krumer-Nevo**

**Ben-Gurion University**

Abstract Background and purpose of the proposed presentation: Although fighting poverty and working with people in poverty have been two commitments the social work profession took upon itself since its inception, scholars have argued recently that social work lacks “poverty aware approach”. However, little of this literature addresses the needs of social workers working in the delivery of frontline human services who wish to apply poverty aware approach in direct practice. This article aims to fill this void by presenting a paradigm of poverty aware social work practice (PAP), which is based on perceiving poverty as a violation of human rights. A summary of the main points of the presentation: The paradigm consists of four interrelated facets: ontological (which deals with the questions, what is poverty? And, who are the service users?), epistemological (how do we know and evaluate the situation? What kind of procedures is needed in order to get the knowledge?), axiological ( what are the ethical values that should be adopted in regard to poverty?), and methodological ( what are the implications for practice with individuals?). PAP is presented in light of two current social work paradigms that shape the field – the conservative and the structural ones. The PAP paradigm is based on an Israeli program which the author is the founder and director of. How the proposed presentation addresses one or more of the conference aims and themes: The presentation addresses issues of knowledge production and, specifically, the use of human rights as a guiding model for social work practice with people in poverty.

Keywords: poverty, people in poverty, practice

# **Glocalization Processes in Russian Social Work**

**Pavel Romanov  
Rostislav Kononenko, Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova**

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

This paper aims to evaluate the changes in institutions and discourses as direct and secondary results of global/local interaction in social work in today's Russia. We consider the contribution of international co-operation to the development of local institutions and discourses, focussing on emerging discrepancies and contradictions between international and local actors. Contemporary society is simultaneously both global and local. The reality of the welfare state in a global world is changing. So are the realities and interpretations of social work. Different internal and external actors have contributed to the constitution of social work as a new profession in post-socialist Russia, where various international projects in the area of social work training and practice have been implemented. Global institutions and processes have an impact on national and local policies and practice in social welfare (Lyons 2006: 377). The result of their interaction is complex and diverse process of glocalization in social work training and practice. When the imported discourse on social work is recontextualized locally, it is "filtered, tested, grounded and reproduced" (Yan, Cheung 2006: 63-64) in the native frame of social, economic, political, and cultural references. On the other hand, such processes can undermine the idea of human rights as the core of social work as a profession. Based on a review of relevant literature and mass media, survey data as well as on interviews with social worker and managers in an industrial region of Russia, interviews with the social workers at the church parishes in 2011-2012, we conclude that when global social work values are embedded in local traditions, it can support the development of social work in Russia.

# **What is going to happen to social work practice during the economic crisis**

**THEANO KALLINIKAKI**

**DEMOCTITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE**

Social work practice in Greece has been deeply affected by the policies chosen to manage economic and social crisis, which cause growth of unemployment, inequality, poverty, racism and social disorganization. Health, insurance and welfare provision has collapsed under the acute pressure of the public cost reduction, and the massive youth immigration has weakened the traditional "family based" welfare. The impact is harder on those who are already living in poverty, youth, women, immigrants and on the elderly. Uncertainty, insecurity, sudden-complete overthrow of living conditions and prospects and lost of dignity have severely threaten health, mental health and daily social functioning of the biggest part of population. This paper discusses the data of semi-structured interviews with 20 hospital social workers, conducted in May 2013, focusing on what is going on in public health and mental health sector, during the economic crisis. Responders underline an increase of urgent needs of specific vulnerable groups, mainly youth and homeless, the patients' low motivation and expectations for preventive and timely treatment. Social work practice has been reoriented in order to deal with urgent requirements and needs, complex problems, and high risk situations without resources to refer to and lack of interdisciplinary support, due to the services and staff reduction. Brief clinical interventions in crisis situations, depression, anger, attempts of suicide, individual and collective trauma and group work aiming to prove coping methods and solidarity might be responsive to patients, while their own close contact to social work networks like "the action on radical and critical practice" looks to protect them from burnout.

Keywords: crisis intervention, economic crisis' impact on social work practice

# **Gender inequalities and aging policies in Europe**

**Elena Roldan  
Begoña Leyra**

**Universidad Complutense**

Gender inequalities in older age result from accumulated gendered disadvantages during the life course. The need to adopt a lifecourse approach when dealing with the interconnections of ageing and gender arises from the understanding that present circumstances of older people can be understood by references to their prior lifecourse. This paper first performs a conceptual review of what it means to age for women from a feminist approach (Arber & Ginn , 1996 ; Freixas , 1997), in words of Slevi Calasanti, age matters (Calasanti and Slevi, 2006). The second section will review some demographic data to better understand what the present and future prospects are which have to face the political challenges forthcoming. In fact, ageing is a distinctly gendered phenomenon, women being increasingly represented in the older cohorts of the European population. Estimate data for 2012 (Eurostat, 2012) shows that European population of 65 years and over represents a 17.9% of total population (52.033.205 women and 38.139.934 men). Third, we will review the main aging policies in the EU and the possible gender imbalance implementation or gender gap ( Bettio , Tinios & Betti , 2013 ). One especially unsettling issue concerns the lack of visibility of the problem which affects and impacts on older women, as caregivers, as beneficiaries and as citizens. Thus, older women are recipients of echoes of past disadvantage, just as they begin to receive signs of future problems. As the EU has taken a lead on both ageing populations and gender balance, it is appropriate that it devotes attention to possible side effects of their interaction. Finally, in the concluding section will attempt to analyze and highlight those issues which contribute to the welfare of the elderly women and review which the challenges are for the future in pro of equal gender treatment and opportunities.

# **Older migrants in Luxembourg – care provision between family and professional services**

**Ute Karl  
Boris Kühn, Anne Carolina Ramos**

**University of Luxembourg**

Abstract belongs to the Symposium: Ageing migrants and care – formal and informal arrangements and the role of social work Luxembourg is a very small country with three official languages and the highest rate of inhabitants holding a foreign nationality in Europe: nearly 45% of the population have a non-Luxembourgish nationality, and around 20% of the group aged 65 and older. The material situation of older migrants varies strongly across national groups, including e.g. former, high qualified employees from the European institutions and low qualified workers who came mostly from Italy and Portugal, having now low pensions, a higher risk of poverty and worse health conditions. Our paper will present first findings from the project “Biographies and transnational social support networks of older migrants in Luxembourg” (2013–2015). The aims of this project are to reconstruct the social support systems of older migrants from their point of view, especially family networks, and the forms of provided and received care including long-distance care. We understand the social relations from a biographical perspective, including the relevance of politics and societal structure. The study is based on biographical and qualitative network interviews, including an ego-centric network map, with older migrants, who migrated from Portugal, France, Germany, Italy and Belgium. For the paper we will include interviews with Portuguese and German immigrants (in depth analysis of datasets with five persons). Our first analyses show the rootedness of our interviewees in Luxembourg. They also show that the wishes who should deliver hands-on care (family, professional services) and where to stay when being dependent on care provision depends on the interplay of several factors: Place of residence of the children, career of the children, distance to Luxembourgish language, ways of living and social services, and financial background, including properties of houses.

# **Romanian ageing migrants going native in Switzerland**

**Oana Ciobanu  
Claudio Bolzman**

**Haute École de Travail Social de la HES-SO//GE Institut d'Études Sociales**

This paper belongs to the Symposium 'Ageing migrants and care – formal and informal arrangements and the role of social work' (Submission Sequence 2060). This paper's overarching question is: what are the formal and informal strategies used by Romanian ageing migrants in Switzerland to fulfil their welfare needs? Based on this, there were elaborated and tested two hypotheses putting in relation the integration at the destination and the care used by migrants. With regard to care, there were taken into account both its locality – where care is accessed – and the types of care accessed – public, private, third sector or informal. The first hypothesis states that the more migrants are integrated, the more they are likely to rely on public welfare provisions. And the second hypothesis reads as: the more migrants are integrated, the more they are likely to use welfare from the country of destination. In Switzerland there can be identified four groups of Romanian ageing migrants: 1. Persons who arrived as political refugees during the communist regime in Romania and have aged in place, 2. Temporary visitors who come to Switzerland for less than 3 months in order to provide care for their grandchildren and be closer to their family, 3. Persons who came to Switzerland based on family reunification, 4. Return migrants to Romania who have ties to Switzerland. The analysis is based on fieldwork research in the canton of Geneva and Vaud, and in neighbouring France. There were conducted 25 in-depth interviews with Romanian migrants aged 60+ (one interview with a person aged 57). The different flows of migration towards Switzerland allow us to look deeper into the above-mentioned hypotheses and identify different cases of ageing migrants.

# **Ageing without children: challenging the hegemony of parenthood**

**Mo Ray  
Sullivan Mary Pat**

**Keele University**

Childless older people have traditionally been regarded as disadvantaged when compared to older people with children, especially in regard to care and support needs. More recently, there has been recognition that defining ageing without children as an inevitably disadvantaged experience is inappropriate. This paper reports on findings from an exploratory study using in-depth, biographical interviews with 30 older women and men aged between 60 and 90, which examined the contexts in which people aged without children and the potential implications for the participants. Using thematic analysis, findings highlight the diversity of contexts in which people age without children. Understanding those contexts provided insights into the resources that people may have to invest in developing support networks across the life course. Moreover, awareness of the context in which people age without children can provide insights into the potential implications of for example, involuntary childlessness. While participants did not feel personally disadvantaged as childless people, they did feel marginalised in a world dominated by the continued centrality of parenthood as an assumed adult role. Experiences included inappropriate assumptions made by others about their 'childless' state; exclusion from the social worlds of parents/grandparents; and recognition that old age care was underpinned by assumptions about family care. Participants tended to be concerned about issues associated with for example, the availability of support if they should lose decision-making capacity. This narrative was invariably accompanied by recognition that older people with children could not necessarily rely on the availability of support from children, or that adult children might not be the most appropriate representative for their parent. Although a small-scale study, the findings suggest implications for challenging the hegemony of parenthood in later life especially when considering policy and practice associated with older people and their potential and actual care and support needs.

Keywords: Childless; ageing; care and support

# **Participative action research in developing social work research and practice**

**Kati Närhi  
Tuomo Kokkonen, Aila-Leena Matthies**

**University of Jyväskylä**

The objective of our three year research project funded by the Academy of Finland is to produce knowledge of the role of welfare service for participation of the most marginalized groups of citizens. The politically and socially most non-participative citizens are often dependants of welfare services. Usually they have also negative experiences on how they are treated as citizens in the services. Therefore, welfare services have a significant role for hindering or enabling participation. In this paper we critically reflect participative action research (PAR) used in our research combined with data produced by focus group interviews of both service users and street-level practitioners. We work with young people outside working life and school, and local welfare service practitioners. PAR approaches seek to address issues of power and politics and offers an option of empowerment of marginalized voices. In the paper we discuss how young service users are indeed able to participate in defining local welfare services and what are the models of participation they prefer. We also reflect upon the real impacts of young people's action towards changes in welfare services. Results of the study relate to the idea that potential for change lies in the involvement of and alliances with people using services and practitioners who work with them. Shared knowledge and collaboration as well as informing policy makers and media are strategies to enable changes in welfare service system. The study has methodological, professional and political implications for social work research, practice and policy. Participation is a political concept that is constantly under definition. Marginalised people have the least power in this struggle. Consequently, user participation can be understood both as developing democratic culture and as a model of neo-liberal governance.

Keywords: PAR, critical reflection, participation, marginalisation

# **SOCIAL POLICY, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND "WELFARE DIAMONDS" IN SIX COUNTRIES: IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK**

**Alessandro Sicora**

**University of Calabria**

Cross-national comparative social policy research can contribute to a wider and deeper understanding of the similarities and differences social work has throughout the world. Family, market, State, community (in alphabetical order) can be considered the most important actors in influencing the personal welfare and providing support and help in handling with problems everybody meets in his/her life . The so-called "welfare diamond" (Evil, Pijl, and Ungerson, 1994) formed by the mutual interactions between these four actors provides an effective and simple model for comparing countries located in different continents and immersed in different cultures. At the same time it provides a good frame for further investigation on how and where social work focus its action to promote social justice and well-being. The aim of this presentation is to compare the general structure of social policy and social interaction in six countries (three EU members - Finland, Italy, UK - and three others - India, Russia, South Africa- outside EU) and demonstrate that the "welfare diamond" is a useful conceptual tool also in comparative social work research because it is focused on subjects considered important in any social work intervention. Standing up to complexity and linking social work and political action are themes connected with this issue. The main points are: 1) a description of the interactions between the variables (family, market, State, community); 2) an analysis of the quantitative indicators and narrative analysis to make invisible "welfare diamonds" visible; 3) a comparative analysis between the countries (Finland, India, Italy, Russia, South Africa, UK) involved in the research with regards to the variables and 4) the implication for social work. The research leading to these results has received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013/ under REA grant agreement n° 295203.

# **The relations between social workers and political organizations in Russia**

**Eugenia Podstreshnaya**

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

The presentation refers to a branch of evolving investigations in the domain of social work in Russia. More precisely, it considers the issue of potential of Russian social workers to interact with political organizations promoting the solving of certain social problems. The presentation is based on the results of the large empirical research project conducted within the framework of research and educational group "Professions in Social State". Despite the current rise of professionalization processes in the domain of social policy initiated by the state, this sphere is still characterized by the under-professionalization and relatively low professional autonomy. The main objective of the project is to analyse the ideology of the professional group of specialist in social work in order to reveal existing problems caused by the lack of professional self-regulation. One of the research questions deals with the level of power resource of social workers that implies their abilities to interact efficiently with political organizations. The project includes both qualitative and quantitative data gained through a survey of specialist in social work in a number of subjects of the Russian Federation. Presentation will include the results of the analysis of quantitative data; the total amount of sample is 1167 people. The frequency and effectiveness of contacts with representatives of political organizations are examined in their relation with the level of specific knowledge in the field of social work and the level of work experience. It seems to be one of important sites of social work practice since social workers can be seen as agents of change in the social sphere of life. The results obtained could highlight the main problems related to the participation of social workers in political life of the state, thus providing possible ways to improve the communication between different levels of social policy in Russia.

# **The release of social workers from local government into the community: The early lessons from the Social Work Practice Pilots with Adults in England**

**Barbra Teater**

**University of Bristol**

**Background:** The Social work practice (SWP) pilots with adults were initiated by the Department of Health in England in November 2010. The purpose of the SWP pilots is to enable social workers to create social enterprise businesses that deliver functions independently of the local authorities (LAs). The authors sought to explore the following: (1) the benefits and disbenefits in terms of outcomes for service users, social workers and other staff; (2) how social work practice was developing when working independently from LAs; and (3) the benefits and disbenefits of professionally-led social enterprise.

**Methods:** Through the use of a co-operative inquiry approach (Heron, 1996), this inquiry sought to identify 'what works', specifically the social work methods being developed in the new practice context and their impact on service users and how the 'values and principles' of social enterprise are evident in the practice. The information was gathered through two, 2-day site visits to each of the seven SWP pilots, and through 2, 1-day workshops where all seven SWP pilots were represented. Information was gathered from social workers, service users, and community members/partners through individual interviews, group meetings, home visits, and office-based activities. All information was analyzed using thematic analysis (Greg, 2012).

**Results:** The thematic analysis revealed the following five main themes: (1) Spend more time with individuals – less bureaucracy; (2) Take decisions much closer to their clients – a more responsive service; (3) More control over the day-to-day management; (4) Thinking creatively about resource use; and (5) Enjoy their jobs more. Each theme will be described and supported through pictures, videos, and case studies.

**Conclusion:** This inquiry has revealed that social workers are able to work more creatively, flexibly, and with less bureaucracy within a social enterprise operating independently from LAs. Future research should explore the long-term impact of SWPs on service users and social workers.

# **Crossing borders: the limits of social work research and the potential for change**

**Kelly McDonald**

**University of York**

This paper is concerned with the 'borders' of social work research and practice. The majority of social work research turns its gaze upon the accepted boundaries of 'social work', focusing in particular on service provision and service users. However, in this paper it is my contention that there are practical and moral imperatives why social work researchers should look outwards, beyond established disciplinary and institutional parameters, to those places where social work does not, or dare not, go. I will illustrate this contention by reference to a qualitative study of the experiences of unaccompanied asylum seeking children leaving the UK care system. The majority of these young people had failed in their asylum claims and were therefore no longer entitled to social work services. My findings prompted reflection on what happens when social work 'ends'; when vulnerable people find themselves without entitlements to services even though the social work commitment to social justice would suggest that they ought to be eligible for some form of protection or support from such services. Relatedly, it does seem that the borders of social work practice are mirrored in social work research, particularly given its increasing concern with evaluating already existing services, according to pre-ordained institutional criteria. Arguably, by accepting the borders of social work as they are currently constructed, researchers perpetuate rather than challenge the structurally determined boundaries which the prevailing consensus imposes upon both disadvantaged individuals and social workers who might wish to assist them. This paper will raise pertinent questions about the borders of social work practice and research, and about the methods which both services and researchers use to access individuals and groups who do not fit within the boundaries of conventional service provision. As such, it will contribute to conference themes 4 and 6.

Keywords: knowledge borders; hard to reach groups; asylum; young people

# **What if social work turns transnational? On the research implications of an emerging approach to immigrant clients**

**Paolo Boccagni**

**University of Trento**

Migration, like other globalization-related phenomena, questions the traditionally "territorialist" approaches and boundaries of social work research and practice. In fact, professional practice with migrant and ethnic clients is hardly new. Much has been done (and written) about it under the banners of cultural competence, anti-discrimination, diversity and even international social work – a long-standing tradition which, in the last decade, has been promisingly (if quite vaguely) reframed as transnational social work. What the latter perspective adds to the social work-migration nexus, primarily in terms of research, is the core question of my paper. I will conceptually revisit a debate primarily based in social work, but open to the insights of migration, development and social protection studies. Central to the transnational view (Furman et al, 2008; Chambon et al., 2011) are, first, a critique of the viability – let alone the appropriateness – of the traditionally exclusive focus of social work practice on migrants' assimilation; second, an emphasis on migrants' cross-border attachments and relationships, especially among first-generation newcomers, as a source of needs, claims and obligations that are out of sync with the "sedentarist" frame of social work provision. Migrant needs and concerns may be multi-scalar and territorially dispersed, insofar as they involve significant others and life contexts in their homelands. Making sense of them would require a sophisticated understanding of the prevailing social needs in their home societies, of the attendant social work resources, cultures and institutions, and of the potential to make connections, through migrants' life experience, between "here" and "there". How far these transnational needs could (or even should) be addressed, and through which strategies, is contentious. Doing research in the regard – concerning, for instance, support to migrants' transnational family life – is itself a source of promises and pitfalls to be explored further, as I aim to do in this paper.

# **Glocalization Processes in Russian Social Work**

**Pavel Romanov  
Rostislav Kononenko, Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova**

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

This paper aims to evaluate the changes in institutions and discourses as direct and secondary results of global/local interaction in social work in today's Russia. We consider the contribution of international co-operation to the development of local institutions and discourses, focussing on emerging discrepancies and contradictions between international and local actors. Contemporary society is simultaneously both global and local. The reality of the welfare state in a global world is changing. So are the realities and interpretations of social work. Different internal and external actors have contributed to the constitution of social work as a new profession in post-socialist Russia, where various international projects in the area of social work training and practice have been implemented. Global institutions and processes have an impact on national and local policies and practice in social welfare (Lyons 2006: 377). The result of their interaction is complex and diverse process of glocalization in social work training and practice. When the imported discourse on social work is recontextualized locally, it is "filtered, tested, grounded and reproduced" (Yan, Cheung 2006: 63-64) in the native frame of social, economic, political, and cultural references. On the other hand, such processes can undermine the idea of human rights as the core of social work as a profession. Based on a review of relevant literature and mass media, survey data as well as on interviews with social worker and managers in an industrial region of Russia, interviews with the social workers at the church parishes in 2011-2012, we conclude that when global social work values are embedded in local traditions, it can support the development of social work in Russia.

# **Social Work in the Context of Social Entrepreneurship**

**Sarka Ulcakova**

**University of Ostrava, Faculty of Social Studies**

Social Work in the Context of Social Entrepreneurship  
The presentation of outcomes of Student Grant Competition project 2012  
Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Social Work, Integration, Modernization  
The Project Team: Mgr. Vera Malík Holasová, Ph.D, Mgr. Vendula Gojová, Ph.D., Mgr. Šárka Ulčáková, Mgr. Marcela Kabeláčová, Mgr. Anna Waniová, Mgr. Eliška Lindovská, Mgr. Marek Mikulec  
Modernization of postindustrial society has caused many changes – for example an increasing significance of economics and economy and its influence on all subsystems of society. This brings lot of questions such as whether it is possible to connect social work with economy. In this regard the concept of social entrepreneurship is an often discussed topic recently. The presentation shall briefly introduce a research which had been realized in 2012 by doctoral and master students at the Faculty of Social Studies at University of Ostrava and which is focused on social work in the context of social entrepreneurship. Design of the research was as followed: identification of the area of research + exploration of literature, creation of a subject of quantitative part of the research, data collection and analysis, exploration of literature and creation of subject of the quantitative part of the research. The qualitative part was focused on procedures applied in social dimension of social entrepreneurship as it is seen by social entrepreneurs. We realized semi-structured interviews while focusing on two partial objectives: (1) understanding the procedures applied in social dimension of social entrepreneurship and (2) identification of areas and forms of application of social work within the social entrepreneurship + creation of social enterprise models related to the professional context of social entrepreneur. For the second part of our research and the formulation of hypotheses we used the positivist paradigm. Our objective was to explore the forms of integration processes in Work Integration Social Enterprises and to find out whether there are differences in the perception of integration among social entrepreneurs with different professional context. For this part of research we used questionnaires, which were sent to Czech social enterprises. During our research we had identified a model of social entrepreneurship category structure within the social dimension of social entrepreneurship and we had also created two new categories of social enterprise. Our conclusions may give some input information for another research related to this matter.

# **Controlling life? Agamben and the political position of child welfare-involved mothers**

**Lorraine Waterhouse  
Janice McGhee**

**The University of Edinburgh**

Background and purpose of the proposed presentation: This paper is based on an examination of one aspect of Giorgio Agamben's philosophical theory, namely the concept of 'bare life', or life as mere existence (1995) to discuss the position of child welfare-involved mothers. Agamben provides an analysis of the politically determined nature of life and the tendency for greater control of life in modern democratic western society. The intention is to use his ideas to examine critically the institutional power embedded in child protective services and the implications for relations between practitioners and women as mothers. A summary of the main points of the presentation: 1. To outline reasons for concentrating on child welfare-involved mothers 2. To contextualise this paper through a brief summary of an earlier body of work on child welfare-involved mothers 3. To set out Agamben's concept of 'bare life' or life as mere existence 4. To explore its application to child-welfare-involved mothers and child protective services

How the proposed presentation addresses one or more of the conference aims and themes: Conference Theme 3: Standing up to complexity – specific and universal issues in social work

The relations between women and child protective services are complex, whilst raising universal issues that concern the control of individual lives and the place of state intervention. The paper seeks to extend our understanding of child welfare-involved mothers who are seen as both part of the problem and part of the solution to child maltreatment and child safety. It seeks to contribute to a wider consideration of the position of women in relation to institutional intervention for humanitarian reasons by child protective services.

Conclusions from and implications of your presentation for practice, policy, or subsequent research: Agamben seeks to convince us that even humanitarian institutions in democratic societies in the exercise of control over life have the potential of reducing life and destroying experience. The position of child welfare-involved mothers alerts us to the complexity that lies behind child protective services for them and to the unintended possibility of their being treated as non-persons by child protective services whose intention is humanitarian. 1-4

keywords Agamben, child protective services, bare life, child-welfare involved mothers

# **Racism, 'bad mothers' and child abuse in news media: A role for social work advocacy**

**Liz Beddoe**

**University of Auckland**

Social workers are frequently critical of the role of media reporting of family violence. While it is understandable that child deaths become the focus of public scrutiny, in New Zealand a cultural 'story' is told about child abuse. Both mainstream journalists and columnists employ race, class and gender stereotyping in discussing child abuse. Columnists have a special power — their cruel words shock and their status affords their polemic some gravitas. And with the freedom offered by public comment the tone becomes more anti-poor and misogynist. Inflammatory judgements about mothers underscore an ideological deviance narrative that seeks to frame child abuse with a central folk-devil figure—the bad Maori welfare mother. It is likely that the inexplicable behaviour of perpetrators leads to casting about for explanations; mothers are thus an easy target, even if they too have experienced violence at the hands of the abuser. A media focus on deaths of Maori children suggests that Maori families, and specifically Maori mothers, have become central to a moral panic about claims that child abuse is a 'cultural' problem, rather than an outcome of poverty, discrimination and institutional racism. There are consequences for social work in this moral panic discourse: moralistic, individualising and surveillant approaches to families with the greatest need. A focus on 'bad mothers' may cement an artificial divide between adult and child protective services at a time when the needs of vulnerable children and their caregivers may benefit from co-location of child and adult services. Ultimately a focus on cultural 'dysfunction' perpetuates social injustice – ignoring poverty, racism, ingrained sexism and other sources of alienation. To counter this is a major challenge for human rights focussed social work. This paper explores the potential role of social work research in challenging these media narratives.

Keywords: Child abuse; Media discourse; Racism; Mothers

# **knowledge and decision making in child protection social work**

**David Saltiel**

**University of Leeds**

There have been a number of highly publicised cases in the UK where social workers were perceived to have made errors in decision making about children at risk. This study addressed the question: how do social workers make decisions in child protection work in conditions of uncertainty and complexity. Observations and interviews were carried out across two UK sites: a team with legal child protection responsibilities and a team undertaking family assessments. Observation field notes and interview transcripts were coded manually and thematically analysed. The social workers were faced with considerable uncertainty and had to make decisions quickly based on incomplete or contested information. The conditions of practice favoured rapid heuristic decisions which could lead to bias and error. The knowledge workers produced was gathered from a range of sources including home visits, work with other professionals, information from non-professionals, case notes and research-based evidence. All these sources were seen by the social workers as troublesome and fallible. These fallible sources had to be evaluated, synthesised and reconstructed for practice through a series of complex social processes that made up the context of the work. Insufficient attention is paid to the contexts in which knowledge is produced and used. Knowledge production and decision making are embedded in practice contexts. Key processes such as gathering and evaluating information through home visits and professional supervision are complex social interactions artfully managed by skilled actors rather than means for producing objective knowledge. More research is needed into these everyday processes to develop theories of social work "practices". Errors cannot be eliminated but studying how professionals make decisions within local practice contexts could help researchers better understand where and why errors occur and what social processes make those errors more or less likely.

Keywords: knowledge production; uncertainty

# **Construction of accountability in child protection workers decision-making processes**

**Ida Marie Schrøder**

**Metropolitan University College**

In order to meet public and political demands on more transparent and efficient public spending the Danish local governments have, as in many other European countries, implemented strict budget constraints and decision control. Within child protection work the aim has been to strengthen managerial accountability in the hopes that child protection workers would be motivated to take into account budget constraints, and public economy in general, when deciding on social interventions. Inspired by the sociological practice-oriented accounting literature, this paper explores child protection workers construction of accountability as relational effects of these new forms of accounting practice. The paper draws on the preliminary results from a 2 ½ year mixed method study of how budgeting and accounting practice influences the processes of decision-making in child protection work. The data has been collected from three Danish local governments and consists of 24 qualitative interviews with child protection workers, leaders and economic consultants, 12 observations of team meetings and a quantitative survey of 150 cases. The study ends summer 2014 and the results of the research will be utilized in the Danish School of Social Work. The preliminary findings suggest that public and managerial accountability have a tendency to be enacted as integrated, and not in contrast to, professional accountability, when the child protection workers are involved in the process of developing management accounting systems – such as setting standards or deciding on the delegation of decision-making authority. Using Actor-network theory as a methodological and analytical approach, it furthermore becomes clear how the types of accountability are enacted as effects, not only by the technologies offered to support accounting practice, but also by the particular context they are part of.

# **Decision-making in problematic situations. Reflections on social workers' use of knowledge and implications for social work research**

**Björn Blom  
Lars Evertsson, Marek Perlinski**

**Dep. of Social Work, Umeå University**

Currently there is an effort to make social workers act according to principles of evidence-based practice. This approach assumes that by supporting social workers with reviews of "what works", or practice guidelines, decision-making, and knowledge use will improve.

Our paper discusses decision-making and knowledge use in social work practice. What kind of knowledge is used? How is decision-making conditioned by contextual contingencies? What are the implications for social work research?

The paper draws on two studies of social workers. From the study *Social Workers and Doctors Use of Knowledge in Practice*, written narratives describing problematic situations where decision-making were hampered were collected. The participants (29 social workers) were experienced and came from different areas of the Swedish social services.

The project "Specialization or integration in the Personal Social Services?" studied how specialised respectively integrated organisations condition interventions and outcomes. We studied three organisational models using several research methods: 1) survey among social workers, 2) interviewing politicians, managers and social workers, 3) focus groups with social workers, 4) analysing official documents, guidelines etc.

Decision-making and knowledge use proved to be more complex than usually assumed within the EBP paradigm. It is seldom just a matter of rational decision-making and matching specific interventions and well-defined social problems. The character of the interaction with clients conditions social workers' decision-making and use of knowledge. Interaction with clients, perceived as being "problematic", causes a rupture in social workers' professional routine practice, which affects decision-making and knowledge use.

The predominant discourse on decision-making and knowledge use focuses on "the best" kind of knowledge, how knowledge should be implemented, as well as professionals' motivation and competence. Professional action is largely viewed as a rational cognitive process. However, this is insufficient and policy-makers and social work researcher should focus more on social and relational aspects (i.e. client encounters) of decision-making and knowledge use.

Keywords: decision-making, knowledge use, disrupted professional practice, relationships.

# **Problem-setting of social workers in complex and super-diverse contexts. An ethnographic exploration.**

**Bea Van Robaeys**

**University College Karel De Grote**

**Background and purpose:** In their daily practice, social workers are often confronted with the complexity of evolutions in the environment and the increasing diversity of their clients. Processes of individualization, emancipation, mobility, migration and secularisation in an urbanized society contribute to this. To cope with the challenges of the super-diverse society, the development of reflective competencies is more important than ever. In this presentation, we report on a qualitative research into the 'problem-setting-capacities' of practitioners and their 'tacit knowledge off working in complex and super-diverse contexts'.

**Methods:** Focusing on the question how social workers formulate 'the problem' in working with a clientele of poor people of diverse ethnic-cultural backgrounds, we report on an ethnographic study in a social work organisation working around family and parenting in the city of Ghent, Belgium. Over a period of one year, we followed a team of seven social workers. We observed team-meetings and interviewed each of the social workers at the beginning and the end of the fieldwork period. We followed the helping process and social work interventions for five individual cases/families. With each engaged social worker, we had several reflective interviews on the evolutions in the individual cases.

**Results:** In this presentation we identify different ways of categorising the problems of poor clients in a super-diverse setting, with a tension between anti-oppressive and ethnic-cultural frameworks. We also indicate the pivotal role of emotions in the problem-setting of social workers when confronted with extremely marginalized families in poor living conditions.

**Conclusions and implications:** We argue that an ethnographic strategy on the one hand, makes it possible to inquire the tacit knowledge off social professionals and, on the other hand, facilitates a learning process for a social work organisation by means of the 'reflexive and reflexivity-stimulating' presence of the researcher.

# **Tacit knowledge regarding re-offending: A repertory grid study of probation officers' judgements**

**Judith Mullineux**

**University of Ulster**

'Tacit concepts regarding re-offending: A repertory grid study of probation officers' judgements'

**Background and purpose:** This research considered professional decision making by probation officers in Northern Ireland. The objective was to creatively identify the complexity of factors involved in the judgement of re-offending by tapping in to the tacit knowledge base of probation officers. The research question was defined as 'How do Probation officers' judge the likelihood of re-offending?'. **Method:** The repertory grid technique, based on personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955), was utilised to elicit probation officers' personal constructs in order to illuminate the extent to which criminogenic factors and/or other underlying beliefs were influencing assessment and decision making with regard to the likelihood of re-offending. Fifteen practicing probation officers volunteered to take part in the study. The results were analysed using initial 'eye-balling' of the data, cluster analysis and principal components analysis. The results are qualitative and quantitative and are presented both statistically and creatively through visual plots. **Results:** The results indicate that the constructs fall in to five broad categories: Crime; external factors; substance misuse; personal characteristics of the offender; personal values. **Conclusions and implications:** Personal construct theory suggests that a person construes and develops a unique understanding of the world "through transparent patterns or templates which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed" (Kelly, 1955, pp.8-9). If we accept that these constructions are what we use to make sense of the world and predict future events, the relevance to decision making practice becomes apparent in both personal and professional contexts. The findings from this study illustrate the range and complexity of factors being considered by probation officers in the assessment of recidivism.

**Key words:** offending, judgements, repertory grid, probation officer/s.

# **Assessment in child welfare – Realistic evaluation**

**Johanna Hietamäki**

**University of Jyväskylä**

Background and purpose: Recent changes in Finnish Child Welfare Act (2008) define assessment as a separate working stage. The new comprehensive assessment measures have affected significantly to the Act. These measures emphasise holistic and child-centred working, include functional methods and a clear working process (e.g. certain meetings with parents and children together and individually). There is no empirical research about the assessment in child welfare. This research is a realistic evaluation of the child welfare assessment in Finnish municipalities. The focus is to study how assessment intervention, clients' background and municipality factors affect the consensual understanding of the family situation between parent and social worker. Methods: The data was collected by sending questionnaires to the parents who had received assessment in child welfare. The data includes 177 responses (response rate 26,6 %). Analysing methods are factor analysis, correlations, hierarchical regression analysis and two-way analysis of variance. Results: The parents are likely to feel that they share a common understanding of the family situation with the social workers, if the parents feel that they have a good relationship with social worker, social worker has explicated the assessment intervention, social worker has assessed their strengths and is not concentrating only to their problems. If fathers join to the assessment then parents are more likely to feel that they and social worker share the understanding of the family situation. If the problems are related to the parent more than to the behaviour of the child, then is harder to reach positive outcomes, if at the same time relationship between parent and social worker is bad. Conclusions and implications: The research confirm that it is important for social worker to build up good relationship, explain the assessment process and reasons to do assessment, assess families' strengths and resources.

Key words: assessment, realistic evaluation, quantitative research

# **Knowledge production in legal processes of divorce - How housing of children is argued in custody reports of Finnish family social work**

**Aino Kääriäinen**

**University of Helsinki**

The goal of this study is to find out how communication between the legal and social services function in the process of divorce. My aim is to examine the knowledge production and knowledge exchange between the different organizations involved in deciding over children's residence and custody in a divorce. In analysing the text of the administrative custody reports I use the theory of polyphony originally developed by Mihail Bahtin and Valentin Vološinov. Divorce rates are relatively high in Finland and also in other European countries (e.g. Kääriäinen, Hämäläinen & Pölkki 2012). Parents' divorce is almost always a traumatic experience for the child, especially when the divorce is contentious. Parents' disagreement about whether the child has two homes or, she/he lives only with one parent is central for this study. In my presentation I will answer the following questions: How are the circumstances of parents documented by writing the custody report? What kinds of arguments are used to justify child's residence only with mother or father, or with both parents? Previously, I have studied Finnish custody reports of the circumstances in a family during a divorce formulated by the municipal social workers and other authorities (Kääriäinen 2014, forthcoming). The material consists of over 1500 documents, which has a significant role in deciding a child's residence and custody during the legal process. Hence, it matters what and how the social workers write about the divorcing parents and child's situations in a family. Social workers are often accused of being biased, and especially, preferring the mother's side. Therefore it is argued to examine the conditions that affect the process of producing an official report. Also, it is important to point out who are being heard during the process and, what kind of information ends up to the inquest.

Keywords: divorce, custody report, housing of children

# **The frontiers of research democracy: involving people with dementia in a systematic review**

**Fisher Mike**

**University of Bedfordshire**

## **Background and purpose:**

Modern social welfare places user involvement at the heart of democratic decision-making, ensuring that people who use services participate in policymaking and in research. People with dementia are rarely included in these processes. Practitioners and researchers often assume that a diagnosis of dementia means that people cannot contribute to policymaking or to research. This project challenges this by involving people with dementia in a systematic review. The study had two aims – to undertake a pilot systematic review of the views of people with dementia, and to explore ways of ensuring the participation of people with dementia in reviews of this kind.

## **Methods:**

Seven people with dementia joined a research group which met three times to consider:

- a. what studies to include in the systematic review;
- b. what quality criteria to apply to the research; and
- c. whether the initial themes made sense to them.

A pilot systematic review was undertaken to provide the material for the research group. Pragmatic search methods were used to identify 214 studies from 18 countries published since 2000.

## **Results:**

This pilot study showed that it is possible to involve people living with dementia as partners in the review process. By paying careful attention both to how the material is presented and to group processes, the group allowed people to participate and express their views, while preserving their emotional health and well-being. People with dementia offered clear views about what should be included, what counts as quality and whether the key themes made sense to them.

## **Conclusion and implications:**

As Europe ages, the number of people with dementia will inevitably increase. Our democratic processes must include our ageing citizens by ensuring their views influence research and policy.

**Keywords:** People with dementia, Research, User involvement, Systematic review

# **Social participation of elderly people: a participative inquiry with particular focus on people with lifelong intellectual disabilities in later ages**

**Sylvia Rainer**

**University of Bolzano Bozen**

Elderly people and particularly people with lifelong intellectual disabilities in advanced age are to be considered as social groups who are exposed to multiple risks of marginalisation. Their overall representations in society appear to involve the portrait of burdensome members of community not being able to take part in the so called active and autonomous life which generally shapes the construction of identity in adulthood. Yet, the present inquiry grounds in the assumption that social participation of senior citizens is both meaningful at an individual level and offers great treasure for every community in terms of social capital and social cohesion. The research design is thus indebted to a participatory action research approach and entails the direct involvement of those growing older. The research participants have been recruited with the help of gatekeepers such as social workers, representatives of social associations and elderly people themselves. The process of data collection involves the collection of life histories through qualitative interviews. Such approach encompasses important ethical and methodological challenges, requires the building of trust relationships between the researcher and the participants and the continuous development and adjustment of adequate research strategies. A further characteristic and innovative aspect of this study is the involvement of an advisory board consisting of elderly people who accompany the whole research process in the role of scientific supervisors. The first results of the study reveal a broad array of individual strategies elderly people develop in order to participate in social life and to contribute to their communities. Further, the study aims to disclose what social spaces and resources communities offer to elderly people and what socially constructed barriers to meaningful participation they need to address. Thus, the overall intention is to reveal emerging mandates for social work and social policy.

KEY WORDS: participation, disabilities, elderly, action research

# **Working at research: lessons from a participatory research project with young fathers**

**Suzy Braye  
Liz McDonnell**

**University of Sussex**

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on and critically evaluate the use of participatory research methods as used in a small qualitative study of the experiences of young fathers (25yrs and under) in a UK city. The Talking Dads Project combined the expertise of young fathers, an NGO and university researchers (with backgrounds in social work, law and sociology) and aimed to deepen our understanding of the everyday lives of young fathers. In accordance with participatory research principles, young fathers (sampled from the participating NGO and through snowballing) took a lead role in developing the content of, and conducting, interviews with peer participants. This paper focuses on five critical processes that emerged during the project that created intense debate and became sites for negotiation of the delicate balance of powers between participants. These included young fathers' initial engagement, the translation of their research ideas into research tools, research ethics such as confidentiality and duty of care, issues around how to facilitate comprehensive, in-depth data collection, and the differential impact of the research on the lives of all involved. This paper examines these critical processes in relation to key features of participatory research identified in the literature: action-orientation, cooperative enquiry, action-reflection cycle, power shift and breadth of epistemology. The learning emerging from this evaluation of the research process contributes to our understanding of the challenges of participatory research such as the distance between the intention and its operationalization, the depth of power sharing achieved, and the various meanings ascribed to participation and desirable outcomes by participants. The Talking Dads Project also demonstrates that it is possible to do research differently and to reach the desired audiences in academic, professional practitioners' and young people's worlds. Flexibility and a capacity to work constructively with constraints were important elements of our experience.

Key words: participatory research, young fathers, power, research methods

# **Knowledge exchange as a participatory research tool: Alcohol and other drugs in social work practice**

**Aisha Hutchinson  
Sarah Galvani, Cherilyn Dance, Debra Allnock**

**University of Bedfordshire**

Background and purpose: While social workers regularly encounter people who are affected by alcohol and drug use, the paucity of education and training for social workers in this area remains. The aim of this three stranded study was to bring together perspectives on the nature of training provision for social workers on working with alcohol and drug use from; the practitioners themselves; social work educators; and employer-based workforce development leads. Methods: As part of the research process a Knowledge Exchange event, with a selection of participants from each of the three strands of the project, was held to ensure the outputs of the study reflected the perspectives of all potential beneficiaries of the research. More than 50 people took an active part in discussing not only the findings from three surveys, but also solutions to some of the challenges and barriers the findings raised. Qualitative analysis was used to examine notes written up from the day. Results: A range of reflections were raised on the availability, nature and extent of training on alcohol and drugs for social work practitioners. Particular attention was paid to organisational barriers which limit training availability or the time practitioners have to attend. Social work practitioners, social work educators and workforce development leads also shared their own experiences about what they do to overcome some of the challenges and barriers raised. Conclusions and implications: The knowledge exchange event played a key role in the final analysis of each research strand, the suggested 'solutions' or 'ways forward' and nature of the research outputs. Taken together this work provides a powerful evidence base from which to target capacity building activities aimed at improving the skills of social workers and highlights implications for wider social care education, policy and practice.

Keywords: Alcohol; Drugs; Education and training; Knowledge exchange

# **Social interventions: quality standards, suitable research instruments**

**Martijn Bool**

**Movisie**

Social work nowadays is often described in terms of social interventions. Social interventions can be characterized as systematic and interactive processes between (semi)professionals and citizens with a specific aim. All stakeholders, professionals, citizens, policy, strive for effectiveness of social interventions. Effectiveness is one important aspect of quality development. It is not only an end state but a process. We will distinguish and present five steps in the process of quality development. For the purpose of accountability we have selected several research instruments matching these five steps for use in practice, each with their specific profits. The workshop addresses the conference themes of - knowledge production and public accountability in social work and evidence and uncertainty; - pathways to accountable social work research and practice. Quality development of social interventions contains several dimensions. Besides the interactive process of interventions and the role of the client or citizen, the main components are the skills, attitudes and knowledge of the professional on the one hand and the quality of the intervention on the other hand. In this workshop we present five steps for the quality development of social interventions and several research instruments for use in each of these steps. We give an overview of the five steps and the instruments. The first step is to make a good description of an intervention, the second is to build a theoretical foundation, the third step is to do research into application and experiences of citizens and professionals, followed by systematic monitoring of results, and the fifth step is research into its effectiveness. These five steps are based on practice and research criteria for interventions in youth care, health promotion, sports and social interventions applied by several institutes in the Netherlands. Accountability is linked most strongly to the fifth step: research into effectiveness. Although the criterion of accountability is not disputed, there are many obstacles to obtaining accountability in the reality of social interventions. Therefore we aim for forms of accountability which include the other four steps. Starting with a description of an intervention will give insight in the aims and approach used. To be more specific, a good description explains which social question is addressed, with which aims, which approach is used, what competencies are expected, what are the foundations and the experiences of the approach. For steps two to five we have a set of research instruments which have proved their value for the social sector. Each instrument has strength and can serve specific aims in accountability, e.g. case study, arena of effects, theory of change, monitoring. We explored these research instruments in practice and summarized them in a (Dutch) publication. In the workshop we present and explore with the participants the overall picture of the five steps and the set of research instruments. The next step is a more in-depth exploration of one of the five steps and one of the research instruments, based on the preferences and experiences of the participants. We aim with our presentation to give a comprehensive and compact overview of routes towards accountability suitable for social work.

Key words: quality development, effectiveness, research methods.

# **Self evaluation of the quality of social work practice**

**Teresa Bertotti**

**University of Milano Bicocca**

Evaluating the quality of social work practice is becoming more important in the light of changes in the welfare system such as the introduction of managerial policies, the reduction of resources; the increased awareness on the effectiveness of the interventions but also the threats to professional social work. Meanwhile, it is acknowledged that evaluating social work practice is complex because of various factors such as: the different meanings that are attributed to the concept of quality; the presence of different subjects that are interested in social work practice and the structural existence of multiple mandates to which social work is called upon to respond; the difficulties to operationalize the criteria adopted and to evaluate situations that are highly variable. Moreover the common understanding about what is 'good social work practice' is low also in the professional community. At least in Italy, social workers have very little room to discuss and share their ideas about which criteria and which indicators can be used. This lack risks to weak the capacity of the professional community to face the challenge of evaluating and assessing social work practice in compliance with professional criteria. In order to overcome those risks and enhance professional sharing, a participative research-intervention project was built. It aimed to: 1) bring out the criteria the social worker use to define a 'good social work practice' and 2) build a self evaluation questionnaire based on these criteria. The research project was proposed to groups of social workers, from 2006 to 2011, involving approximately 400 social workers. The research intervention project will be presented and discussed considering both some contents, stemming from a cross sectional analysis of the questionnaires, as well as the method used. The structure and the usefulness of the questionnaire will be also discussed.

Key words: research intervention, self evaluation, social work practice evaluation,

# Quality in access to social services in South Tyrol

**Andrea Nagy**  
**Elisabeth Berger, Silvia Fargion**

**Free University of Bozen**

Access to social services is particularly complex in a heterogenous and multilingual community as it is the case in the region of South Tyrol in Upper Italy. The research aims to explore the institutional, organisational and professional level of access. In Italy the Law 328, which has inspired most of the regional or provincial laws regulating social services, acknowledges information and first counselling as an essential service. Additionally our hypothesis, supported by previous national and international research, is that the way people get in contact to social services has a huge significance and impact on the quality of social work interventions, on the use of resources and on how the rights of people are promoted and respected. Based on telephone interviews with all heads of social services districts, we could so far identify three "ideal type"- models of access accordingly to the focus the leader took on while describing "access": the value-based, the organisation-based and the profession-based access model. A following on site study in the three ideal type districts will support or challenge those first conclusions. Due to a relative freedom of decision making and specific local conditions in the districts a variety of "best solutions" have been developed in different districts throughout the region, rather than one unified procedure. If "best solutions" are good practises for access has to be evaluated - equally by all parties which are involved in the access: citizens becoming clients, social worker, other professions in the districts, head of services, policy makers etc. That's what the project is aiming for. We would like to offer a "work in progress" presentation in the section: Knowledge production and public accountability in social work or in the section: Research in social work as participative learning process.

Keyword: Access to social services

# **Social Work & public accountability: What do Carers Say?**

**Julie Lawrence**

**University of Salford**

## Background to Research

Legislation, policy and strategies encourage services and professionals to work with carers in ways that complement and enhance their roles. This is in order to maximize their capacity to care for their relative (e.g. Department of Health (DH) 2008, 2009, 2010; Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), 2006; Scottish Executive, 2010; Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), 2007), (James, 2012). Family carers, therefore, are recognized as a valuable resource in terms of caring for their relative and also when involved in public and professional partnerships, including the DH and statutory services.

## Research Aims

This presentation will address the conference theme by exploring carers' perceptions about working in partnership with social workers through a qualitative research study undertaken during 2012 in the UK. The research site was a statutory intellectual disability service for adults in the North West of England. The purposive sample of carers lived in the local community and had access to a social worker, to support them with their son or daughter. This paper argues that evaluating social work that matters to carers is important (Cameron et al., 2012). Outcomes defined by carers may differ from policy, strategy and practice imperatives, but are a crucial aspect of understanding the effectiveness or otherwise of accountable social work.

## Methodology

A narrative approach was adopted, whereby both the researcher and participants (n=6) worked as collaborators in order to facilitate in-depth 'life-stories' about valuable experiences. The data set was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA enabled the detailed and nuanced analysis of the lived experiences of participants to be explored (Smith et al., 2009).

## Key Findings

There is limited research which addresses the support needs of carers. This study highlighted 'what mattered' to carers, in terms of how social workers supported them to continue caring, including implications for effective social work practice:

- \* Displaying a genuine interest and commitment to people with intellectual disabilities
- \* Having a key person to contact
- \* Offering a consistent approach and co-ordinated service provision

- \* Working in genuine partnership: development of trust
- \* Continuation of support, despite limited resources
- \* Receiving timely and clear information about benefits and services

Keywords: Carers, resource, social work, partnership, intellectual disabilities

# **Professional autonomy of social workers in Russia**

**Anastasiya Selchenok**

**NRU Higher School of Economics**

**Background and purpose**The report is aimed to present main results of the qualitative research of social workers in Russia. Social work was included in the registry of service employment in 1991 in Russia. It was faced with institutional difficulties - low-status of social workers, gender stereotypes, low wages and the lack of professional competence. The neo-Weberian approach (E. Freidson, ? . ?bbott. M. Saks) and theory of social work (M. Payne) forms the theoretical background of my research.The research goal lies in analyzing the social work as a profession in Russia within the professional autonomy.The research objectives are assigned as follows:1) Describe socio-economic and professional features of social work as profession2) Suggest the ways of professional autonomy of social workers in Russia.**Methods** The research is based on the original data collected in the form of in-depth interviews. The data includes 13 interviews with people who work in social service centers. During the research we managed to discover the main aspects of professionalization of social work and professional autonomy.**Results** First, development of professional standards of social work, new laws and regulations, increasing the number of high schools offering education of «social work» point to the institutionalization of the profession of social work.Second, in contemporary social work in Russia there is bureaucratization of work and routinization of labor.Third, specialists of social work are mediators between the government and customers. So they are faced with a choice between taking care about the client and the state control.**Conclusions and implications**The results of the research can be used to improve the professional standards of social workers in Russia, as well as to enhance the professional autonomy of social workers.

**Keywords:** social work, sociology of professions, professional autonomy.

# **Do social workers employed in Italian probation stand up to welfare state erosion?**

**Ruggero Capra**

**University of Genoa**

Often social workers involved in supervising offenders have to stand up to political changes in the area of penal welfare erosion. How can their behaviour be defined? Can their political action be considered effective or too weak? If their positions are very vulnerable, why do they not succeed in enforcing them? In my research, I examined in depth a controversy originated by the Attorney General's proposal to change the ways of controlling people under alternative measures to prison. I analysed the discourse originated by this event; my tools have been both the documents collection about this event that is published online and interviews of social workers employed in probation offices. Through an examination of different qualitative research analysis methods, I have chosen those suitable for my research question (above all, grounded theory and frame analysis). The results show that Italian social workers ask the Attorney General to abandon his purpose, because it could bring the features of supervising offenders very far from social work principles, such as rehabilitation and inclusion. Although they react to the Italian Attorney General's proposal, their language seems to be much influenced by his proposal; therefore, the social workers' position seems affected by the change and corruption of meaning of terms like "rehabilitation" and "inclusion." These results cause me to think that the social workers in probation offices, instead of only "reacting" to the erosion process of penal welfare without any proactive position, should stand up to this process. Besides, in order to gain more confidence in their political action, they need to examine in depth both the meaning of the changes due to the erosion of the welfare state, and the knowledge that may enforce their positions closely linked to their professional principles.

# **To Blend in or Stand out? Hospital Social Workers Jurisdictional Work in Sweden and Germany**

**Manuela Sjöström**

**University of Gothenburg**

This dissertation describes, analyses, and compares the means by which hospital social work (HSW) associations in Sweden and Germany pursue their members' professionalization through 'jurisdictional work', an ongoing effort by HSWs' professional associations to establish and maintain formalized professional jurisdiction. The time period covered is 1989 through 2008. The research questions focus on the kind of activities these associations perform, and the way in which they are performed, to promote HSWs' professionalization in the two countries in question. The question will also be asked as to the reasons why HSW associations perform the specific activities under consideration. This is a cross-national comparative case study on jurisdictional work performed by a social work subgroup operating in organizational settings where social work represents a minority occupation subordinate to other professional fields. The research materials include, approx. 600 documents obtained from HSW associations in Sweden and Germany. Additionally, two focus group interviews with board members of two associations were conducted. The theoretical framework draws on theories of the sociology of professions (Abbott 1988, 2005), complemented by theorizing on compliance in voluntary organizations (Etzioni 1961) and on social identity (Jenkins 2004). Additionally, argumentation analysis is drawn upon Karlsen (2012). Altogether, two different jurisdictional work strategies were found to be used by professional HSW groups operating in subordination in Sweden and Germany. A mimetic strategy was used by the Swedish HSWs, to allow them, to better "blend in" with their hospital settings; in this case, similarities between the HSWs and their working environment were emphasized, especially as concerns their knowledge base, professional identity, and disciplinary affiliation. In contrast, the German HSWs relied on an aposematic strategy stressing differences between the HSWs' and their colleagues' knowledge base, professional identity, and disciplinary affiliation, so as to make their subprofession "stand out" from its enveloping hospital settings.

# **Pros and cons with the use of case vignettes and focus groups in a comparative approach to study child welfare work in Norway and Sweden**

**Lennart Nygren  
Siv Olteidal**

**Umea University**

It is imperative to gain more knowledge about how social workers in child welfare systems perceive and intervene into families with complex needs. Changes in terms of migration, changed cultural and family values and the pressure of economy, social problems, conflicts and disasters have created new contexts for social work with children. In a two-country cross-national comparative study, we study how social workers perceive their actions in relation to families with complex needs. The two countries, Norway and Sweden, are typical of the Scandinavian welfare model, commonly labeled as a de-familialised model, with highly developed ambitions to uphold good living standards independently of family relationships. The aim of this presentation is to describe and discuss how qualitative comparative research methods are applicable in order to reveal the relevance of contextual factors, such as local economy, legal frameworks, professional ethos, organizational structures and societal norms as conditions for social workers' interventions. Empirical data from six focus group interviews with professional social workers in Norway and Sweden, complemented with contextual local and national data provide a basis for evaluating the use of focus groups, the design of case vignettes and the methodology for how primary data from group interviews can be linked to contextual data in a systematic and comparative way. A conclusion is that variation of focus groups (participants, professional positions, work context, size etc.) and the details of how case vignettes are constructed (realism, balance between vagueness and concreteness etc.) are critical elements for the possibility to link data systematically to contextual data in qualitative comparisons. Key words: Focus groups methodology, Scandinavia, child welfare, comparative research

# **What We See and What We Say in Social Work - Rational and methods for using images as a tool for participative social work research**

**Ephrat Huss**

**Ben-Gurion University of the Negev**

1. Images in social work 2. Arts based research 3. Participatory action research methods 4. Indigenous research methods 5. Arts as social change Being central to human functioning, images contribute to the individual's ability to remain oriented in the world in light of memories of past experiences and envisioning methods of problem-solving based on these images. Researching and practicing social work with the help of images specifically, or visual information in general, can help to reveal the client's own hermeneutic understandings of the issue- thus giving an embodied voice to those that are powerless- based on spatial and experiential rather than academic knowledge structures. This is especially relevant when working with marginalized and silenced populations. Arts will be shown to be an effective tool for indigenous and participatory action based research methodology as it is based in spatial embodied, but also indirect metaphorical concepts, rather than western abstract conceptualizations of problems and of solutions. This has particular relevance to social work populations from diverse cultural backgrounds. This is based on my book called What we see and what we say: Using the Arts in Social Research and Practice published by Rutledge as well as on two articles –one focusing on methods and one on arts as social change, both in the British Journal of Social Work. Images will be discussed in terms of process product, and interpretation, as well as in terms of cultural context; A typology of uses of images within social work research will be presented, explaining how to use images as data, method, subject, or product of the research, and the advantages of each use will be outlined. Images as a research method, for the above reasons will be shown to connect to the conference themes of social diversity, knowledge production, and also research as political action when the outcome of the research is an arts product such as a film or exhibition.

# **Q-Methodology, Pragmatism, Knowledge Forms and Social Work Practice**

**Steve Hothersall**

**Edge Hill University**

Background: This mixed-method empirical study focused on the types of knowledge held and used by social workers in day-to-day practice through the innovative use of both Q-methodology and semi-structured interviews. My research questions were focused on how social workers obtain knowledge for practice, what forms such knowledge takes, how they use it and what strategies they use to develop it. Q-methodology (Brown 1980) is regarded as a unique means by which one can apply objective measures to examine matters that are inherently subjective; in this case, knowledge preferences and practices of individual practitioners (n=37). The additional use of SSI's provided methodological triangulation in line with the paradigmatic requirements of MMR. Methods: A mixed-methods approach combining Q-methodology and semi-structured interviews was used. Q-sorts were used to elicit subjective viewpoints from social workers and others on a range of statements relating to professional knowledge – structure, type, form, content, use and dissemination. Q-sort responses were analyzed using PQ-Method (Schmolck 2002) and SSI 's undertaken with a representative sample of participants with particular viewpoints thematically arranged and cross-referenced back to original Q-scores. Results: I found that different types of practice equated with different ways of acquiring, using and developing different types of professional knowledge. The results suggest that particular approaches to the acquisition of knowledge, its use and development are aligned to particular types of practice and to practitioners' essentially pragmatic views regarding 'what works' at the level of the individual practitioner and practice context. The findings have implications for social work education, training and management at both pre- and post-qualifying levels as well as for the academic community and the evidence-based practice movement in terms of its 'hierarchical knowledge hegemony'.

Keywords: Q-methodology; Knowledge; Social work practice; Mixed-methods

# **Whose problem is it anyway? How schools and school-based social services in Switzerland deal with children's problems and deviant behavior.**

**Florian Baier  
Rahel Heeg**

**University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland**

In our contribution, we will highlight findings concerning the questions of how children's problems and behavior are perceived in public schools, how and why children become 'cases' and who deals with these cases in which ways and for what purposes. We refer to three of our own research projects conducted in Switzerland: 1. A study about the effectiveness of school social work (2010-2013). In this study we used videography, interviews, observation methods and a semi-standardized questionnaire to find out how effects are created in professional practice. 2. A secondary analysis of data (questionnaires, interviews and time logs) gathered in five different evaluations of school social work (Baier/Heeg 2011) 3. An evaluation of the school program "Time-Out" (2012): In this program, children were separated from school for a couple of weeks, worked in local businesses and attended a special Time-Out-School. Based on quantitative data we asked why children were sent into a Time-Out, what they were doing during a Time-Out and what happened afterwards. Findings: Schools and school-based social services do not consistently deal with children who are getting in trouble. We present and discuss this heterogeneity and show how different intentions and further factors influence practice and outcomes. Our contribution refers to key questions "Knowledge production and public accountability in social work" and "Standing up to complexity – specific and universal issues in social work"

Keywords: school social work, youth services, practice research, school

Baier, F.; Heeg, R. (2011): Praxis und Evaluation von Schulsozialarbeit. Sekundäranalysen von Forschungsdaten aus der Schweiz. Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag. [engl.: Practice and Evaluation of School Social Work. Secondary Analysis of research data from Switzerland.

# **School Social Worker and Social Inclusion**

**Irene Katsama**

**University of Nicosia**

The present article focuses on school social work practice aiming at prevention and early intervention of school bullying. Systems theory and strength's based model consists of the main theoretical framework while group social work was the methodology of practice. The social work theories, values and methodology of intervention were the main framework of consideration and copying with bullying within the context of the present article.

The phenomenon of bullying among students is being studied in four cross culture primary schools, while based in the result of the study, an intervention is being designed, implemented and evaluated. The main purpose is the adaptation of social work action – intervention aiming at the students' psychosocial inclusion and empowerment through their participation in the group. Group is conceived as a mean of prevention and early intervention concerning the school bullying phenomenon.

The aim of the intervention was the student's empowerment through the development of social skills and reinforcement of personal, psychological, social and environmental factors which enhance wellbeing and lead to healthy life choices. It is an action research that combines research with active participation of students and intervention aiming at conflict resolution and provoke change. The thorough qualitative and quantitative data analysis reports acknowledgment of the phenomenon existence and participation of students in bullying incidents from multiple - non static roles.

A before- after evaluation of the social work intervention reported student's positive impact concerning factors such as: life in the school and classroom, relationships in the family and among classmates and friends, pointing out that they had the opportunity to cope with conflict in alternative ways and felt appreciated.

# **Young adults leaving residential care institutions: social patterns, policy and practice in South Tyrol**

**Andrea Nagy**

**Free University of Bozen**

Young people who have received long term residential care often have serious difficulties in taking steps toward autonomous living, and they indeed take these steps earlier in life than do youth living in mainstream families even though insufficient preparation proves to be detrimental to their future possibilities. This thesis project, rooted in the region of South Tyrol in Upper Italy, is occupied with the passage from residential care to autonomous living. Its focus is the attempt to describe „typical“ orientation patterns of young people living in residential care institutions toward autonomy, which are, at the same time, life determining „effects“ of public education on clients of this particular social service. Through this study, this work should illuminate some facts pertaining to the general debate about the effects of social work and quality management issues in social services but it should as well inspire a debate about specific social policy issues which frame the pathways of leaving care for the young adults additionally – as will be shown - in a disadvantageous way. Firstly empirical data were collected through leading group discussions with youth groups in residential care and the data-analysis will be done by using the Documentary Method, established by Ralf Bohnsack. The advantage in using this method is that it not only allows for the explicitly expressed contents, which represent the reflexive body of knowledge a youth has acquired, but also for the reconstruction of a young person's implicit or „atheoretical“ knowledge underlying and orienting habitualized social action. Secondly some follow up interviews after the passage to autonomous living should illuminate how ‚leaving care‘ has worked out by a detailed view on specific cases. At the conference this work in progress will be presented by focussing on critical issues in policy and practice around youth leaving care in the region of South Tyrol in Upper Italy. It might be a relevant topic in the section „Standing up to complexity – specific and universal issues in social work“, because the view from different actors and knowledge scopes (also implicit) reveals disadvantages which are easily overseen. It might also relate to the section: ‚Social diversity: Promoting human rights and the role of research‘ because children in care are pretty much a ‚forgotten‘ population group, and research can make them ‚seen‘ (which is one aim of the thesis project) or in the section: ‚Research in social work as participative learning process‘, because the thesis project was developed from practice with youth in care and is driven by the search for a better understanding of their voices, their life experiences. The expression of their life experiences is restricted by stigmatization, which is an obstacle to their ‚participation‘.

# **Sexual-coercion, between planned-behavior and exposure: An Arab-female perspective**

**Guy Enosh  
Adital Ben-Ari, Ghada Ghannamy-Hiadrey**

**University of Haifa**

## **Background:**

In this study, two models that explain behavioral-intentions regarding sexual-coercion were examined: Exposure to domestic-violence and behavioral-intentions regarding sexual-coercion as explained by Planned-Behavior Theory. The first model stipulated that self-esteem and posttraumatic-stress mediate the effects of childhood-exposure to domestic-violence, on behavioral-intentions regarding sexual-coercion. The second model stipulated that behavioral-intentions are the outcome of attitudes, social-norms, and perceived-control.

## **Methods:**

the study is a cross-sectional survey of a convenience sample of 145 female-Arab-students in Israeli colleges and universities. Respondents replied to a paper-and-pencil questionnaire, incorporating measures of childhood-exposure to parental-domestic-violence (adopted from the CTS), self-esteem, and posttraumatic-stress, representing the first model; as-well-as personal-attitudes, subjective-norms, perceived-control, and behavioral-intentions regarding sexual-coercion, representing the second model. Model-analysis was carried out using structural-equation-modeling.

## **Ethics:**

The study was authorized by the University's Ethical-research committee. Respondents were informed of their right not to participate, and to stop participation at any stage without any harm. All questionnaires were anonymous, and no identifying data were collected.

## **Results:**

The results indicate the need for an integrated model; in which the Planned-Behavior variables (personal-attitudes, subjective-norms, and perceived-control) emerge as outcomes of the Exposure-model (Parental domestic-violence, traumatization, and self-esteem), and affect behavioral-intentions regarding sexual-coercion.

## **Conclusions:**

The discussion centers around a conceptual stage model linking between violence in the family-of-origin as leading to lowered-self-esteem and post-traumatic reactions, affecting attitudes, subjective-norms, perceived-control, and intentions regarding sexual-coercion.

The findings are discussed within the context of the dialectics between modernity and tradition as experienced by Arab-female students in Israel.

Keywords: Sexual-coercion; Arab-Female students; Exposure-model; Theory of Planned behavior.

# **Working with victims of human trafficking - Challenges of Social Work research and practice - Results of Empirical Study in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Vesna Sucur-Janjetovic**

**University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Political Sciences, Department of Social Work**

Considered as modern slavery, phenomenon of human trafficking is a historical category and fairly known phenomenon in modern and developed societies. The complexity of this phenomenon requires specific society responses that need to be placed in the context of presence. This paper presents the research results concerning the assessment of mechanisms and processes that should provide the society's response via different actors involved in fight against human trafficking, during the process of identification, rehabilitation and re/integration of victims of trafficking. Social work in different phases offers professional support and help to victims of human trafficking, including protection. However, what is perceived as a problem, is the fact that there is no unique or universal internationally applicative social work model that could offer answers to issues of re/integration of victims of trafficking. Therefore, it is essential to have more researches, as well as comparative studies with the aim to promote international and multicultural dimensions of cooperation between the institutions of social welfare and other actors involved in combat of human trafficking. This paper presents the results of empirical study carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, specially emphasizing challenges of social work both in research and practice.

Key words: human trafficking, social work, victims of human trafficking, re/integration process.

# **Migration and Empowerment in Transition: Perspective of Bosnian Women**

**Sanela Basic**

**Faculty of Political Sciences**

The aim of the present research project is to give an answer to the question whether own migration or migration of (male) family members has any impact on the empowerment of women. The study focuses on the household unit. The position of women in the family is conceptualized in terms of: control of economic resources (e.g. possible changes in access to paid employment and its effects), relative degree of autonomy (mobility, value system, freedom to choose own lifestyle) and relative degree of decision-making power. Given explanatory nature of the research which focuses on finding out what particular groups of women do think about the impact of migration on their position within their families, focus group interviews have been chosen in order to collect data and construct source/data base. The guiding principles of present research are following:- Gather information about how participants think/feel/percept about the impact, if any, of migration on their empowerment as stated in our research question.- Multiple (six) focus groups – each with different participants to be held in order to ensure reliability.- Sampling was done in accordance with a) homogeneity principle with regard to migration experience. In each group there were women of particular “migration” background: women with own migration experience, women with migration experience in the family, women with no migration experience, and b) heterogeneity principle in relation to age, education, civil and employment status. Regional characteristics have been taken into account by organizing same focus groups in urban and rural areas of the same region. Empirical evidence allows for mapping rather controversial migration-related women's realities. Neither positive nor negative causality migration – empowerment of women is clearly sustainable, the only exception is found in the economic dimension of women's empowerment. Key words: migration, empowerment, women, focus groups.

# **Exploring the Involvement of Older People within Adult Safeguarding**

**Sarah Finlay**

**Northumbria University, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences**

Background and purpose: The importance of fully engaging adults at risk in all areas of adult safeguarding (at both a strategic and an individual level) has been highlighted within UK guidance; however, research has suggested that the level of involvement is low, both regionally (in the North East of England) and nationally (e.g., Corkhill & Walker, 2010; Wallcraft & Sweeney, 2011). This research study considered two related research questions; 1) Why is there a low level of involvement of older people within adult safeguarding? 2) How can the meaningful involvement of older people within adult safeguarding be achieved? The overall aim of the research was to contribute to adult safeguarding through greater knowledge and understanding of the involvement of older people and to identify and develop indicators for best practice in this area. Methods: The research applied a qualitative approach using case studies as the strategy of inquiry. Two local authorities within the North East region of England were purposively selected as the cases for inclusion. Data collection methods included interviews and observations as well as the collection of related policy documents. Participants included the following: \* Safeguarding Adults Board members \* Advocates \* Social workers \* Older people and their family members. Thematic analysis was used to explore the data. Results and conclusions: A number of key themes were identified from the data including factors which help and hinder involvement and participants' constructions of involvement and adult safeguarding. Key themes also related to the human rights of older people within safeguarding processes and the impact of both regional and national policy on adult safeguarding practice. The proposed paper will discuss the key recommendations and implications of the research findings for social work policy, practice and future research.

Key words: Older people, adult safeguarding, involvement, rights

# **'Working the house': The art and skill of home visiting in social work with children and families**

**Harry Ferguson**

**University of Nottingham**

'Working the house': The art and skills of home visiting in social work with children and families  
Social work research has largely failed to get close enough to actual practice encounters to produce understandings of how practice is performed and achieved and what goes on between social workers and service users. I argue that such research and knowledge must be place specific, sensitive to the routines and challenges that arise in performing social work in particular spaces. This paper addresses the sociology of practice in the most common place where social work with children and families goes on, the home. It draws on a participant observation study in which 87 practice encounters between social workers, children and parents/families were observed and audio-recorded, 71 of which were on home visits. From the findings, and by drawing upon a material culture studies approach to the home (Miller, 2010), three particular skills are identified and conceptualised. 'Accommodating' refers to the process of adjusting to the 'agency' of the home, the internal world of the family and the energies and atmospheres within the home. 'Multi-relating' refers to how workers frequently have to do more than one thing at a time and sometimes several different things at once: meet children and settle and calm them down; relate to parents, dogs, friends, the TV. On home visits conditions and 'order' that enable the work to be done have to be created and workers achieved this through what I will call 'partitioning', which refers to the breaking down of the work into manageable, doable pieces and completing discreet tasks by seeing children and parents all together, separately in particular combinations, or as individuals on their own, in different places (the home, school etc), in different rooms within the home, or in gardens. The value and implications of such a sociology of home visiting will be identified.

# **Synergetics of co-creating learning and help in social work**

**Lea Sugman Bohinc**

**Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana**

Synergetics is a transdisciplinary science that studies spontaneous emergence of more effective organization in complex systems. Exploration of synergetic description of formation and change of (cognitive-emotional-behavioral) patterns of systems has already shown its usefulness in different scientific fields. Synergetics offers fresh, reframing answers to the question of effectiveness in social work and related helping professions, as well as increasing empirical evidence for what works in those professional contexts. A research team at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, has conducted a developmental and research project on working relationship of co-creating learning and help in school (2011). One of the purposes of the research on participative learning and help was to use and verify the usefulness of synergetic theory and methods in individual working projects of help - IWPH (each consisting of a student with learning difficulties, his/her parents, teachers, school counselors). Collected data (recorded IWPH and supervision conversations, questionnaires for all the groups of participants, different fill-in forms for researchers) from 18 IWPHs of 9 primary schools were qualitatively analysed from the view of eight synergetic generic principles and a variety of heuristics, with a tentative theory suggested. The research findings support the original thesis that synergetics meaningfully frames and theoretically and empirically interconnects the concepts and methods of collaborative, dialogical approaches to participative learning and help. It's use can essentially enhance our chances to increase the effectiveness of social work projects of learning and help in a wide range of contexts, above all by creating conditions for relational stability, a sort of pre-condition for successful social work. While the Slovenian school legislation and social care system have already adopted the concept of co-creating learning and help, the synergetic theory with its methods for mapping processes of change is contributing to a growing body of new empirical research.



# **Developing knowledge about the effectiveness of reflective supervision**

**John Carpenter**

**University of Bristol**

Background: Supervision has been described as the 'cornerstone' of good practice in social work (Laming, 2009). The Munro review of child protection in England (2011) stressed the importance of social workers having frequent opportunities for reflective supervision separate from case management. Nevertheless, a systemic review of the research 2000-2012 in Children and Youth Services Review (November 2013) concluded the evidence base for supervision was 'surprisingly weak'. Aim: to evaluate the effectiveness of reflective supervision for newly qualified child and family social workers (NQSWS) delivered through a national programme in England (2008-2011). Methods: Supervisors received a three-day training programme in supervision based on Morrison's (2005) 4x4x4 model. They then provided reflective supervision to NQSWS for 90 minutes fortnightly for three months, reducing to monthly meetings. Outcomes measured using validated scales were: self-efficacy, stress, role clarity, role conflict and job satisfaction. Demographic and outcome data were collected using an anonymous online survey at baseline and 12 months. Analysis of co-variance compared outcomes over time for NQSWS who received their full entitlement of reflective supervision (n = 390) vs partial receipt (n = 139). Path analysis explored hypothesised relationships between variables. Results: self-efficacy increased in both groups (difference ns). Full supervision had an ameliorating effect on role conflict ( $p < .05$ ) and stress ( $p < .001$ ). It had no effect on intention to leave or intrinsic job satisfaction. Conclusions and implications: Reflective supervision was highly valued by NQSWS and beneficial outcomes were found for those who received it. The most notable effect was in ameliorating stress, an important finding given the high rates reported for social workers. This study provides practitioners with evidence to insist on the provision of reflective supervision in addition to case management supervision. Future research should employ rigorous experimental designs and fidelity checks.

# **How Documentation Influences Front-Line Practice: A Qualitative Study of Case Managers in Supportive Housing Programs**

**Victoria Stanhope  
Emmy Tiderington**

**New York University**

This study uses qualitative methods to explore the complexity of front-line practice in a climate of increasing demands for accountability in the public sector. The rise of “managerialism” has resulted in closer monitoring of social and health care services workforce through documentation in order to codify and measure outcomes. Whereas positivist methods often replicate the goals of managerialism by focusing on “what works”, qualitative methods can explore its influence on service provision processes. This study of case managers in supportive housing programs explores how documentation procedures influence their practice. Methods: This NIMH funded qualitative study investigated the views of 34 case managers working in two supportive housing programs. A total of 80 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with case managers as their clients entered housing, six months later if the client remained in housing, and at 12 months. Coding and thematic analyses explored case manager views of documentation and how these accountability mechanisms impacted their practice. Results: Documentation influenced practice in the following ways: 1) providers structured their encounters with clients around service plan goals rather than around immediate client-identified issues, 2) providers reported repetitive documentation as damaging to client-provider rapport, distinguishing between ‘real work’ and ‘busy work’, and 3) while some providers structured their practice around service plans, others used discretionary power to circumnavigate documentation demands. Conclusions and Implications: Although documentation endeavors to tie practice more closely to the goals of the clients, the actual impact was to limit quality time case managers spent with clients and place demands on the type of interactions taking place in face-to-face encounters. This prevented case managers from addressing immediate concerns and building rapport with clients. This more prescribed approach to practice, while more measurable, may lead to greater disengagement by clients as critical therapeutic components of casework are reduced to routine practices.

# **Moving research into practice: Two perspectives on research utilisation**

**Elaine Sharland  
Mel Gray, Milena Heinsch, Leanne Schubert**

**University of Sussex**

Background and purpose: In contemporary knowledge societies, research is seen key to effective and accountable service provision. As the demand for greater accountability, efficiency and effectiveness increases, so does pressure on practitioners to use research evidence to inform their decision-making. This paper examines the commonalities and distinctions between two distinct discourses on research utilisation: 'knowledge production' and 'evidence-based practice', along with their implications for social work. It hopes to contribute to the movement towards greater research use in social work, enhancing understanding of how research is moved into practice. Main points of the presentation: Knowledge production and evidence-based practice discourses share the common priority of moving research into policy and practice. But how the research-to-practice process and the relationship between knowledge producers and users is understood varies between them. This paper looks in turn at their common interest in, and different approaches to, i) research quality, usability and utilisation; ii) knowledge transfer and translation; iii) the nature and stages of the research utilisation process, and iv) barriers and facilitators to the research-to-practice process. It ends with discussion of the implications for research utilisation in social work. Conclusions and implications: Research utilisation is about connection not collection, and that connection ultimately depends on critical decisions made by researchers, end users and their organisations. Effective strategies to promote research utilisation rely on the capacity of institutions to shape their knowledge production and translation approaches and activities in partnership with their various end users, and to respond creatively to their distinctive needs. Addressing conference aims and themes: The paper directly addresses the theme: 'Evidence and uncertainty – pathways to accountable social work research and practice', encouraging reflection on knowledge generation and on the value of involving a variety of subjects in the construction of practices.

Keywords: Evidence-based practice, knowledge production, research utilisation

# **The Social Work Evidence Bank: deposits and withdrawals for accountable practice**

**Fiona  
McDermott**

**Monash University**

Background & Purpose: Social work practitioners often struggle to articulate the evidence or information bases from which they practice. This makes it difficult for them to demonstrate their accountability to employers and service users. Since 2012 successive cohorts of social work students on placement in our health network have been tasked with identifying and analysing existing evidence for the specific interventions their supervisors nominate. In 18 months more than 45 systematic reviews and meta analyses have been collected and made available to practitioners. We will describe the strategies we have put in place to (a) build this growing evidence bank, and (b) assist in the translation of evidence into practice Addressing conference theme: we will describe the Evidence Base Bank Initiative in our health service, addressing the theme of pathways to accountable social work research and practice Summary of main points: The Evidence Base Bank Initiative has four purposes: (i) to engage students on placement in uncovering evidence for particular social work interventions in health; (ii) to educate the next generation of social workers on the value of and expectation that they will be practicing from an evidence base; (iii) to make available to social work practitioners current evidence supporting their practice, (iv) to develop strategies to assist practitioners in using the research evidence in their practice.. Conclusions & implications: we will discuss the outcomes of this initiative in relation to students' and social workers' satisfaction, and the ways in which social workers have made use of the Bank in researching, shaping and critiquing their practice. The Evidence Base Bank project illustrates one pathway towards demonstrating social work practitioners' accountability to employers and service users.

# **The acquisition of scientific knowledge in children and youth services in Switzerland**

**Lukas Fellmann**

**University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland**

In theory the use of scientific knowledge is a characteristic of professional social work. Recent studies suggest a low use of scientific knowledge in social work practice. In this study the acquisition of scientific knowledge has been examined to gain more findings about the sources of scientific knowledge that are being used in practice. It answers the following research questions: How often and by which sources do social workers in children and youth services acquire scientific knowledge? How do individual and organizational determinants influence the frequency of scientific knowledge acquisition? An online survey was conducted in the field of children and youth services in three cantons of Switzerland (Aargau, St. Gallen and Zurich). The questionnaire was sent out to social workers in the fields of residential care, youth work and school social work. The response rate was 43% (total n=470, residential care n=146, youth work n=124 and school social work n=200). The data was analyzed by comparative analysis and logistic regression. The results show a low frequency of scientific knowledge acquisition for most of the examined knowledge sources. This might explain the low use of scientific knowledge in practice. Nevertheless there are significant differences between practice fields within children and youth services. The most frequently used sources are formal meetings, media (mostly internet) and informal conversations during work time. The logistic regression analysis shows that organizational determinants play a more important role than individual determinants. Especially the organizational culture towards science, the challenges in daily practice and the practice field have a significant influence on the acquisition of scientific knowledge. These results suggest that a positive organizational culture towards science enhances the acquisition of scientific knowledge.

Keywords: scientific knowledge acquisition, knowledge sources, professionalism

# **Assets and Impediments in the Use of Ethical Decision-Making Models**

**Kimberly Strom-Gottfried**  
**University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**

Social workers must frequently navigate ethical dilemmas and decision making (DM) in daily practice. Some authors claim that DM models have limited practical utility (Banks, 2009). Others consider their use to be essential for effective practice and risk management (Reamer, 2006). DM models can encourage thoughtful, objective, and consistent responses to dilemmas rather than responses that are subjective, ungrounded, or haphazard (Gambrill, 1997; Mattison, 2000).

Dozens of DM models for are available in the health and helping professions (Cottone & Claus, 2000). Although practitioners generally react positively to DM models (D'Aprix, 2005), they also report a preference for employing intuition over existing frameworks (Gambrill, 1997). Little is known about the factors that influence adoption and use of models. As the profession of social work endorses evidence-based practices, information is needed on the conditions that promote or impede the uptake of new methodologies. Research suggests that content, perceived quality, and characteristics of the professional and practice setting affect uptake of new methods. Likewise, research in social work indicates that individual, organizational and systemic factors affect use (Manuel, Mullen, Fan, Bellamy, & Bledsoe, 2009). For example, professional issues related to legal risk and malpractice may influence the adoption of evidence-based practices (Barsky, 2009).

This study examined US practitioners' use of DM models when facing ethical dilemmas. Two-hour ethics trainings were offered free-of-charge to subjects solicited from alumni, field, agency, and education consortium mailing lists (N = 85). Participants were trained in one of two DM models (n = 44 Model 1 and n = 41 Model 2). Pre- and post-session questionnaires examined participants' education, practice experience, training in ethics, intentions to utilize frameworks in future practice, and perceptions of factors that could influence model use. Subjects randomly selected from each group participated in a process evaluation of the respective models. Subjects (n=17) kept diaries for 6 months in which they cataloged dilemmas encountered in practice, steps used in resolution of the dilemma, the elements of the model used, and the factors that influenced model use. The presentation will address the findings from training participants as well as the subset of diary keepers.

Participants had substantial practice experience (M=11.8 years, s=8.9) and diverse educational and practice backgrounds. Few (16%) reported typically using a model to guide DM. In response to the training, participants reported that they were more likely to use elements of a model to make decisions, rather than using a given model in its entirety. Workshop participants identified the following as factors that would affect model use: the time available to make the decision (40%), difficulty remembering the model (16%), and access to consultation and information (9%).

In practice, diary keepers positively endorsed the steps of the models, reporting that model use led to more thoughtful decisions and better quality outcomes. Participants also rated the models favorably in terms of ease of recall, relevance, helpfulness, intuitiveness, and consistency with practitioners' judgment and values.

However, 88% also reported encountering extra-ethical factors that detracted from use of the model. Among the most common impediments were: internal/personal factors, such as fear of retribution and discomfort with confrontation (71% of diary-keepers); external/professional factors, such as insufficient access to consultation or support from colleagues (59%); institutional factors, such as agency policies that limited options (47%); and issues related to time (47%). We will discuss the study's implications for supervision, education and model-development and juxtapose the results with research from other countries.

# **"Non potevo spenderci un nero" migrant identities of Italian women in Germany and biographical reconstruction development and juxtapose the results with research from other countries.**

**Anna Aluffi Pentini  
Universita' Roma tre**

This paper presents the results of a research project whose aim was to give voice to Italian women who emigrated to Germany in the 1960s to give therefore an authentic account of their experiences. The presentation examines both the validity of the participative methodology applied and the relevance of the results for support strategies in the area of migration. The research method applied in-depth biographic interviews and the thematic analysis of transcripts. Interviews were conducted 2012/13 in Darmstadt and Stuttgart. The interviews revealed that the women, around pension age, often were thereby able for the first time to reflect on their migration story, on how much of Italy they left behind or took with them, on their relationship with the host country, its language and culture. The impossibility of returning, bar rare exceptions, comes as a late awareness of how definite an originally provisional project had become. In view of the women's age remaining is invariably linked to the realisation of the enormous quality differences in socio-medical services and tax regimes between host and home country. This result indicates the effects on migration patterns not just of economic inequalities but also of social policy discrepancies which impede both a real choice of settling down and the full identification with the adopted cultural context. A differentiated listening to such voices has far-reaching implications for both research and intervention methods in social work.

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# **PhotoVoice: Assessment of Women's Experiences of the 2011 Great East Japan Disasters**

**Mieko Yoshihama**

**University of Michigan**

Post-disaster disparities and vulnerabilities tend to reflect, and often amplify, pre-disaster disparities. This paper presents the findings from a PhotoVoice project with women affected by the 2011 triple disasters of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accidents in northern Japan. This ongoing participatory action research examines how gender and other social positionalities impact the wellbeing of women in/after a major disaster. Since June 2011, a diverse group of women (n=35) in five localities in the most disaster-affected areas of Japan have participated in small group meetings (4-8 sessions on average). At the meeting, participants share and discuss the photographs that they have taken, reflect on and examine their experiences and associated emotions. Trained facilitators (researchers) foster interactive and empathic exchange while also encourage participants to analyze their own and other members' experiences in the historical, societal and political context. Group discussions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using open and focused coding processes guided by grounded theories. The discussions encompassed beyond individuals' experience of trauma, dislocation, and devastation; participants have examined how individual experiences are influenced by various community, sociocultural, and structural forces. The analysis of meeting records and photographs illustrates how acts of taking photographs, sharing their experiences, thoughts and emotions, and receiving feedback from others have encouraged participants to further explore and (re)construct the meaning of their experiences in the socio-political context. Increasingly, participants have become interested in speaking out, educate and influence the general public and policy makers. Findings suggest that PhotoVoice promotes participants' reflection, wellbeing, mutual support, growth, and action. As a research method, PhotoVoice appears to be a promising approach to not only assessing the needs of disaster-affected individuals, but also promoting collective critical analysis of underlying sociocultural factors and formulating strategies to improving individual and community conditions. PhotoVoice facilitates the processes of politicalization and conscientization/conscientização (Freire, 1970).

# **“Education, ethnicity & gender. Biographies of Roma and Sinti women in Germany.”**

**Julia Reimer**

**Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg**

Roma and Sinti are facing social marginalization within the German education system (Lüken-Klaßen/Meixner 2004; Strauß 2011). In Germany as well as in other countries they are overrepresented in so-called special needs schools for children with learning difficulties (Kertesi/Kézdi 2010; Open Society Justice Initiative 2012). The paper is a report of an ongoing research project (in the context of a doctoral dissertation) that brings into focus that especially Roma and Sinti women are confronted with various levels of discrimination as they belong to a certain ethnicity and are female. The project, which is informed by Glaser's and Strauss's (1967) strategies of Grounded Theory (e.g., theoretical sampling), is based on autobiographical narrative interviews with Roma and Sinti women in Germany and is dealing with processes of social exclusion especially in the field of education but also with the women's strategies of resistance and self-realization. It tries to answer the question how biographies of Roma and Sinti women are shaped concerning their self-conception as women and education processes (focusing formal learning and especially informal learning settings/surroundings). The study also wants to offer some first ideas how support for women can be effectively organized and discrimination can be reduced or even anticipated. First results show that Roma women are facing specific forms of discrimination but they are also developing forms of opposition against discrimination. The dominant discourse on Roma and Sinti students' frequent failures at school emphasizes "essential cultural differences" and "ethnic particularities", discriminating structures and schools' lack of sensitivity to the life circumstances. Informal ways of learning are seldom taken into account. Solutions that mainly comprise pedagogic measures instead of addressing processes of institutional discrimination and social exclusion are too narrow. Keywords: Minority, Ethnicity, Gender, Biographical research. References: Glaser, B., Strauss, A. L.: The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research. Aldine Pub. New York 1967. Kertesi, G.; Kézdi, G.: The Roma/non-Roma test score gap in Hungary. In: American Economic Review, 101(3), pp. 519-525. Lüken-Klaßen, D.; Meixner, S.: Roma in Public Education. RAXEN. National Focal Point for Germany. European forum for migration studies (efms) Institut an der Universität Bamberg. Bamberg 2004. URL: <http://www.efms.uni-bamberg.de/pdf/Roma.pdf> (September 24, 2013). Open Society Justice Initiative: Failing another generation. The travesty of Roma education in the Czech Republic. New York 2012. URL: [http://www.soros.org/sites/default/files/failing-another-generation-20120601\\_0.pdf](http://www.soros.org/sites/default/files/failing-another-generation-20120601_0.pdf) (September 24, 2013). Strauß, D. (ed.): Studie zur aktuellen Bildungssituation deutscher Sinti und Roma/ Dokumentation und Forschungsbericht. I-Verb.de. Marburg 2011.

# **Social work education for a culturally competente practice**

**Paula Sousa  
José Luis Almeida**

**Portuguese Cathólic University**

This research arises from the assumption that cultural competence is integral to best practice and the results achieved in a PhD research, which uncovered a lack of cultural sensitivity by the Portuguese social workers, which challenged us to reflect on the causes and it took us questioning their own initial education.

Study objective:

Identify the existence or absence of curricular units on the theme of «culturally sensitive social work».

Research question: How the curriculum of social work education affects cultural competence and a culturally sensitive social work?

Research method: documentary research

Step 1: Identification of all courses / schools of social work

Step 2: Consulting the webpage of schools/courses

Collecting the syllabus and download the dispatch law (from the national press of legislation)

Step 3: Document analysis (content analysis)

Summary:

The results obtained allow us to verify the lack of curricular units, in social work education, that address the sensitivity and cultural competence of social workers. This gap in formal education helps to explain and understand the discourses of the social workers interviewed for the research in the framework of PhD study that revealed unawareness and ill at ease in these issues.

This research is based on the premise that to successfully face the challenges of a multicultural society and diverse service users, schools of social work in Portugal need to put the goal of cultural competence at the top of their agenda for curriculum reform priorities.

The main outcome consists in finding a gap in social work education regarding cultural competence and culturally sensitive social work. The implication for practice to draw from this study is the need to review the policies and curriculum guidelines for social work in Portugal, as well the accreditation standards for social work education.

Keywords: culturally sensitive social work; cultural competence

# **Social Work at the Street-Level of Employment Policy – Institutional vs. Professional Challenges**

**Søren Peter Olesen**

**Aalborg University, Institute of Sociology and Social Work**

A reform of Danish local government in 2007 reduced the number of municipalities from 279 to 98. After the reform the state employment service became integrated in municipal employment and welfare administration. This has led to comprehensive reforms of social and employment administration including social work and the role of social work has been problematised. In this paper I focus on the role and the challenges of social work at municipal jobcentres. Empirically the paper is based on a major recent mixed methods study of the practice at Danish jobcentres. The study combines survey data with interviews, observations and sound-recordings of authentic practice situations (Baadsgaard et al. 2012). The policy discourse as well as the management discourse and the professional discourse is mapped. Similarities and differences between selected job-centres and at the street-level are analysed leading to discussions of professional challenges and dilemmas. Theoretically the paper is based on a combination of policy implementation (Lipsky 1980; Goodsell 1981) and institutional interaction (Sarangi & Roberts 1999; Hall et al. 2006). Among the findings and conclusions of the study are that the tasks and the qualifications needed at the street-level of employment policy have a professional social work character. It is argued that although in some respects street-level work at the jobcentres are at a boundary of social work and although it has undergone thorough-going and comprehensive reforms, it still bears a number of central characteristics of social work.

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# **The street-level delivery of activation policies: constraints and possibilities for a practice of citizenship**

**Urban Nothdurfter**

**Free University of Bozen/Bolzano**

The decentralization and individualization of activation services has gained in importance in all European welfare states making lower level discretion an intrinsic feature of activation policies. Thus, the debate on activation policies and on their challenges to social citizenship has to go beyond formal policy and to take into account also its operational and street-level dimension which has to be conceived not as mere organizational and technical issue but as shaping what is eventually produced as policy on the ground. In this context, frontline practice plays a crucial role since it constitutes the very moment where activation policies encounter their target groups and real world solutions have to be found. The proposed presentation is based on a research project aimed at studying the challenges, interpretations and reactions of frontline workers in activation services and analyzing them in the light of a combined theoretical framework which understands frontline practice as part of the policy making chain and addresses issues such as the use of discretion, power and situated agency. The research project consists in a qualitative study undertaken on the frontline of Public Employment Services in the cities of Vienna (Austria) and Milan (Italy). Data have been collected by qualitative interviews with 20 frontline workers and have been analyzed in a general inductive approach. The findings contribute to the debate on constraints and possibilities for a practice of citizenship in a practice field whose challenges are often neglected both by social policy and social work research, although it has become a central arena for welfare state intervention and, eventually, for the concretion of social citizenship.



# **Policy practice engagement in Italian social work**

**Annamaria Campanini**

**Università Milano Bicocca**

Policy practice engagement in Italian social work A sustainable development based on the enhancement of human rights and social justice is closely related to the social policies that are regulating these aspects in a country, but also to the way in which social workers can influence social policy formulation and its implementation in the community. This presentation, that address the key theme n.6 (social work and political action) will briefly define the concept of policy practice and will firstly analyze, with a historical perspective, the Italian situation in relation to the commitment of social workers in defending and enhancing the social work values. Secondly we will present the current situation where, despite these important transformations in social services and the role played by the National Register of Social Workers who made public statements against some laws considered in violation of social work principles, in the last decades social workers have failed to position themselves as a collective subject capable of formulating proposals at a political level or to react to the policies of the right-wing government that undermined the basis of social justice (see the law for immigrants). Some results deriving from national research carried out with funding from the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, through both phone interviews to 1000s of SW and 40 in-depth interviews to long standing managers of social services, in fact, show a low political sensitivity of social workers towards this topic. Finally we will present a research project that would like to deepen this analysis in two regions (Lombardia and Sicily) using the same questionnaire that has been used in the Israeli research (Gal, Weiss, 2013). The presentation will conclude with some suggestions as how to strengthen policy practice competences in social work education and practice. Key workds: policy practice, research, social workers

# **Social issues and the public: about the democratic role of social work**

**Marion van Hattum  
Hans Oostrik, Mariel van Pelt, Alletta Spreeuw  
HAN University of Applied Sciences**

The core of the mastercourse social work at HAN University of applied sciences in Nijmegen is the project of 'sociale practice development'. In this project students do research in their social work practice and improve this practice by designing actions based on the results of their research. The theory of social practice development is based on the pragmatic view on democracy as formulated by John Dewey in his book "The Public and its Problems" (1927). Central viewpoint in this work is the development of public issues out of social issues. Issues arise by the effects of people's behaviour on the behaviour of other "strangers". For example in cases where people with a psychiatric disorder get in conflict with their neighbours because of the noise and the pollution they produce around the house. In this way a social issue of inconvenience arises. The behaviour of one person has consequences for others. Democracy, Dewey states, "begins at home, and its home is the neighborly community" (p.211). Social issues are often issues of inconvenience, such as homelessness, children's abuse or addiction. But also other social issues come across, like volunteer help in the so called 'pedagogical civil society' Winter (2012). In the policy of the Dutch government, the neighbourhood is the place where social support has to be designed and built up. But the necessary engagement between people is often lacking in urban areas. People are more or less strangers to each other. People's engagement and solidarity with vulnerable persons is often far away. Linders (2010) also found that people experience a shyness and hesitation to act, being confronted with vulnerable people in the neighbourhood. Not only by solidarity or sociality, concepts distinguished by Sennet (2012), togetherness must be created, but also by involving different stakeholders with their different interests in a process of cooperation. This is what Dewey calls 'the creation of a public'. A public is an assembly of citizens united through a common engagement with a shared problem (Dijstelbloem, 2009). Democratic politics is – first - about indicating problems and tracing publics, and secondly working together to formulate and realize a common action. Social practice development is a method that stresses the role of social work in creating public interest. To execute this role, a new professional attitude is needed. Therefore the social worker needs to combine the classic methods of casework, groupwork and community work in a new way. After a short introduction of the theme, we will discuss some examples of the mentioned professional attitude and method. In interaction with the participants, explicit elements of this professional attitude and behaviour will be explicated.

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# **The Lived Experience of Religious Homosexual Men in Heterosexual Marriages**

**Eyal Zack**

**Haifa University**

Religious homosexual men in heterosexual marriages are a minority who are twice marginalized because of their distinctiveness – in general and in religious societies, and within the homosexual community. On one hand, their religious faith (in the Pentateuch) forbids them from engaging in homosexual relations. The broadest of the currently-accepted interpretations of this religious sanction prohibit, and despise, any outward sign of “homosexual identity”. On the other hand, most of these men avoid LGBT meeting places, which they perceive as fundamentally different from, if not opposed to, their faith and lifestyle. Living as members of a collectivist, traditional society that sanctifies the values of marriage and family, these men experience an intensified identity conflict, which is played out in the gulf among their religious faith and affiliation, their heterosexual marital status, and their inherent same-sex orientation. This study opens a first window on the lived experience of these men, who live in fear of been exposed and alienated by their community. It focuses on how they cope with their complex reality. This study is being conducted according to the qualitative perspective. It is based on the findings of an analysis of twenty narrative interviews, which were conducted with homosexual men who define themselves as religious and who are (or were) married to a woman. The findings reveal that, to relieve their dissonance, these men choose to change the subjective meaning and value of one of the three angles of their triangular reality: their attitude regarding their same-sex orientation, their attitude regarding their religion and faith, or their attitude towards their marriage and wife. In this way, they attempt to balance their emotional experience, and thereby cope more effectively with their unique conundrum. By allowing for an understanding of their perspective and behaviors, this study may facilitate the formulation of a model of intervention that will ease their emotional distress.

Keywords: Religion, Orthodox Jews, Homosexuality, Marriage

# **LGBTI Seniors Staying Connected: Loneliness and support among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex people aged 50 and over in Australia**

**Mark Hughes  
Sujoy Kentlyn**

**Southern Cross University**

## Background and purpose:

While loneliness continues to be identified as a concern for some lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) older people, there is also substantial evidence of the diverse sources of support that many LGBTI people access from both biological families and 'families of choice'. This presentation reports on research that examined LGBTI seniors' experiences of loneliness, and their reflection on support gained from both family members and friends, including their perception of who would be there for them in a crisis.

## Methods:

The research involved delivery of an online and paper-based survey, which comprised both closed and open-ended questions. A series of standardised instruments were also employed, including the Three-Item Loneliness Scale, reported on in this presentation. As of October 2013, the study had recruited 309 self-identifying LGBTI people, aged 50 years or over, who resided in the state of New South Wales, Australia. Data were analysed via quantitative statistics and thematic qualitative analysis.

## Results:

As of October 2013, approximately 48% of respondents said that they lacked companionship some of the time or often, 49% that they felt left out some of the time or often, and 53% that they felt isolated from others some of the time or often. Respondents identified a wide range of supports that they felt they could draw upon in times of crisis, including partners, biological family members and both LGBTI and non-LGBTI friends. They also identified a series of formal and informal social groups and activities of which they make use.

## Conclusions:

Effective social work practice with LGBTI seniors requires a good understanding of the diverse sources of support that people draw upon, as well as of experiences of isolation and loneliness. Barriers to support are considered, along with strategies to address these barriers.

# **'We've got an awful long way to go': sexuality, language and representation in older adults' care homes in Wales**

**Paul willis**

**Swansea University**

## Background & purpose:

While sexuality is widely recognized as an integral aspect of health and wellbeing throughout the lifecourse, older people are often assumed to be asexual and lacking sexual desires (Doll, 2012). In parallel, older people are frequently presumed to be heterosexual, which can neglect differences in sexual identity. Completed 2013, this research focused on the provision of care services to older lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people in Wales. The research was guided by the question, 'How are the sexual identities and relationships of older LGB residents perceived and supported in residential care environments in Wales?' This presentation attends to the ways in which older people's sexualities are represented by care staff and managers – the ways in which dominant knowledge about residents' sexual lives are reproduced in care environments.

## Methods:

Mixed methods were used to gather staff perspectives from across Wales —1) self-completed questionnaires (121 respondents), and 2) focus groups with care staff and managers (5 groups) from 32 organizations providing residential and nursing services to older adults. Organizations were recruited through random sampling.

## Results:

Qualitative findings indicate that care staff and managers discuss residents' sexual lives in limiting ways, including: - discussion of dementia and sexuality as problematic and risk-laden; LGB identities as separate to individual needs; and, care homes as (hetero)sexualised spaces.

## Conclusions and implications:

Care staff need to be supported to a) increase their attentiveness to residents' sexual biographies, including LGB residents, and b) continually redress the construction of care homes as heteronormative environments. As advocates for older people's human rights, social workers have a fundamental role in promoting wider recognition of residents' sexual lives in care environments.

Doll, G.A. (2012). *Sexuality & Long-Term Care: understanding and supporting the needs of older adults*. Baltimore: Health Professions Press. Keywords: Heteronormativity, sexuality, older adults, care homes

# **Victimization of Gay and Bisexual Men: A Public Problem with Private Consequences**

**James Martin**

**New York University**

This presentation reports on a study of victimization in a U.S. nationwide sample of self-identified gay and bisexual men (GBM), and it considers the systemic context in which this victimization occurs.

Worldwide evidence of high rates of victimization among GBM (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2012) indicates the presence of a serious global problem that has received little attention from social work researchers.

Research in the U.S. shows GBM experience a high rate of sexual orientation bias-related victimization (Herek, 2009; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2010). GBM may be victimized as well because of their gender expression, race or ethnicity, or for non-bias reasons (Martin & Alessi, 2012). In addition, they experience intimate partner violence at rates comparable to women in opposite-sex relationships, and much higher than men in opposite-sex relationships (Greenwood et al., 2002). Examining incidence of total victimization among GBM is important because behavioral, emotional, or physical health problems may result from any kind of victimization incident.

The current study recruited a convenience sample of 297 adult men through several Internet-based methods. Self-reported data were collected via an Internet-hosted questionnaire. Victimization was measured with 13 items adapted from Herek's (1994-1997) Northern California Men's Study. The study found a high rate of victimization during the previous 6 months, with 72% experiencing an incident of any kind and 22% experiencing a violent victimization incident. Incidents included verbal insults or abuse (60%), threats of violence (27%), and being hit or beaten (15%).

The presentation will note that although GBM must cope with the personal impact of victimization, evidence of widespread violence toward them indicates the need for systemic solutions. Thus, social work researchers must attend both to the personal and the public aspects of this problem.



# **Managing local pressures: – creative adaptability as a prerequisite of resilient child protection social work in 3 European contexts**

**Elizabeth Frost**

**Annamaria Campanini, Staffan Höjer, Karin Kullberg, Alessandro Sicora**

**University of The West of England, Bristol**

Whilst 50% of child protection workers across much of Europe and the affluent 'West' leave after 2 years, many stay in this work and develop substantial professional careers. The authors undertook a small-scale piece of research in Italy (South and North), Sweden and England to examine what factors explained staying for more than 3 years in this stressful area. Underpinned by a hermeneutic epistemology, 57 qualitative interviews were undertaken and subject to an interpretative thematic analysis. Rich and extensive data has been generated on the role of resilience, supervision, organizational impact, management, colleague support etc. in supporting workers to continue. This comparative paper will specifically consider what role worker's own creativity and their capacity to adapt to the specific demands and contexts of 'local' child protection (in Sweden, Italy and England) plays in their job satisfaction and endurance. The paper will briefly outline the comparative working context of child protection professionals in Italy, Sweden and England, e.g. number of workers per head of population, resourcing of the services, welfare regime etc. It will then interrogate the interview data from workers and managers to offer some tentative thoughts on what the relationship between context and survival strategies is. Having highlighted that there is no simple impact of lack of resources, high work-loads and retention levels in all 3 countries, the paper will consider what workers themselves advanced in each location to account for their continuing commitment. Pride in offering and continuing to offer 'good' practice, whether despite or because of the organizational context, permeates the interview material. The paper concludes with underlining the need for research, professional development and organizational practices to recognize the personal and creative elements in sustaining good practice in relation to local conditions.

Keywords: comparative; European; creativity; adaptability

# **From the Zone of risk to the Zone of Resilience: Narratives of Resilience among Child Protection Workers in Argentina, Canada and Ireland**

**Dermot Hurley**

**Kings University College at Western**

This study explores the concept of resilience in Child Protection and looks at how child protection workers (CPW's) construct resilience in different cultural settings. It also examines the ways in which CPW's remain resilient themselves through a process of shared resilience with their clients. Practice hardiness is the process by which social work professionals remain competent and committed despite significant work related adversity. The study attempts to answer three basic questions. (1) How is the concept of resilience understood within child protection practice? (2) What do CPW's see themselves doing to promote resilience in children and families? (3) How do narratives of resilience help foster resilience in CPW's via a process of vicarious resilience? Interviews were conducted in three different countries allowing for diversity of culture, policy and practice in the delivery of child welfare services. Through a series of 60 interviews, workers were encouraged to share 'narratives of resilience' about their clients, and to reflect on how these shared narratives impacted their own sense of resilience. Although many similarities were identified, significant differences were found with respect to how resilience is constructed in each location. Findings from the study suggest that resilience is not a unitary concept and that the idea of collective resilience may be more meaningful for many CPW's than an individualized notion of resilience. Social work practitioners continually struggle to support resilience in children despite the contradictions and ambiguities of child protection practice. It is hoped that the study will encourage reflection on knowledge generation and contribute to helping children and social work providers develop more resilient relationships.

Key Words: cultural contexts, child protection, vicarious resilience

# **Satisfaction, commitment and motivating factors: the staff of basic social-pedagogical assistance in the Province of Bolzano**

**Sabine Krismer**

**Amt für Familie, Frau und Jugend – Autonomous Province of Bolzano**

## Background and purpose

The implementation of managerial principles in social services in the Province of Bolzano started at the end of the 90s in form of the Social Management. This approach is based on the model of the New Public Management with the aim to lead the professional action as much objective, measurable and verifiable as possible making use of neutral and standardized instruments. This paper, based on an empirical research, analyses the impact due to this reform processes for the professional well-being and motivation of the professionals in the basic social-pedagogical assistance in the Province of Bolzano with the goal to formulate practical recommendations for the administrators, professionals and education facilities.

## Methods

The research is based on a qualitative method including 25 interviews in form of recorded and transliterated narratives: 15 interviews with current professionals from the basic social-pedagogical assistance and 10 interviews with professionals who have left this area, with the goal to understand which reasons have brought them to this decision. The participants with different occupational profiles and professional experiences represent all territories of the Province. For the analysis of data was used an analytic software (Atlas.ti).

## Results

Labour disaffection is connected to organizational and institutional issues.  
Organizational and institutional issues influence the professional identity.  
Central role of the authority level in mediation an implementation of reform processes.  
Importance of education.  
System which select the most indifferent.

## Conclusions

The New Public Management is overwhelming the strongest identities with the risk to loose efficiency in system. This negative consequences needs cooperation between different levels: social policy, administration, profession, education: 1. Strengthen professional aspects and competences of professionals to face changes 2. Authority level able to mediate reform processes 3. Review principles of New Public Management starting from motivations of professionals

Key words: New Public Management, well-being, Province of Bolzano

# **Damned if you do, damned if you don't: Recruitment and Retention of English Children and Family Social Workers**

**Simon Cauvain**

**University of York**

It is well established that the UK social work profession endures historical problems in recruiting and retaining staff, especially within children and family teams, but reasons for these problems are not fully understood. The inner-workings of social work are little known outside the profession, contributing to a climate of political misunderstanding and public vilification. The purpose of this study was to open a small window on the world of social work practice, and give fresh insight into why recruitment and retention problems exist, and how they might be resolved. Using a case study of an English Local Authority this research explored factors contributing to recruitment and retention problems by examining employee experiences. Analysis of local data, an ethnographic study of the daily lives of social workers, interviews with 18 social workers, and a nominal group interview technique with 28 senior managers combine to illuminate the issues. Local vacancy and turnover rates above national levels helped identify a need for a new 'real-time' vacancy rate that more closely reflected front-line experiences, when compared to the rate calculated using traditional formulae. The data reveals challenges and rewards being a social worker, high levels of resilience, emotive nature of practice, and wide-ranging complexities associated with recruitment and retention. Disparity in senior management and social worker relationships contributed to front-line workers feeling undervalued, despite sharing the aim of protecting and improving child welfare. The study indicates the need for careful consideration of how political pressures influence poor communication between senior managers and social workers. A lack of acknowledgement of the emotive nature of practice feeds negative perceptions. The findings suggest that improvements in mutual understanding between politicians, senior managers and front-line workers will help create an environment where problems associated with recruitment and retention can be addressed more constructively.

Key words: Recruitment, retention, social work.

# **Individual and Structural Determinants of Social Assistance Trajectories in Switzerland**

**Elisabeth Gutjahr  
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**University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, School of social work  
Fribourg**

Academics, social work professionals, and politicians recently started to devote growing attention to the so-called new social risks resulting from a more flexible labor market and changes in the family structure. Unstable employment and income, and family disruption may increase the risk of being in need of social assistance, sometimes for a long period. The presentation discusses some findings of a longitudinal study designed to 1) identify typical trajectories of social assistance and 2) assess individual and structural determinants of these trajectories. Data came from six consecutive waves of the Swiss social assistance statistics (2005-2010). This comprehensive survey collects detailed data about recipients, their social and economic situation, as well as the duration and type of benefits received. The applied research techniques include sequence analysis and multiple linear regression analysis. Results show five typical social assistance trajectories: \* Entrance\* Exit\* Re-entrance\* Long-term assistance\* Sporadic assistance. The most frequent trajectories are entrance and long-term assistance, whereas re-entrance is rare. The identified trajectories mainly depend on individual characteristics, such as education, family status and employment. Well established protective factors associated with poverty, like higher education, seem to play an attenuated role with regard to the risk of being in need of social assistance. Structural determinants also play a role, such as social assistance systems and benefits which, in Switzerland, are regulated by cantonal laws and hence show some marked differences. Although social assistance is an important welfare issue, it has so far attracted limited academic attention, both in Switzerland, and beyond. The present study provides insights into typical social assistance trajectories and helps identify the most vulnerable subjects, but also critical life events which may lead to the need of social assistance. It thus may offer important clues to social politics and social work to develop better targeted prevention and intervention strategies.

# **Work-life balance vouchers: new opportunities for social work to match private sector's needs**

**Federica Viganó  
Giovanni Lombardo**

**FUB**

In the last decade there has been a growing interest for reconciliation of work and family life issues, leading to the development of policies and instruments both as state and company measures. After a brief discussion of the rationale for public policies to support work-life balance issues, we introduce the possible role of vouchers in financing demand for such services and analyze some cases by presenting available comparative data on the work-life balance vouchers, adopted in some Italian Regions. The benchmarking example is constituted by the CESU (Cheque Emploi Service Universel), which in France set a new paradigm for social policy: the public financing play a role in guiding the private sector in becoming a main contributor of the welfare system: tax allowances and public funds are available for the private actors if they spend on specific merit goods/services. Two implications of the above paradigm ask for a deeper understanding: on the one side the case of the diminished public funding and, consequently, public welfare and the opportunity for social services and social work to benefit from the contribute of the private sector; on the other side the opportunity for the private sector to be socially responsible through the spending policies supporting the work-life balance of the employees. In this perspective the link between social work and the private sector enhances the socially responsible behavior of the SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises, the typical dimension of the European firms). The paper addresses the topic "Social work and political action". The issues of work-life balance is high in the agenda of the policy makers, but there is a strong need to investigate more deeply what are the consequences at the level of the welfare system, both public and private, when it is challenged by an intervention at the economic and fiscal perspective.

# **Limits of binding legislation for the professional integration of persons with disabilities**

**Pierre Margot-Cattin**

**University of Applied sciences western Switzerland**

The right to work is part of fundamental social rights to guarantee coverage of the vital needs of any person. The Swiss Constitution provides that authorities are committed to assure that any person able to work ensure its maintenance by working under fair conditions. The right to work is not synonymous with a concrete right to employment. The political and social context of Switzerland nowadays underline the importance of rehabilitation and the intensification of vocational integration efforts. However, recent studies shows that many employers do not consider the subject as important. Some Swiss regions have adopted binding legislation on the matter. However, the effectiveness of these measures are somewhat discussed. Questions arises with respect to the implementation of binding quotas for hiring of persons with disabilities. Through a double methodology based on interviews and a questionnaire, the aim of the survey is to analyze the understanding and implementation of legislation by public authorities and institutions as well as to describe the social representations of potential employers about the vocational integration of people with disabilities. The results highlight a critical positioning of employers facing stick legal dispositions. The attention of employers addresses the labor market conditions and less socio-political obligations. There is a wide shared sense of ignorance of the needs of persons with disabilities and strong fears in this context. Training and awareness, through job coaching, seems to be a solution to develop of a real professional integration. The survey highlights both the inefficiency of the legal framework and the need to influence social representations of disabled workers through information, awareness and training actions. Job coaching of potential employers and employees seem to be a good way to explore.

Keywords : employment of disabled, social representattioon, legal context of vocational integration, job coaching

# **Disability Pensions in Denmark – Reforming Eligibility and Categorization**

**Dorte Caswell  
Tanja Dall**

**Aalborg University**

Reforming Eligibility and CategorisationAt the very beginning of 2013 a new reform of disability and early retirement pensions and flexible employment was implemented in the Danish municipalities. This reform drastically reforms the granting of disability pension, including the eligibility of this benefit and the ways in which clients are categorized in the process leading up to the possible granting. The reform introduces the possibility of granting a client one to five years of 'resource programs' in situations where a permanent disability pension was previously granted. Albeit being part of a financial reduction of this welfare area of close to two billion Danish kroner before 2020, politically the reform draws on an investment argument. Thus the reforms argues, that rather than leaving clients on a permanent and passive disability pension, social work after the reform will focus on investing in clients resources rather than "giving up on them".In this paper we focus our analysis on eligibility and categorisation before and after the reform. The empirical part of the paper draws on a number of sources. We will analyse legislation (prior to and implemented in 2013). Furthermore we draw on empirical research before the reform (Caswell et al. 2012; Caswell and Kleif 2013) and current empirical evidence (from a new research project starting at the beginning of 2014). Theoretically the paper draws on theories of institutional categorisation (Mäkitalo 2009; Mäkitalo and Säljö 2002) and theory on the moral status of clients (Hasenfeld 2000).

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# **The history of the Danish profession/education of social pedagogy – reflections about forms of knowledge**

**Inge Bryderup**

**Dep. of Sociology and Social Work**

Professor Inge M. Bryderup Department of Sociology and Social Work University of Aalborg, Denmark Standing up to complexity – specific and universal issues in social work: The history of the Danish profession/education of social pedagogy – reflections about forms of knowledge The aim is to explore the complex development of the social pedagogical forms of knowledge through analysis of the historical debate between the central actors – the State, research and the social pedagogical workers and benefactors with a focus on the historical development of different types of education. The following reflections are made: three phases are identified in the 20 century where you can identify a historical development from moral and practical knowledge to psychological knowledge in the two first phases. From the 1970's the psychiatric and psychological knowledge is integrated in the social pedagogy profession. At the same time the Danish social pedagogy's forms of knowledge has a strong ethical and social engagement – as an inheritance from private benefactors – where sociology plays an important role in all three phases. The development of social pedagogy forms of knowledge has happened in a complex interplay with other actors – policies/local authorities and research/scientific perceptions.

# **The British Journal of Social Work: History, Discipline and Professional Field**

**Ian Shaw  
Hannah Jobling**

**University of York**

A history of the emergence, development and scholarly role of the British Journal of Social Work in the first forty years of its 'life'. Journals have played a central role in shaping and being shaped by shifts in the identity of the social work field, but little or nothing has been done to explore this. The BJSW seeks to act as 'a journal of record', and hence as a representative depository of the writing of the field, in particular in the UK. This study includes interviews with almost all former and present editors, and other key informants; a detailed content analysis using an extensive scheme for classifying research developed by one of us; a study of patterns and trends in styles of scholarly writing; and analysis of extensive editorial, publishers and journal Board archive papers. Analysis is a combination of thematic and narrative interpretive portrayals of editors' and key informants' accounts, set in conjunction with the archival history of contemporaneous documents; a form of content analysis; and an application of a discursive standpoint to scholarly writing styles. This presentation will focus on two themes: ways, patterns and trends in the content and 'style' of writing that illuminate social work as a field from 1971 to 2012; and the role of journal editors (and by implication reviewers) in 'shaping' the profile and image of social work as a field of practice and research - 'shaping' because we do not wish to presume a single direction of influence or power. Given the continued growth of social work journals across Europe and further afield, the study has implications for a critical appreciation by all social work stakeholders of the identity and continuing change and direction of the field.

Key words: journals; knowledge production; social work as a field

# **Intergenerational Trauma: Understanding the Context for Diverse Populations and Treatment Implications**

**Shayna Waites**

**Howard University School of Social Work**

The universal mission of social work is to promote social justice and change with and on the behalf of others. In order to provide effective practice, it is essential that social workers understand the historical and cultural context of the populations whom they serve. This includes intergenerational trauma. Intergenerational trauma has been defined as the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding that is transmitted from one generation to the next (Dass-Brailsford, 2007; Raskoff, Sigal & Epstein, 1966). Historical trauma theory explains intergenerational trauma and how populations that are subjected to massive trauma (i.e. war, slavery, colonialism, and/or genocide) exhibit higher rates of disease or disorder generations after the trauma (Sotero, 2006). To date, much of the existing literature has focused on the intergenerational trauma associated with the Holocaust and the Native American "Trail of Tears" (Dass-Brailsford, 2007). Whitbeck (2004) discussed the development of the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale to measure historical trauma among Native Americans. There is a lack of empirical data measuring historical trauma with other ethnic groups that have experienced a collective trauma such as African Americans and the trauma of slavery. This presentation will address the following: 1) historical perspectives of understanding trauma for various ethnic groups, 2) understanding intergenerational trauma is a universal social work issue, 3) the need to develop more measurements that address historical loss with other ethnic groups and 4) understanding the treatment implications.

Keywords: Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale, Historical Loss Scale, Historical trauma, Intergenerational trauma, ethnically diverse populations

# **Sociospatial Practices In US Social Work, 1880-1917: Changing Places, Changing People**

**Susan Kemp, Yoosun Park**

**University of Washington School of Social Work**

**Background and Purpose:** This paper presents a detailed historical analysis of American social work's "spatial turn" in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Influenced by evolutionary theory, public health, urban sociology, and by growing public awareness of the terrible living conditions in poor urban neighborhoods, Progressive era social workers focused increasingly on environmental factors, which they addressed interventions ranging from home visits and housekeeping advice to residency in poor neighborhoods, exhaustive social survey research, and advocacy for playgrounds, parks, gardens, bathhouses, improved sanitation and garbage disposal, and housing reform. This important strand in social work history has not however been subject to close historical scrutiny. Building on scholarship that addresses Progressive environmentalism more generally (e.g. Boyer, 1976; Bulmer, Bayles & Sklar, 1990; Greenwald & Atkinson, 1996; Ward, 1989), this study aimed to develop a fine-grained, multidimensional analysis of US social work's environmental frameworks and practices in the period before World War I.

**Methods:** Primary source materials for the study include the Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (later the National Conference of Social Work), archival materials (e.g. the Russell Sage Foundation papers, Rockefeller Foundation archives), contemporary periodicals (e.g. *The Survey*), published writings of leading social workers (both caseworkers and settlement leaders), and relevant contemporary materials (e.g. Mary Beard's landmark study, *Women's Work in Municipalities* (1915)). Study findings are also placed in relation to relevant secondary materials. Analytically the study takes a critically theorized approach, informed by historical scholarship in the spatial sciences (e.g. Craddock, 2000; Hayden, 1995; Sibley, 1995) that directs attention to the recursive relationships between spatial and social arrangements.

**Results:** US social work's Progressive era environmentalist research and interventions were a welcome corrective to the overtly moralistic, person-centered practice which came before. They made clear the role of social and structural factors in human problems, resulted in important reforms in housing, sanitation, urban space, and public health, and supported more sympathetic assessments of the lives of the poor. Despite their seemingly pragmatic and rational constitution, however, the historical evidence makes clear that these were practices with moral as well as material force, aimed at shaping the living conditions of the immigrant poor – and thus the poor themselves – in conformity with dominant ideals.

Implications: The study's layered analysis of this largely invisible sociospatial legacy adds important dimensions to the literature on social work history. By surfacing the complexities inherent in US social work's earlier, abundantly well-intentioned, frequently effective, but also flawed environmental efforts, the study findings also offer lessons relevant to social work's renewed interest – spurred by global environmental challenges and increasingly robust empirical evidence that 'place matters' in health and well-being – in spatial and environmental interventions.

# **Knowledge co-creation and university-agency partnerships: magic concepts to close the research-practice gap?**

**Roos Steens  
Koen Hermans, Tine Van Regenmortel**

**Jeugdzorg Emmaüs- KU Leuven**

The move towards evidence-based practice and policy in social work has been accompanied by an increasing recognition of a 'cultural gap' between research, policy and practice. Managers and practitioners often do not implement the direct findings from academic research. At the same time, researchers often fail to integrate the perspectives of practitioners in developing research designs and interpreting research findings. Shonkoff (2000), among other authors, portrays the research, policy and practice communities as three separate cultures, defined by unique characteristics, yet with similar goals. During the last years concepts as 'co-production' or 'co-creation' (e.g. Regeer & Bunders, 2009) and initiatives as 'agency-university partnerships' (e.g. Bellamy, Bledsoe, Mullen, Fang & Manuel, 2008) are embraced as new 'magic concepts' and strategies for closing this gap. To produce outcomes that really matter, it is increasingly recognized that relevant stakeholders (policy-makers, practitioners, service-users and researchers) should be involved in social work research. But beyond theoretical considerations, we know little about the implementation of those concepts or what the possibilities and the barriers are. In this paper we reflect upon a partnership between the university of Leuven and a social service agency. Our methods, techniques (a mixed advisory board, discussion days about the literature review, in-depth-interviews with service users, participant observations of client-worker interactions, homogeneous and heterogeneous focus groups, ...) and the possibilities, pitfalls and bottlenecks of our project will be discussed and embedded in a broader discourse on different types of knowledge, knowledge creation and power dynamics. We illustrate the ethical complexities of service-user involvement and reflect upon the specific position and task of the practitioner-researcher (who works both at the university and the social service agency) as an intermediary and facilitator of a joint learning process.

Keywords: co-creation, university-agency partnerships, service-user involvement

# **Negotiation as a way to emphasize participative learning processes in social work research**

**Lars Uggerhøj**

**Aalborg University**

Background: Experiences in defining and using practice research as a learning process  
Purpose: To present and discuss understandings to develop participative learning processes  
Abstract: Practice Research is a meeting point between practice and research where both common understandings, different interests and powerful positions are to collaborate. Although having a joint goal for establishing knowledge based social work there are in between the participants both culturally and professionally differences in the perception of what knowledge is and how it is established. On top of this partners have different positions: while practice has a powerful position concerning knowledge from social work and putting knowledge into action, research has a powerful position as a base for knowledge production and creation of new findings. These differences and positions cannot be hidden or overlooked – on the contrary they have to be clarified and used. To prevent the collaboration from being a mission impossible both parts have to focus on negotiation using the different knowledge and positions in an active and respectful process. From this point of view negotiation becomes a central part of developing collaborate research initiatives between the participants. In these negotiations all partners must balance to make it possible both to hold on to their interests, to open up for new understandings, new traditions and new learning processes and to make it possible to learn as a part of the process. To establish the negotiation partners hold on to some of their central interests, while they at the same time have to be interested in learning from the other partners. In this way all partners must accept to be disturbed in their traditional understandings, to exchange perspectives and to accept to work with 'otherness' as a positive and challenging part of the collaboration.

Keywords: Negotiation, learning, disturbance, otherness

# **Cooperation dynamics in participatory knowledge production - a critical reflection.**

**Sabina Frei**

**Free University Bolzano Bozen**

Cooperation processes as a key issue of participatory knowledge production, will be addressed in depth and critically reflected in relation to an ongoing research project on quality in social work practice, based on the constructivist assumption that what we call "good quality" can only be the result of a complex negotiation process between all actors involved. The research takes place in an area where participatory social work research involving both professionals and users is at its first steps and the whole research process is characterized by a consistent number of feedback-meetings between users, carers, professionals, managers and academic researchers, in order to discuss both the research process and the preliminary findings. These meetings are the very spaces where participatory interpretation of the collected data takes place and where potential conflicts on what can be considered the "right" interpretation may occur. This presentation focus particularly on the issues of power (imbalance) and of communication (difficulties) which may emerge in these feedback-meetings, showing however that it is precisely in this spaces where, through negotiating processes, participatory knowledge production takes place.

Keywords: participatory knowledge production; negotiated quality; critical reflection

# **Less Dangerous Encounters: Power, Epistemic Privilege and Participatory Social Work Research**

**Julia Janes**

**York University**

Participatory research is well aligned with the values and practices of social work and a promising approach to democratizing the knowledge economy. The extant literature claims that participatory scholarship aims to decolonize knowledge production by engaging socially diverse communities in the research enterprise. Yet these discursive claims and their associated material practices, remain under scrutinized and under theorized, particularly as to how relations of power and privilege are reproduced and resisted in collaborations between academic and community knowledge work/ers. If social work scholars are to realize more inclusive knowledge-making alliances, then the social relations of participatory research must be interrogated to reveal how power circulates in these epistemological encounters. This paper proposes a postcolonial and poststructural framework to inquire into the full complexity of these collaborations drawing on critical reflections of the author's previous participatory projects, as well as preliminary findings from current research. This inquiry aligns with a number of conference themes including: participative co-learning, uncertainty as ethical praxis, and problematizing how participatory research may diffuse and activate political action. Specifically, this paper offers a postcolonial reading of participatory techniques that dislocate knowledge work from the historical, political, socio-economic and embodied conditions in which it unfolds. Postcolonial readings are put in conversation with a governmentality analysis to trace participatory techniques of access and appropriation of local knowledges and how they articulate to macro-practices of inclusive policy development and micro-practices of critical social work. Although this paper presents an analyses of limits of participatory research, it is not in pursuit of revealing "bad" participatory praxis or recuperating better practice. Nevertheless, this paper concludes with modest proposals for less dangerous encounters and a theoretical critique that can account for the ways in which participatory research can be both emancipatory and exploitative.

Keywords: participatory research, power relations, postcolonial, governmentality

# **The contribution of CIT method to explore the development of social work values and ethics during practice placement**

**Eleni Papouli**

**Department of Social Work, TEI of Athens/Greece**

The contribution of CIT method to explore the development of social work values and ethics during practice placement

**Abstract**

**Background and purpose:** The aim of this study was to explore the processes through which final year students at the Department of Social Work in Athens/Greece develop their knowledge and understanding of social work values and ethics in their professional practice placement.

**Methods:** The study adopted an exploratory qualitative approach, and used the critical incident technique (CIT) as a data collection method. 32 of 54 invited students were asked to provide written description of incidents -positive or negative (or unpleasant) - which they perceived as significant for ethics learning and development in practice settings. Critical incidents were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

**Results:** Of the 32 critical incidents, 18 were classified as positive experiences and 14 were classified as negative experiences, according to the students' responses. The main categories that emerged from the analysis of positive critical incidents were associated with: a) the Client, b) Interprofessional Teamwork, c) the Practice Instructor, and d) the Student. Similarly, the main categories that emerged from the analysis of negative critical incidents were associated with: a) the Client, b) Interagency Work, c) Interprofessional Teamwork, d) Management, e) the Practice Instructor, f) Staff, and g) the Student.

**Conclusions and implications:** The CIT as a reflective method was found to be an effective tool to explore aspects of the process of the students' ethics learning and development in the course of their practice placement. Given that competency models of learning and assessment in social work education have been criticised for not dealing well with ethics, the CIT method could be part of the evaluation process of ethics learning and development in social work practice.

**Key words** CIT method, social work values and ethics, practice placement, final year social work students, Greece

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# **“Ma non e’ lo stesso anche in Inghilterra?”: A comparative study of practice educators experiences of working with struggling and failing social work students in practice learning settings in the UK and Italy.**

**Alberto Poletti  
Jo Finch**

**University of Bedfordshire**

Periods of assessed learning in practice are common requirements for qualifying social work students worldwide (Raymond, 2000; Shardlow and Doel, 2002). The ‘Practice Learning Opportunity’ as it is known in the UK, and ‘tirocinio di servizio sociale’ as it is referred to in Italy, are important sites of gatekeeping in preventing unsuitable people from becoming social workers (Finch and Taylor, 2013). The experience of assessing failing students in practice learning settings however, has been found internationally to be particularly stressful for practice educators in both social work and other professions (Gizara et al, 2004; Bogo et al, 2007; Schaub and Dalrymple, 2012). Given the importance of the assessment of students’ practice in promoting high standards of professional practice, this is an important area for research. Two qualitative studies comparatively explored UK and Italian field educators’ (26) experiences of working with struggling or failing social work students. In-depth interviews methods were used and the data was subsequently analysed using the Voice Centred Relational Method (Gilligan, 1982). The comparative nature of the study thus provided an opportunity to uncover hitherto taken for granted assumptions in the original UK study and uncover new insights. The findings highlighted similarities and differences in the narratives from the two countries. Similarities includes: unpleasant emotional experience of working with failing students, internalisation of the students failing as their own, perceptions that the universities hide negative information about students and lack of acknowledgement of the gatekeeping function. The differences include the levels of emotionality experienced, the way students were spoken about and the perceived role of the university. The research findings intend not only making explicit particular localised cultures of social work education, but they also aim to stimulate a broader debate that can be translated outside the two original national contexts in which they originated.

Keywords: comparative research, emotions, practice learning, practice educator, failing students

# **Surveillance and silence: assessing difficult social work placements**

**Jason Schaub**

**Buckinghamshire New University**

**Background:** Studies to date have highlighted a number of key factors in the assessment of difficult social work placements including: the need for adequate professional formation; communication; the changing social work education framework; and the influence of the wider social work context. Factors less widely examined are the perceptions of some practice educators that the assessment of placement students operates in a wider context of surveillance and scrutiny by a range of stakeholders. Their experience of struggling to assess challenging students within complicated environments is less evident in the literature.

**Methods:** A dual strand qualitative research methodology was used, with semi-structured recorded interviews (15) of practice educators and university-based tutors and two focus groups of practice educators in the South of England. **Results:** The study found a sense of uncomfortable oversight from a variety of external bodies. Practice educators identified the following issues as being of primary importance in their experience of a difficult or failing student placement: communication; professionalism; values; insight; impact; and most importantly, engagement and orientation towards practice. Practice educators struggled to verbalise their concerns about students, and appeared concerned with the sensation of surveillance.

**Conclusions:** There appears to be a need to create a safe discursive space for conversations to take place during the challenging placement and suggest that a reduction in perceptions of surveillance and enhanced outcomes for students and practice educators will result. Such perceptions of surveillance can cause a discursive anxiety for practice educators and can inhibit key conversations between assessor and student, or inhibit robust assessment.

**“...there are students who should not be in social work and we have to make that decision” – Exploring social work tutors experiences of managing struggling or failing students in practice placements.**

**Jo Finch**

**University of East London**

In the UK, social work students are required to undertake 170 assessed days of practice. Tutors are required to undertake 2 placement visits and play an important gate keeping role, particularly when issues of failing students arise. The study emerged out of previous research undertaken by the author, which indicated the need to explore the tutor experience of working with failing students. Finch (2004) for example, revealed variations in tutors' understandings of their roles and Finch (2010), highlighted inconsistencies in tutors practice and conflictual relations between the field and the academy. The current study aimed at; exploring the social work tutor role and their experiences of managing failing students, identifying good practice and assessing the need for a larger study. The study was qualitative and influenced by practitioner-research paradigms (Shaw and Lunt, 2011) and practice-near approaches (Froggett & Briggs, 2012). Twelve tutors were interviewed. Participants were recruited directly and online via a bulletin board. The interviewees were drawn from universities across England. The data was analysed using the Voice Centred Relational method (Gilligan, 1982). Findings show that tutors are able to articulate the tasks of their roles when issues of failing students arise in practice learning settings although the experience is challenging. The challenges include: supporting practice educators and students, concerns about other tutors' practices, the difficulties in promoting appropriate professional standards and values within higher education contexts and frustrations with practice educators and placements. Only a quarter of the respondents however, articulated gate keeping responsibilities. Given the current reforms in social work education in England, with greater emphasis on threshold standards, the research is timely in terms of the critical consideration of the tutor role and the challenges inherent in promoting appropriate standards to ensure incompetent students do not become qualified practitioners.

Keywords: social work, tutors, failing students, challenge

# Looked after children and offending: risk, resilience and restorative justice

Gillian Schofield

Centre for Research on Children and Families, UEA

**Background and purpose:** There are concerns in the UK for young people who are looked after in care and are also offenders.

This study was a partnership between the Centre for Research on Children and Families at the

University of East Anglia and The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT). It aimed to identify the individual, family, community and systemic factors which reduce risk and promote resilience. In the UK, social work with both offenders and looked after children often draws on restorative justice, an approach originating among indigenous communities in New Zealand, Australia and the USA.

This paper offers findings on risk and resilience and the implications for restorative justice practice.

**Methods:** This multi-method study included a national survey of care and youth offending social work services; multi-agency focus groups; file searches, narrative interviews and psychological measures (e.g. social cognition) with a total sample of 100 young people (14-19).

**Results:** The characteristics and pathways of looked after children in relation to offending demonstrated the risk arising from abuse and neglect, late placement and multiple moves. It confirmed the benefits of close relationships, including with social workers, and active engagement in education and activity.

But it identified that problems of social cognition and empathy linked to maltreatment were likely to make offending more likely and restorative justice practice more difficult. The isolation of young people in care could also challenge the involvement of family and community in the restorative justice process.

**Conclusion:** Although psychological difficulties for children in care might appear to rule out restorative justice by social workers, this study suggested that using restorative justice approaches was likely to help young people to become more resilient. The study used both social work and psychological methods to understand complex situations relevant cross-culturally and to draw on solutions that have been generated in very different cultures.

Keywords: Care; offending; restorative justice

# **Adolescent Social Orphans and the Transition into Young Adulthood: The Role of Social Work Research with Vulnerable Populations**

**Michelle Novelle**

**Boston University**

Research access to vulnerable populations such as institutionalized adolescents in the developing world often result in studies in which the voices of these youth are neglected while the perceptions of the adults with whom they interact are privileged. Due to the many complications with respect to access, recruitment and retainment, investigatory results and policy initiatives are generally based upon adult interpretations of the needs of this population as they transition into young adulthood. Thus, social work research that aims to promote the voices of underserved as well as vulnerable populations is well poised to promote the human rights of these individuals and enhance the social justice aspect of the social work profession, which appears at times to be obscured by the dominance of clinical practice in the United States. This presentation will not only highlight the process of acquiring the necessary permissions to interview members of a protected population within the context of a foreign culture, but also discuss the political and human rights perspective behind the decision to use only the voices of these social orphans within a study conducted by this author in Cali, Colombia, in which 32 adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 were interviewed while institutionalized.

# **A Critique of the Use of the 'Neet' Category**

**Jean-Pierre Tabin  
Anne Perriard**

**Haute école de travail social et de la santé · EESP · Lausanne (HES·SO)**

In OECD countries, the problem of young people not being in education, employment or training (the so-called "NEET") has been frequently raised in the political field since the beginning of the last crisis. On the basis of empirical data collected in Switzerland within the framework of the NCCR Lives project (<http://www.livesnccr.ch/en>), we shall first attempt to understand what the use of the NEET category is founded upon: we shall show that it is based on two tenets. One is of a social nature, founded upon the fact this age group is the most affected by unemployment; the other is of a moral nature, resting on the idea that any unemployment at all in this age group is a problem. We will show that the field of political controversy around these tenets has clear borders (Bourdieu, 2012) and that it mostly centres on whether various measures should be imposed or not, whilst there is complete agreement on the category itself. We will then show that social workers dealing with youth unemployment endorse the official normativity about NEET. 44 of them have been asked to identify and precisely describe three situations that they consider as emblematic of their interventions toward unemployed youth people; hence, about 150 such situations have been collected and allow investigating how the past, present and future stages of the beneficiaries' life course interact within them. The data show that their normative figure is the employed adult and that they see NEET as people in need of socialization. In conclusion, we will show that the NEET category is founded upon a linear and androcentric representation of the life course (education–training–employment–retirement) (Levy, Gauthier, & Widmer, 2006) which not only subsumes very different social universes into chronological categories (Bourdieu, 1984, Yates & Payne, 2006), but tends to deny the importance of power relationships founded upon age.

# **Discourse analysis and criminal justice groupwork: An empirical approach to reflexive practice**

**Steve Kirkwood**

**The University of Edinburgh**

Recent research suggests that an important aspect of criminal justice social work interventions relates not simply to content of programmes, but to elements of the relationship with clients. These include: appropriate use of authority, empathy and respect; the establishment of an effective 'working alliance' based on mutual understanding; the demonstration of pro-social modelling and positive reinforcement; and the constructive management of conflict within the group. However, very little extant research has used qualitative methods to analyse these aspects of practice in action. The present research addresses this gap through applying discourse analysis to video recordings of Criminal Justice Social Work Groupwork Programmes in order to explore the elements of best practice. The analytic approach pays close attention to the interactions between people through the fine grained analysis of instances of talk. The research was undertaken in close collaboration with social workers and is intended to help build an empirical aspect into reflexive practice. The results highlight the ways in which social workers are able to build a working alliance with their clients and how this develops in on-going interactions. This approach provides social workers with the scope to develop an empirical aspect to their reflexive practices, through focusing on specific instances of interaction based on empirical data. In this regard, the research has the potential to improve training of social workers and ongoing professional development.

Keywords: Criminal Justice, Discourse Analysis

# **Critical factors of intensive family work which produce positive outcomes for child welfare client children and parents**

**Pirjo Pölkki  
Riitta Vornanen, Riina Colliander**

**University of Eastern Finland**

In the Finnish child welfare system, the model of intensive family work is often a final family preservation service and community-based intervention to support families and to prevent children's placement outside home. The model aims to achieve good outcomes both for children and their parents, especially in families which have parenting problems, child neglect or abuse because of fatigue, substance abuse or mental health problems of the parents. Family work has been criticized for omitting the needs of children and of concentrating on the complex needs of parents. Its cost-effectiveness has also been questioned. In this regard, this study seeks to address the following research questions: 1. What outcomes does intensive family work produce for under-12-year-old welfare children and their parents during three months' working period? 2. What are the critical factors and processes in intensive family work which are connected to the well-being of children and their parents? 3. What kind of child protection work is still needed with children during two years' follow-up after intensive family work? This study is a part of a multi-disciplinary project entitled, 'Needs, Processes and Outcomes of Child Protection', which is supported by the Academy of Finland. The data were obtained from seven focus group interviews with 26 family workers in five municipalities and 20 child protection case files. The documents covered child protection social work and family work during and two years after family work (e.g. decisions, assessments, child welfare notifications, care plans and reviews) on child welfare families with under school-aged children in one municipality. Qualitative content analysis was used as the method of analysis. Results mainly showed moderate improvement in the general situation of the families during three months' family work when the families were visited three to four times a week by two family workers. Case files showed improved safety and well-being of children, organization of daily life and parenting skills. According to family workers, the critical factors for good outcomes for children were motivation and commitment of the parents, adequate time to assess the family situation, realistic objectives and the possibility of using flexible and innovative working methods and of working with children. Family workers wanted intensive cooperation with social workers and to be thoroughly familiar with the situation of children and parents. They also

hoped that social workers can actively address children's distress and abuse, even if this meant involuntary intervention and placement of the children. The analysis of the results on the long-term outcomes of intensive family work is still continuing.

Key words: Child protection, intensive family work, children, outcomes

# **P.I.P.P.I. Program of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalization. Participatory strategies to prevent child placement.**

**Sara Serbati  
Marco Ius, Diego Di Masi, Ombretta Zanon, Paola Milani**

**Università di Padova**

Data developed by the Ministry of Welfare (1999, 2010) show that the number of children placed out-of-home has increased during the last years, going from a rate of 2,3 to a 2,9 ‰. It's a research's commitment responding to this trend, in agreement with European legislation (CRC 1989, EU2020 Strategy, REC(2006)19) that recognizes the parenting support as a strategy that could break the cycle of social disadvantage and ensure children a good life path. P.I.P.P.I. is a research-training-intervention program funded by Italian Ministry of Welfare and developed as an intensive care program for vulnerable families. P.I.P.P.I. stands for Program of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalization and it is inspired by Pippi-Longstocking, whose life is an amazing resilient metaphor. P.I.P.P.I. aims at preventing child placement focusing on supporting parenting through a care process that uses participatory strategies and multi-professional and intensive-intervention. Tools were used by practitioners with children and parents, in order to give them voice on their life, to collect their points of view, and therefore to develop a shared care plan. The main tool was R.P.M. (that stand for assessment, planning, monitoring) an online-tool developed by University of Padua, based on the British Assessment-Framework, that practitioners and families use for each child to assess, plan and evaluate intervention. The first implementation (March 2011-December 2012) involved more than 200 practitioners working in 10 Italian cities with 10 vulnerable-families each city (136 children 0-11 years-old). Data were collected using questionnaires to measure parents' satisfaction, children's behaviour (SDQ), families' social support (MsPSS), and family-functioning (Assessment-Framework). Results (both quantitative and qualitative) are encouraging, and will be presented to give evidence to the programme and to show how the second implementation currently in progress (2013-2014) was planned. Moreover, it'll be presented how results were used in fostering a reflective practice between families and practitioners.

# **The Capabilities Approach and Child Protection in the UK**

**Anna Gupta  
Brigid Featherstone, Sue White**

**Royal Holloway, University of London**

The Capabilities Approach originally developed by Amartya Sen and then further explored by Martha Nussbaum provides a theoretical framework concerning wellbeing, human development and social justice. The Capabilities Approach has been used widely in development work in the Global South, and is attracting increasing attention in social policy and research in Europe. It has been suggested that the Capabilities Approach can provide an alternative conceptual framework for social work that challenges the dominance of neoliberal ideology in ways consistent with the promotion of human rights and social justice; however this has not been explored to any significant extent. Sen has described poverty as a capability deprivator, and there is a high degree of consensus in the child welfare literature that poverty and social deprivation makes parenting a greater challenge and can impair the health and development of children. The Coalition Government's cuts in welfare benefits and family support services, alongside more punitive responses towards families experiencing poverty by the child protection and family court systems, have led to questioning of the current settlement between the state and family life in the UK.

In this paper we address the conference theme of Social diversity: Promoting human rights and the role of research. We draw upon a review of the literature and case examples from the authors' research and practice to critique child protection policy and practice using the Capabilities Approach. A particular focus is on neglect and poverty within the current context of 'austerity' Britain. Possibilities for using the Capabilities Approach to promote more humane social work practice that works with families to develop strengths, minimise adversities and promote the welfare of children are also presented.

Key words: Capabilities Approach, Child Protection, Poverty, Parenting

# **“Strength-based approaches and child protection: conflicting paradigms or the key to improve interventions?”**

**Tessa Verhallen**

**Utrecht University**

Background In the Netherlands there is a growing public support for preventive approaches and safety precautions regarding child protection.[1] Risk-aversion led to a 153% increase of children placed under supervision in 2010.[2] Family guardians increasingly use standardized and positivist evidence-based methods that should help them to make ‘right’ decisions regarding the child. Standardization affects the quality of relationships with families (Hermanns, 2008) that, in turn, affects child protection intervention processes and ‘outcomes’ (cf. Parr, 2009). Against the background of supporting and controlling roles of family guardians their (changing) relationship with families is ethnographically studied to assess how child protection work takes places in practice and what is needed to make interventions work better. Methods A triangular approach is used to reveal what is said, written and done during child protection processes (Pithouse, 1998). Ethnographic fieldwork is conducted among fifteen single-mother child protection families between 2009 and 2012 in the Netherlands. The researcher took part as a participant observer in interactions between family guardians and single mothers during e.g. home visits, court hearings and supervised meetings. The analysis draws on concepts from critical discourse analysis. The study also includes interviews, narratives, case files and written reports. Results The study shows that outcomes of child protection interventions are more effective[3] if parents are engaged in, and positive about, the process. Trust, respect and positive treatments of single-mother families are crucial to successful child protection outcomes. Analysis of empirical data shows that mothers are often addressed and treated as ‘multi-problematic’, ‘not capable’ and ‘a risk’ in child protection cases. Deficit-based approaches turn out to impede the family guardian-mother relationship and the outcome of child protection interventions.[4] The results indicate that cooperation, a positive relationship and an agreed plausible explanation for the families’ situation are crucial in determining whether a family guardian recommends for restoring the full parental authority and family reunification. Implications The paper assesses what is needed to improve child protection interventions and debates whether strength-based approaches are commensurable with child protection discourses.

Keywords: Ethnography, Outcomes, Family research, strength-based approaches.[1]

Due to e.g. 'insufficient' voluntary- based interventions, high-profile family dramas and the risk for family guardians to be prosecuted for misjudgments (cf. Baecke et al. 2009).[2] Compared to the number of 20.000 in 2002 (Statistics Netherlands, 2011; Youth Care Netherlands, 2011).[3] In line with the legal aim of care orders (Article 1: 257 of the Dutch Civil Code). [4] With this I mean that it is less likely that the full parental authority is restored, which is the legal aim of a supervision order (Article 1: 257 of the Dutch Civil Code).

# **Leaving an Insular Community: The Case of Ultra Orthodox Jews**

**Roni Berger**

**Adelphi University**

A qualitative mythology was employed to capture the lived experience of individuals who left Ultra Orthodox Jewish communities where they grew up to enter mainstream society. Their communities of origin are insulated from the modern world and keep outside influences from challenging their basic beliefs or affecting their highly structured way of life. Because Orthodox education consists almost exclusively religious subjects, everyday language is Yiddish and exposure to non-religious media, literature, art, music, and the web is strictly prohibited, they often lack educational and vocational training and marketable skills necessary to function in the modern world. They lack knowledge of norms of behavior relative to dress and interpersonal behaviors and are frequently stigmatized, rejected, and publically humiliated. Such stigmas may extend to their families, who often ostracized them and they may lose contact with children, parents, and siblings. "Exiters" are like new immigrants in a world often demonized by their community of origin, encounter cultural disorientation and must navigate an unfamiliar territory with little preparation and no financial, psychological, or social support. This may beget loneliness, multiple losses, stress, and potentially depression. With very few exceptions, this population group has not been studied.

Non-structured individual in-depth interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of 19 individuals to learn how these individuals perceive, describe, and interpret their experience. The interviews were content-analyzed. This analysis yielded six main themes: The nature of the process (beginnings, intellectual vs. relational motivation, phases, and pivotal points), social attitudes (of the families and the community), emotional issues, challenges, and coping strategies (reaching compromises and reasoning, relocating to a different geographical area, pretending, developing a "thick skin", and catching up), support sources, current view of the Ultra Orthodox community and of self. These themes will be discussed and illustrated.

Implications for interventions and future research are suggested.

# **Socio-economic and Psychosocial Factors as Determinants of Health among Immigrants with a Russian Background in Finland and in Israel**

**Varda Soskolne**

**Maritta Torronen, Teemu Vauhkonen, Minna Veistilä, Eveliina Heino**

**BAR ILAN UNIVERSITY**

Background and purpose: Despite improvements in health indexes in many countries, there is consistent evidence of inequalities in health between population groups that are attributable to social factors. Immigration is one of these factors according to the Social Determinants of Health framework (WHO, 2008). It is expressed in health inequalities between immigrants and non-immigrants, which are often explained by inequalities in socio-economic status (SES). However, few studies have attempted to study social determinants of health within immigrant populations. The current studies aimed to examine socio-economic and psychosocial correlates of health among immigrants of a similar background in two countries. Methods: Secondary analyses of data from two cross-sectional studies of adult immigrants with Russian background. Study 1: A sample of immigrant families with children (n=231) living in South-East Finland. Study 2: A subsample (n=224) obtained from a national representative sample of adult individuals in Israel. In both countries, data were collected using structured questionnaires. Similar variables in both datasets were selected and included SES (education, income) and psychosocial variables (e.g., stress, emotional support) as independent variables and self-rated health (SRH) as the dependent variable. Data were analyzed using logistic regression models, controlling for age and gender. Results: The rate of good SRH was 69% in Study 1 and 44% in Study 2. Multivariate analyses revealed that in Study 1 income, emotional support, and experience of discrimination, and in Study 2, income and feeling of control, but not emotional support were associated with SRH. Conclusions: The findings indicate the SES is the major determinant of health, and personal feelings of discrimination or not being in control are another determinant of health among immigrants. More in-depth research is required yet these results provide practical implications for social work practice and policy aiming to decrease health inequalities specific to immigrants in each country.

Keywords: immigrants, self-rated health, social determinants, well-being

# **Second-generation African-Caribbean men and psychosis: Developing frameworks for anti-discriminatory mental health research**

**Mark Wheeler**

**University of East London**

It is widely acknowledged that membership in certain migrant and ethnic minority groups in Western Europe carries with it an increased risk of being diagnosed with psychotic disorders (Cantor-Graae and Selton, 2005; Fearon and Morgan, 2006; Veling and Susser, 2011). In the United Kingdom for example, higher incidence rates of schizophrenia and mania are noted amongst first and second generation African-Caribbeans (Bhurga et al., 1997; Cantor-Graae, 2007; Fearon and Morgan, 2006; Pinto et al. 2008). People do overcome such diagnoses and the rebuilding, or reconstitution of a 'sense of self' has been identified as important in the 'recovery' process (e.g. Czuchta et al., 1998; Forchuck et al. 2003; Laithwaite and Gumley, 2007; Pettie and Triolo 1999). Yet, the majority of research informing mental health policy and clinical practice with regard to minorities of non-European descent and psychosis continues to adhere to third-person ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with the Western medical-model. There are a dearth of studies which examine the subjectivities of those said to be at the greatest risk of what the World Health Organization refers to as global 'priority conditions' (WHO, 2008). Aligning with the conference theme of 'Promoting human rights and the role of research', this presentation will discuss key directions for research exploring psychosis in the contexts of ethnicity and migration. It will draw upon thinking from the development of a current project examining how second-generation African-Caribbean men make sense of and reconcile the self-disturbance that can accompany psychosis, to outline strategies for constructing anti-discriminatory theoretical and methodological frameworks in mental health research. While ethnicity will be a central topic, attention will also be given to other aspects of diversity that can be overlooked. The presentation will conclude by articulating the ways in which European based social work practitioners and educators are ideally situated to strengthen the scientific bases of social work by generating practice relevant and practice informed knowledge while also drawing attention to covert forms of discrimination and bias inherent within current mental health research.

Key Words: Mental Health, Anti-discriminatory research, African-Caribbean, Social Work

# **watchdogs or challengers? How changes in social legislation affect the role of social workers in the promotion and defence of Human Rights of migrants in Spain**

**Emilio José Gomez-Ciriano**

**Universidad de Castilla-la Mancha. Facultad de Trabajo Social**

Watchdogs or challengers? How changes in social legislation affect the role of social workers in the promotion and defence of Human rights of migrants in Spain Emilio José Gómez Ciriano. Universidad de Castilla-la Mancha. Faculty of Social Work Key Words: Human rights, welfare, migrants Background and purpose: The aim of this communication is to advance some results of a research project which aimed at highlighting how migrant populations in Spain were being affected by welfare cuts. The research is coordinated by MJ Devillard from Universidad Complutense de Madrid and involves ten researchers from three universities (Complutense de Madrid, Autónoma de Madrid and Castilla-la Mancha) The project is funded by the Ministry of Science of Innovation of Spain, and is still running In this presentation, the author will focus on how the successive legislation reforms in Spain since 2010 have left social workers without social, legal and economic resources to promote and defend the user's social rights when they are violated and this situation produces a dilemma amongst social workers: How to act? As watchdogs and controllers or as challengers of the system The communication fits, in my opinion, well, in topic 5.

# **Means of measuring and monitoring: a participatory approach**

**Jan Depauw  
Kristel Driessens**

**Karel de Grote-Hogeschool**

Background The paradigm of Empowerment is getting more popular as a framework for social work against social exclusion and poverty: a framework for both thinking and acting. According to Rappaport (1984): 'Empowerment is viewed as a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives'. Inherent to this paradigm is the focus on people or groups who are socially vulnerable: their strengths as well as their vulnerabilities and experiences. The objective of this study was to include the empowerment perspective into social policy and social interventions and to construct an instrument for measuring empowering effects on the individual level. Methods Combining quantitative and qualitative techniques in a Delphi-design we explored attitudes towards measuring and -in collaboration with social workers and people in poverty- we constructed a tool to measure empowerment of clients (and social workers) in Public Centers of Social Welfare. Results Accountability is, also in social work, of an increasing importance. It seems part of the job. Systems of measuring or monitoring are not adapted to social work. But social workers don't take an exclusive negative stance toward measuring. They see as benefits that it provides transparency and accountability, and the fact that one can learn from the results. There seems to be a need for an alternative way of measuring. Therefore we have constructed a meter together with social workers and service users. This tool was tested. This testing resulted in a reliable and valid scale to measure psychological empowerment. Conclusion The feedback afterwards lead to the conclusion that the scale looks promising, by answering some of the needs and flaws of the existing registration and monitoring systems, but there is still some work in fine tuning. Participation of social workers and service users is essential for a successful implementation.

# **Participatory approach in developing ICT for social work**

**Marjo Kuronen  
Hannakaisa Isomäki**

**University of Jyväskylä, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy**

Academics and practitioners in social work have been rather critical towards the ways in which information and communication technology (ICT) has been introduced into social work. On the other hand, it has been argued that social workers are lacking the skills and motivation to use it. This is understandable because the development of ICT for social work is still mainly based on technical rationality and commercial purposes. In this paper, we argue that a human-centred, user-driven and participatory approach is needed in the ICT research and development to take into account not only technological but also social and cultural contexts where these technologies are to be used, and the people, both social work practitioners and service users actually using them. The end users should be involved right from the beginning in the research and development process, in defining its aims, contents and technological devices to be used. This kind of a participatory process can also improve the ICT-skills of the participants and their understanding of the possibilities in which ICT could be used in social work in innovative ways for the benefit of the service users. Participatory approach requires a multidisciplinary approach where academics and practitioners from social work and information technology join their expertise in open dialogue. Social sciences and information technology do not always communicate very well with each other but that is the only way forward if we want to gain sustainable and successful solutions to complex problems that require a multidisciplinary approach.

Key words: ICT in social work, participatory approach

# **Evaluating together – learning together**

**Tiina Muukkonen  
Hanna Tulensalo**

**Heikki Waris Institute**

Our abstract is based on three different researches, which have in common the participative re-search methods. The methods are slightly different but have many joint aspects. In our presentation we will introduce our research methods and what are the elements in those three methods that make them supportive to participative learning process. Our wider research context has been practice- and case research. Our method has been to participate service users, social workers, other authorities and researcher. We call our method as co-evaluation (Järvinen 2007) empowered evaluation (Kivipelto 2008), participated evaluation or co-construction (Rautiainen 2010). Our context in every research is child protection in open care (see Hearn, Pösö Smith, White and Korpinen 2004). We have collected our research material together with service users, social workers and other authorities. Together with participant we have evaluated the heart of social work; joint work to make change in people's lives. The precise focus is different in each research. The focus has been in child protection social work: assessment, co-operation and knowledge creation about child. In our presentation we will tell more specifically about each research, what are our experiences about using participative methods in research, what it means in action and finally we discuss how this promotes participative learning process. We have noticed, that participative research methods include elements of developing and learning and this combination can create a joint learning area to all participants.

Keywords: Child centred work, evaluating together, co-operation, joint learning area

# **ICT, Social Work and the Death of the Narrative Knowledge Base?**

**Jasper De Witte  
Koen Hermans**

**KU Leuven - LUCAS**

According to Lipsky, social workers not only implement, but also form policy through the use of their discretion (Lipsky, 1980). To gain greater control over professional practice, managerial mechanisms such as the ICT have been introduced in social services in the 1980s (Pollitt, van Thiel & Homburg, 2007). Parton (2009) states that the increased utilization of ICT in child welfare services and the growing importance of information has led to a shift regarding the form of knowledge and the nature of social work itself: from 'the social' to 'the informational'. The narrative knowledge base is increasingly framed by a way of thinking structured by databases, variables and numbers. Hence, it is claimed that social workers are becoming primarily information processors concerned with the gathering, sharing and monitoring of information, instead of being focused on the relational and social dimensions of their work (Parton, 2009). There are still some blind spots regarding the impact of ICT on social work. Based on a social informatics approach (Kling, 2000), we hypothesize that social workers develop certain strategies regarding ICT in order to maintain a narrative and a relational social work approach. During this presentation we present findings from a qualitative research project concerning child welfare services in Flanders, Belgium. Based on qualitative interviews with social workers, we illustrate the applied street-level strategies to deal with these information systems, in order to safeguard the client-centered approach. Preliminary findings suggest that further research should include the dynamic interactions between social workers, their social setting and informational systems.

Keywords: social work, ICT, discretion, registration systems

# **The Transforming Methodology of Social Work Practice Research**

**Mirja Satka**

**Kati Palsanen, Heidi Muurinen, Aino Kääriäinen, Laura Yliruka**

**University of Helsinki**

This paper describes and reflects the recent multifaceted developments of practice research methods at Heikki Waris Institute in collaboration with the Department of Social Research and the municipalities of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. During the past ten years the agents of the Institute – professors, lecturers, students, research social workers as well as in the field - have developed a cyclic and collaborative method of functioning. It consists of three elements: 1) collaborative developing of social services, 2) dialogical learning in close connection with 3) research. We have recently gained evidence that this model of vivid and ongoing collaboration relationships can also serve as a base for novel openings in research methods. The first case is a study which promotes and investigates the idea of collaborative discovery as a form of service between social workers and a group of clients with similar experiences. Originally the idea of collaborative discovery was an unexpected result of a previous project with unemployed young people. Presently the young, who have experienced a child protection intervention, are developing new identities and improving skills for social life in co-operation with professionals. Do these experiments also lead to a professional method of collaboration? The second case is a study of the relations of space and social interaction in municipal social welfare agencies. It is testing whether experimenting and prototyping in a space is a valid research method by asking: what are the benefits and challenges of the method in relation to the aims of social work practice research? Also this study has its origins in the previous research findings of the Institute. Finally, and in the light of the research examples, the paper concludes the potentials of the collaborative approach for the progress of the research methods in the future.

# **Clients as initiators of a joint study**

**Michal Shamai**

**University of Haifa**

Usually the initiation to explore social phenomenon or social intervention is initiated by those who have financial or professional interest in it and not by those who are the source for acquiring the data needed for the exploration. The goal of the proposed presentation is to describe a unique experience that was initiated by a woman, who was a client of the department of social services in Haifa, during the social protest of summer 2011 in Israel. The woman approached me after one of my lectures that were given as part of the social protest; and in her reflection she claimed that poverty is a collective trauma. Since neither one of theories or studies regarding poverty does not define it as a collective trauma, I suggested a joint action research to aiming to inquire into the phenomenon of poverty in order to find out whether it can be defined as a collective trauma. The study group included ten women living in poverty and long term clients of the departments of social services. The joint study lasted for a year and a half, in which I met with the group every second week for two hours. All the meetings were transcribed by a third year social work student. The joint learning included three main stages: 1) Life stories of the participants: In this stage each one of the participants told her life story focusing on traumatic events, stressors, strength and ways of coping. In the process of telling the stories I was operating as a practitioner and researcher. As a practitioner I was empathic, supportive, and empowering. As a researcher I directed the group to look at similarities and differences between the stories, and to find out whether aspects of collective trauma characterized these stories; 2) An open and unstructured stage: During this stage each one of the member could bring difficulties with which she wanted to share with the group. As in the first stage I was operating as a researcher and practitioner. As a researcher I guided the group to look of the repetitive behavior, thought and feelings that characterized the life in poverty. At this stage the group became also a source of support to its members, and 3) Summarizing stage: In this stage the members were asked to bring up their conclusions regarding the question whether poverty is a collective trauma and to point on issues that came up in the group and can validate their conclusions. In this stage it was also decided how the process of the joint research will be documented. One of my main conclusions was that without operating as a practitioner using my social work skills I would not be able to engage the women and explore the phenomenon of poverty as a collective trauma; and without being a researcher I might be blamed for not being helpful enough... which is part of the collective trauma of poverty.

# **A CHALLENGE FOR SOCIAL WORK SCIENCE: RESEARCHING CO-CREATED PROCESSES OF HELP**

**Gabi Cacinovic Vogrincic**

**Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana**

Years of research, teaching and practice in social work have led me to the conclusion that processes of help are an important but neglected topic in scientific research: how do we do social work, what are the specific, social work ways of helping? Who have been the participants in creating our knowledge base? We need reflexive research of theories for practice to build specific social work scientific knowledge. My purpose is 1. to present arguments for intensive reflexive research on theory in and for practice, and 2. to present the concept and the model of co-created social work processes of help and the new language of social work as results of reflexive research involving both social workers and users. A theoretical concept and two reflexive research-based models for social work practice will be proposed, presented and explored as possible definitions of social work process: the concept of co-creating in processes of help, the working relationship and the individual working project of help. The new language, reflecting postmodern changes in theory and practice, will be explored: words for dialogue and cooperation built on strengths perspective (D. Saleebey) and ethics of participation (L. Hoffman), opting for words that are positive, empowering, inclusive. The paper addresses knowledge production, offers clear theoretically and empirically proved arguments for co-creating research as participative learning process. The concept of working relationship enables social workers to challenge complexity in a unique way and accept uncertainty as a welcome fact of social work practice and research. Research results in social work with families and social work in schools are arguments that enable us to conclude: we need intensive reflexive, participative research of helping processes to develop social-work-specific scientific knowledge and further explore the co-creative paradigm.

# **Participative action research in developing social work research and practice**

**Kati Närhi  
Tuomo Kokkonen, Aila-Leena Matthies**

**University of Jyväskylä**

The objective of our three year research project funded by the Academy of Finland is to produce knowledge of the role of welfare service for participation of the most marginalized groups of citizens. The politically and socially most non-participative citizens are often dependants of welfare services. Usually they have also negative experiences on how they are treated as citizens in the services. Therefore, welfare services have a significant role for hindering or enabling participation. In this paper we critically reflect participative action research (PAR) used in our research combined with data produced by focus group interviews of both service users and street-level practitioners. We work with young people outside working life and school, and local welfare service practitioners. PAR approaches seek to address issues of power and politics and offers an option of empowerment of marginalized voices. In the paper we discuss how young service users are indeed able to participate in defining local welfare services and what are the models of participation they prefer. We also reflect upon the real impacts of young people's action towards changes in welfare services. Results of the study relate to the idea that potential for change lies in the involvement of and alliances with people using services and practitioners who work with them. Shared knowledge and collaboration as well as informing policy makers and media are strategies to enable changes in welfare service system. The study has methodological, professional and political implications for social work research, practice and policy. Participation is a political concept that is constantly under definition. Marginalised people have the least power in this struggle. Consequently, user participation can be understood both as developing democratic culture and as a model of neo-liberal governance.

Keywords: PAR, critical reflection, participation, marginalization

# Poster

# **Staff Members of Community Services for People with Mental Retardation and Mentally Illnesses: Values, Attitudes, and Burnout**

**Eugene Tartakovsky**

**Adi Gafter-Shor, Moran Perelman-Hayim**

**Tel Aviv University, the School of Social Work**

**Purpose:** The present study focused on the connections between the staff members' value preferences, attitudes towards community living, and burnout. **Method:** The study was conducted in Israel among staff members of community services for people with mental retardation (n = 126) and mental illnesses (n = 96). The participants were recruited for the study using random sampling of services in the central part of Israel.

In addition, the questionnaires were sent to the members of an internet community of workers serving people with MR and MI. **Results:** A higher preference for the self-transcendence values and a lower preference for the self-enhancement values were associated with the staff members' positive attitudes towards their clients' empowerment, a higher sense of similarity, and a negative attitude towards exclusion.

In addition, a higher preference for the self-transcendence values and a lower preference for the self-enhancement values were associated with a lower level of depersonalization and a higher sense of professional accomplishment. Finally, a more positive attitude towards empowerment, a higher sense of similarity, and a more negative attitude towards exclusion were associated with a lower level of burnout among the community services staff members. **Implications:** The findings indicate new directions for the selection and training of community services workers.

In general, the community services should seek candidates with a higher preference for the self-transcendence values and a lower preference for the self-enhancement values. Furthermore, among the staff members who already work in the community services for people with MR/MI education and training should aim towards increasing the salience of the self-transcendence values and decreasing the salience of the self-enhancement values.

**Keywords:** burnout, community living attitudes, mental illness, mental retardation, values

# **Promoting South Epistemologies to support informed political action**

**José Luis D'Almeida  
Paula de Sousa**

**Trás-os-Montes University**

The financial crisis and austerity that looms over South Europe, provides an opportunity for social work to open up new paths for social transformation and emancipation. This possibility will only be realized on the basis of the epistemologies of the South <sup>[1]</sup> or, in other words, a set of initiatives for the production and validation of knowledge and understanding based on the experience of oppression and alienation of a large population of Southern Europe, caused by financial crisis and austerity.

Social work can use this experience, that plagues the countries of Southern Europe, as a source of further knowledge and researches, as to promote awareness of " new" forms of oppression and alienation.

Only with a better understanding of the new ways of oppression and alienation it is possible an informed political action and therefore to renew social work practices.

The South Epistemologies can not only give visibility to the phenomena of oppression and alienation as well as produce knowledge and innovative approaches to the practical level, supporting the development of practice at the policymaking level.

It is believed that South Epistemologies could contribute to restore and reinvent social emancipation in social work practices, an approach that has fallen into disrepair.

<sup>[1]</sup> Idea based on ALICE, a research project coordinated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos and financed by the European Research Council (ERC), one of the most prestigious and highly competitive international financial institutes for scientific excellence in Europe. The project ALICE seeks to re-think and renovate socio-scientific knowledge in light of the epistemologies of the South. The objective is to develop new theoretical and political paradigms of social transformation.

# **'Signs of safety' practice at the health and children's social care interface**

**Tony Stanley  
Rob Mills**

## **Principal Social Worker**

In Tower Hamlets, London, we are strengthening our 'risk work' across the agency borders through a shared practice framework for risk analysis: The signs of safety approach. The 'signs of safety' methodology offers a coherent language about risk analysis and is a practice-framework that traverses disciplines, while providing practice depth within. It resolves any 'risk assessment tensions' that easily operate across the health and social care divide. Our work on introducing this to our health and social care interface is the subject of this poster. Cases can be analysed using a consistent practice methodology that health and social care understand and share. The practice tools become useful vehicles for the referral process into and out of children's social care. We argue that this is just and right for children and their families. In this poster, we show how definitions of risk can be conceptually and practically mapped at the interface of health and social care practice, with families, to strengthen the analysis of the risk case and thus inform the planning about what needs to happen next. We illustrate how we have adopted the 'signs of safety' approach at Tower Hamlets to be more accountable in our decision making. Our implementation strategy and our evaluation plan are presented in this poster. We argue that methodological congruence across the health and social care interface strengthens our risk work. This is something that the English government inspectorates of Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will be evaluating when they next inspect our safeguarding services. Most importantly for us, providing rigorous and robust risk analysis is right and just for the children and their families we work with. We need to be accountable because the practice decisions made are too important.

# **Long- term- multi- problem- families and their struggle with social services: is there a public responsibility in this phenomenon?**

**Elisabeth Berger**

**Free University of Bozen - Bolzano**

This paper aims to present my dissertation project which will explore the phenomenon of long-term, multi- problem families and their dependency on public social services for years. In our complex society social problems become even less predictable and controllable for families and their single members. Social structures are changing, the traditional role of families is more and more weakened and resources are decreasing. Nonetheless, families who are struggling with multiple problems often are seen as responsible themselves for their difficult life situations; strengths of families and structural, socio- political and organisational factors which deteriorate life situations of highly stressed families are often not seen and far away from public discussion. Moreover, there seems to be little interest for this issue also in literature and in research: the phenomenon remains largely underexplored. Nonetheless the phenomenon of long- term clients in social work practice continues to exist. Nowadays, as resources are decreasing, social structures are becoming more vulnerable and social policymakers demand efficiency and efficacy, dependency of multi- problem families on social services is seen as a great challenge for social workers. This on-going study focuses on analysing the structural and political context which is the framework of social work practice deploying a 'multi- strategy- approach'. The pilot study focuses on analysing professionals' perception about professional, structural and political factors which could increase the phenomenon of dependency of multi- problem families on social services and is the basis for a structured questionnaire which goes to social workers engaged in public child care services in South Tirol/Italy. The results of the questionnaires will be discussed in in-depth-interviews both with service users and social workers. The findings of this on-going study aim to enrich theory of social work practice and also to discuss social policies in relationship to 'multi- problem families' who often seem to be forgotten or invisible. Keywords: long- term clients, multi- problem families, social work practice.

# Health Promotion as an action and research field for Social Work

Sigrid Mairhofer

Free University of Bozen - Bolzano

This research project deals with the issue of health (in)equity under the aspect of "health in all policies" in rural areas of welfare states. It demonstrates why Health Promotion is an action and research field of Social Work, and explains the connection between social and health inequalities. The actual crisis of welfare states, the rising savings in the social and health sector and current demographic trends bring us to a reflection about how we can deal with this issue.

Health opportunities are seen as capabilities, in according to the capability approach of Sen and Nussbaum. This holistic approach of the concepts of *health* and *health inequalities* (WHO) leads to a socio-political debate about a fair distribution of health capabilities in welfare states. When welfare states are defined by the fact that the state plays a key role in protecting and promoting the social, material and cultural welfare of the population, the discussion about health equity becomes a task for all policies (health in all policies). Building on this the research project will explain how local social and health policies and community-based health promotion projects can address health inequity and promote health equity.

The research project has the aim to identify existing health inequity in the research region, to give an overview of the state of arts in international research on health equity, to analyze international experiences and to test the implementation of different community based initiatives by a local, trans-disciplinary, participative action research project.

The poster describes the research design and shows first outcomes of the project.

Social Policy, Social Work, Health Promotion, Health (In)Equity

# **An enquiry into students' motivations to train as social workers in Romania**

**Mihai Bogdan Iovu**

**Babes-Bolyai University, School of Sociology and Social work**

Background and purpose: The reasons that upon their graduation senior highschoolers choose social work as a prospective career is of great interest for higher education institutions that deliver these programs. Understanding their interests should help with the development of effective recruitment techniques for social work schools and with increasing the retention rate of professional social workers in the field after graduation. The current study aims to evaluate students' motivations applying to an undergraduate social work program to one prestigious institution in Romania.

Methods: A survey of Romanian junior undergraduate social work students was designed. Subjects filled The Social Work Career Influence Questionnaire in the first week of their training. The instrument captures four factors (personal and family experiences, desire to be a therapist, prestige of the profession, and social change mission) related to their potential career choice. Results: More than two thirds of the respondents decided to enroll to social work after the highschool graduation. 81.1% wanted to study social work and 94.3% declared they intend to stay in the field after graduation. Among the reasons for choosing social work, the best represented is its prestige ( $M = 3.93$ ).

Conclusion: Giving the current mobility in the job market and the shortage of social workers in certain domains, it becomes utterly important to consider the factors that motivate students to train in the profession. Results are a starting point in informing recruitment and retention policies employed by social work schools and organizations.

# Dialogue in online support services

Anne Rahikka

Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

The development of information and communication technology has spread to social and health care organisations (NGO), which in Finland offer interactive online services. The subject of the study is the work of social and health care professionals. In this study these online services are given the term online support services. The study will answer to following research questions: How are the online services defined in the professionals' narratives? How is the computer-mediated communication between the professionals and the customers structured according to the narratives? The research material consists of 18 interviews conducted through a combination of active and theme interview methodology and then analysed by shape and thematic analysis. In this study the computer-mediated communication is conceptualized as consisting of three dimensions: textuality, process and socio-cultural factors. The computer-mediated communication is studied from the perspective of dialogue. According to the professionals' narratives, online support services are independent of time and place, based on anonymity and guide the customers toward more personalized face to face services. The results of the study show tension in computer-mediated communication, because the professionals must balance between expert-like communication on the one hand, and personal and deeply encountering communication on the other. In online services there exist both open and closed dialogue, which serve the customers in different types of situations. Professionals are able to generate open dialogue by using online text that meets the customers at their point of need and by mastering the elements of the dialogical process. In the network groups, the professionals seek with their dialogic interventions to guide the communication from regressive narratives to progressive narratives. In the network groups the professionals' interventions can be divided into either cognitive or emotional interventions. The study shows that socio-cultural factors produce polyphony both in the organisations' inner and external communication.

Keywords: social and health care organisations, online support organisations, computer-mediated communication, dialogue

# **Advocating for sex-workers' rights between prostitution policy and harm-reduction measures**

**Gabriella Scaramuzzino  
Roberto Scaramuzzino**

**Linnaeus University**

This paper presents a case study of a European network by and for sex workers, the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE). The aim is to understand and explain the strategic action of this network in the field of prostitution policy and sex-workers' rights. Prostitution is traditionally a social issue which divides the women's movement and the feminist debate. Four different feminist approaches to prostitution have been identified: liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism and sex radicalism. Such different approaches have motivated different policy models/regimes and methods in the practice of social work, from harm reduction measures to exit strategies, law-enforcement and repressive strategies. This study is based on qualitative text analysis of internet websites (organisations' and projects' websites and online documents) and interviews with a representative and two activists that are engaged in and/or have experience of the work of ICRSE. To understand the role and the strategies of ICRSE in such a contested policy field this study adopts a relatively new theoretical approach called "a theory of fields" which draws on social movement and institutional organisation theories to understand the organisation's role and strategies in a relational context populated by other actors, not least other civil society organisations. The study shows that ICRSEs position in this policy field is that of a challenger while the Women's movement and the LGBT-movement often take on much more established positions. By framing their activities in terms of harm-reduction and fight against the spreading of STDs, ICRSE is able to strengthen its position at the EU-level and finance activities in the member-states. It also gives legitimacy to national organisations working in ideologically hostile environments as Sweden where policy and social work practice are oriented towards the elimination of prostitution.

Keywords: Social mobilisations, Prostitution, Sex-workers' rights, Theory of fields

# **Social work with victims of trafficking in women: alternative or complementary approaches?**

**Natalija Mazeikiene  
Dalia Puidokiene, Gabrielle-Elyse Kempton**

**Vytautas Magnus University**

Main research questions raised in this paper are (a) what are main theoretical approaches embedded in practice of social work and social services provided to victims of trafficking in human beings and prostitution in Lithuania and (2) how these different approaches and practices can be combined and matched. The authors provide meta-analysis of three empirical research projects which the authors deal with. The first research has been conducted in 2005 in Lithuania (Ruskus, Mazeikiene, Blinstrubas, Balciunas, 2005) seeking to evaluate quality of social services to victims of trafficking in human beings and prostitution. Analysis of services in 12 organizations was carried out by applying variety of methods (visits to organizations, interviews with social workers, document analysis, survey). Dalia Puidokiene's (2012) doctoral research evolves investigation which was conducted in 2005 - 2008. Interviews with women (victims of trafficking in human beings and prostitution), analysis of women's letters (correspondence with researcher), observation (researcher's field notes) were used. Gabrielle Kempton (2013) carried out comparison of social work approaches with victims of trafficking in human beings and prostitution in Lithuania and U.S. Social workers were interviewed asking about empowerment issues. These three researches revealed certain approaches in understanding of nature of social work which can be found in literature on theories of social work (Payne, 2005; Howe, 2011) - psychodynamic perspective, crisis intervention and task-centered models, humanism (especially Christian humanism approach), existential approach, etc.). Comparison with U.S. practices discovered quite weak features of feminist and critical paradigm in Lithuania. There is insufficient attention to structural causes of the phenomenon of prostitution, empowerment on mezzo and macro level, advocacy, awareness raising activities. It is interesting that different types of organizations which provide social services to victims of trafficking in women and prostitution apply and stress in their activities different paradigms and approaches. These empirical findings have implications on how cooperation between different types of organizations could be fostered and services could be improved by introducing new and matching existing approaches.

# **Conceptualising Practice Development in Social Work: cleaning up a messy construct**

**Mariël van Pelt  
Marion van Hattum, Hans Oostrik, Alletta Spreeuw**

**HAN University of Applied Sciences**

Keywords: practice development, construct validity, masters programme In the Netherlands a transition towards a participation society is taken place, which impacts social work. Next to an emphasis on quality improvement of services in which both reflective practice and evidence based practice are important, social work practice alters. Social workers become generalist workers. They cooperate with other disciplines, volunteers and informal networks in neighborhoods in order to empower vulnerable citizens to function socially as good as possible. Only when problems are severe or specific, specialist care is provided. This implies a change in the position and role of social workers. Professionals themselves play a crucial role in development of their practice but are they equipped for doing so? Practice development is a known approach in Anglo-Saxon countries in the health care domain. A first inventory, however, revealed that it is container concept, poorly operationalised and lacking a concise definition. Moreover it is not defined for the social work domain. Hence, PD in social work isn't a validated construct. Therefore a PhD research project was conducted, aimed at validating the construct and in doing so, add to the theory on PD and enable empirical measurement. Method Phase 1: narrative literature review (N=30) and three focus groups with lecturers of a masters programme (N=5). Phase 2 (based on phase 1): survey amongst social workers (N = 250). The digital written questionnaire is developed with researchers (N=4), lecturers (N=3) and experienced social workers (N=4). Results/conclusions PD in social work is defined as a multidimensional construct with three dimensions: (multidisciplinary) cooperation, expertise for problem solving and alliance. Preliminary results of phase 2 will be presented at the conference. Future research focuses on the hindering and helping elements in the curriculum of a masters programme in social work in order to prepare social workers for PD.

# **Social workers' and their clients' attitudes concerning accounting for alcohol use**

**Elina Renko**

**University of Helsinki**

This study analyzes social workers' and their clients' attitudes concerning accounting for alcohol use. The aim is to make often unnoticed accounting practices visible. Social workers and their clients were asked to comment on the following statements: I believe that social worker can influence customers' alcohol use and Alcohol use is a private affair. The analytical focus is on how the two parties were commenting on the statements. The study employs a qualitative attitude approach, which emphasizes a social and communicative reading of an attitude concept. The aim of the approach is not to make generalizations from sample to population but to analyze plurality of attitude sphere. The data consist of argumentative talk of social workers (N=14) and their clients (N=14). Interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviewees' attitudes can be divided between three spheres, each of which is characterized by different way of accounting for alcohol use. On an individual sphere, the main actor was an individual who makes his own decisions and on whom no one can influence. The individual was thus the only one accountable for his alcohol use. On a relational sphere, there were more actors who were seen as having an influence on each other's. The accountability for alcohol use was allocated not only to the individual but to people around him as well. On a structural sphere the structures were seen as guiding the movements of the actors and accountability for alcohol use was allocated to the structures. Social workers presented more comments on the structural sphere, clients on the individual sphere. This analysis has shown that social workers' and their clients' have different ways of accounting for alcohol use. Both parties presented three ways of accounting and combined individual, relational and structural elements in different ways. This study pinpoints the importance of hearing the voices of different stakeholders; further research on comparing social workers' and clients' accounting practises is warranted.

Keywords: social worker, client, accounting, alcohol.

# **Students as knowers in developing inclusive practices**

**Torunn Alise Ask**

**University of Agder**

Inclusion and exclusion, especially for children and youth with an ethnic minority background, are on the political and professional agenda, also in social work in Norway. Such issues are combined with the fact that the amount of children with minority background having measures from the child protection system is relatively higher than children from the majority population. Social workers are accused of not being adequately educated and trained in a cultural sensitive way. Mistrust and misunderstandings are identified. Social work and social workers have (often) at the same time an idea of advocating social justice and non-discriminatory practices. A way to handle this from official authorities is to establish programs and projects who aim to strengthen social workers and students' intercultural knowledge, and improve collaboration and communication with ethnic minorities in welfare services. As a teacher and researcher I have followed several attempts in this area. In my paper presentation I will focus on one program where students are recruited as mentors for children (8-12 years old) with a minority background, through a school-year. They also collaborate with the child's family. I relate my study to questions about how intercultural tolerance can be taught and learnt in such frames, including challenges and discussions about the notion of tolerance in social work. Further how this is linked to different actors' perception of citizenship in a broader sense. White papers from the government use the expressions «there are many ways to be Norwegian» and «there are new ways to be Norwegian». My interest is to look into how the students describe their experiences and whether and how this may be traced to the larger conversation on the issues mentioned. The students are knowers from their site and their contributions must be included and can make a difference in developing inclusive practices.

# **Complexity and Complex Social Problems – Neoliberalization as Context of the Estonian Social Work**

**AIRI MITENDORF**

**Tallinn University**

The developed welfare states in Europe, as well in Estonia are under the increasing pressure of neo-liberal ideology. Due to global neoliberalization (a weakening of the welfare state), unsecure employment has become so wide spread that even those groups previously sheltered from labour market risks, like middle class, will be affected. Many social experts expressed the feeling that post-modern society is a highly complicated world to inhabit. The complex society 'creates' new types of problematic social functioning and social work should deal with variably vulnerable population under condition of uncertainty. Social work requires a 'wise person' to mediate, negotiate and interpret knowledge as a part of complex social interactions in practice. Presentation focusing on how municipal social workers in Estonia understands the essence of social work in contemporary "complex" (post-modern) society and how they positioning themselves in social work practice. The empirical material consists of semi-structured interviews with a sample of the thirteen social workers from different regions of Estonian municipalities. Discursive analysis inspired the research. Social workers referred that contemporary social work face with complex problems: such as economical problems, social-psychological disorientation, lack of meaning, addictions, psychosomatic disorders and problems of isolation and exclusion. At the same time, society and clients provides requirements for social workers, they ought to do "anything" to support people in needy. Many social workers emphasised, the people have chosen their "lifestyle" by themselves and there are no possibilities to change people attitudes. This article explores the evidence that there is a 'direction' in which social work in Estonia developing, taking particular account of the influence of the Estonian political context, neoliberal ideology. Government emphasis personal responsibility and service user empowerment has the potential to be liberating, but transfers personal risk from the state to individual.

Key words: Estonia, complexity, neoliberalization, social work, social policy

# **SWIFT. Much more than an international academic network**

**Emilio José Gomez-Ciriano  
David Edmondson, Martin King**

**Universidad de Castilla-la Mancha. Facultad de Trabajo Social**

SWIFT: MUCH MORE THAN AN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC NETWORK  
Poster Presentation: Bolzen / Bolzano (ECSWR 2014): David Edmondson, Prof Emilio José Gómez-Ciriano, Dr. Martin King  
Key words: social work, mirror, media, network  
Background and Purpose of the proposed presentation: In our poster presentation we will outline the work of the SWIFT – Social Work in Film and Television – network so far and advertise future developments, including opportunities to get involved with the network at the conference.  
Summary of the main points of the presentation: Since its foundation in 2011, SWIFT has become a focal point for many students, academics, and practitioners in the fields of social work and the media. Our network has produced a space for common thinking around how social workers are perceived and depicted by the media, and what lies behind these perceptions. This common thinking has been made visible in our conference presentations, congress communications, journal articles and, particularly, on our Twitter site.  
Work so far has concluded that these depictions are far from neutral, and in many cases, reflect the values, priorities and the role of institutional actors in the societies in which social workers operate.  
How our presentation addresses theme 3: As a mirror, SWIFT intends to reflect the reality of media representations of Social Work both historically and currently. At a time when protective networks are being dismantled and Social Workers are being urged to redefine their role to adapt to the new framework or struggle against it the work of SWIFT is expanding to include consideration of the relationship between the state, the media, the direction of the Social Work profession and its role in defending the rights of vulnerable people.  
Conclusions – Implications: The conference will offer an opportunity for academics and professionals to become involved in the network and draw in further partners

# **Exploring the Involvement of Older People within Adult Safeguarding**

**Sarah Finlay**

**Northumbria University, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences**

**Background and purpose:**The importance of fully engaging adults at risk in all areas of adult safeguarding (at both a strategic and an individual level) has been highlighted within UK guidance; however, research has suggested that the level of involvement is low, both regionally (in the North East of England) and nationally (e.g., Corkhill & Walker, 2010; Wallcraft & Sweeney, 2011). This research study considered two related research questions;1) Why is there a low level of involvement of older people within adult safeguarding?2) How can the meaningful involvement of older people within adult safeguarding be achieved?The overall aim of the research was to contribute to adult safeguarding through greater knowledge and understanding of the involvement of older people and to identify and develop indicators for best practice in this area.**Methods:**The research applied a qualitative approach using case studies as the strategy of inquiry. Two local authorities within the North East region of England were purposively selected as the cases for inclusion. Data collection methods included interviews and observations as well as the collection of related policy documents. Participants included the following:\* Safeguarding Adults Board members\* Advocates\* Social workers\* Older people and their family membersThematic analysis was used to explore the data.**Results and conclusions:**A number of key themes were identified from the data including factors which help and hinder involvement and participants' constructions of involvement and adult safeguarding. Key themes also related to the human rights of older people within safeguarding processes and the impact of both regional and national policy on adult safeguarding practice. The proposed paper will discuss the key recommendations and implications of the research findings for social work policy, practice and future research.

**Key words:** Older people, adult safeguarding, involvement, rights

# **Young social workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina - highly educated workforce without a future?**

**Gorana Panic**

**University of Jyväskylä**

“Youth without a future” and “Lost generation” are used to describe young, qualified and jobless people in Europe. Global youth unemployment has risen as a result of austerity policies adopted in a response to debt crisis. Growing inequalities connected to the decline of Welfare state are affecting even more countries in development such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). This doctoral dissertation in progress addresses the issue of young social workers in transition between education and work. After their graduation several scenarios are in range: unemployment, precarious jobs, “voluntary work” or becoming part of national statistics on brain-drain phenomenon. This Action research seeks to explore possibilities for “creating a job vs. looking for a job”, and to challenge the dominant privatisation of unemployment risk. Its aims are to facilitate young social workers in critical understanding of their individual transition between education and work, to help them to self-organize and act in order to gain more power over their own life situation and professional future. It also strives to create alternatives in social work in respect to specific social context and complexity of transitional process in B&H, and development of social work profession in South-East Europe. Beside the contribution to practical solutions and direct benefits to its participants, results of this study could contribute to the international discussion and collaborative knowledge production about social work future in radically changed environment.

# **Complex multiplicity: professional social work**

**Tijs Van Steenberghe  
Nadine De Stercke, Hildegard Gobeyn**

**University College Ghent**

The relation between social work practices and society has always been dynamic. Societal changes and evolutions in society relate to evolutions in social work practices and make the job of professionals complex and insecure, and raise possibilities to reconceptualise notions of professionalization. What are starting points for social work interventions, how can social work practitioners and researchers strive towards a more just and human society, and how can they recognise the plural meanings of their work? This poster presentation is based on a finished research project that looked upon different conceptions of professionalization in order to support the bachelor social work in Ghent (Belgium) to cope with these different conceptions. Based on a qualitative research design with a literature study, interviews and round tables we came to the conclusion that in order to overcome the dual conception of normative and technical professionalization, other concepts were necessary. Professional social work is shaped by a multiplicity of dynamics. We visualised our research results based on the idea of a Rhizome, a way for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. We've created a 'shared ground' framework to show the multiplicity and complexity of social work in order to stimulate discussion about actual themes in social work in relation to the important question on how to educate social work students. We reveal three non-hierarchical interconnected levels to understand the multiplicity of social work: first: the social work practice, second: the scientific, professional and institutionalised context and third: the wider (historical) social, political, economic and ecologic context. This framework formulates a view on social work connecting different conceptions of (professional) social work and different ways of learning, what opens up the discussion on what is good social work and what is essential for the education of social workers.

# **POTENTIAL ACCIDENT AT THE CROSSROAD: CURRENT CHALLENGES OF TURKISH SOCIAL WORK POLICY AND RESEARCH**

**Gonca Polat**

**Lund University**

Social work profession in Turkey has a history beginning from 1960s with the initiative efforts of United Nations. The system didn't have radical changes for a long period, although the need is perceived by the professionals and policy makers. Finally, after 2000s, the system has gone through a transformation which is characterized by deinstitutionalization, localization of services and changing service patterns. The dark side of this transformation can be regarded as the risk of deprofessionalization and decreasing Professional authority for social workers. If not taken seriously, this dark side will cause an accident at the crossroad, which will be dangerous for the well-being of our clients. While experiencing such a transformation, I would like to discuss the role of Turkish social work Academia and the Professional body, Turkish Association of Social Workers (TASW). Some discussion points in this manner will be; (1) What are the characteristics of the new system that pose risks for both professionals and the clients? (2) how current educational and research trends become a potential threat, instead of contributing to a more effective service provision and policy making? (3) How the Professional body become ineffective in contributing to a more rights-based services for clients. With these discussion points, the current challenges will be summarized and discussed in terms of deprofessionalization, insufficient knowledge production for evidence-based policy making, decreasing professional authority and ineffective professional response to current policy changes. After identifying the challenges, I would like to discuss my recommendations for research, policy and practice areas. These recommendations will be some key issues to prevent the potential "accident in the crossroad" which will be unavoidable unless social work researchers and practitioners participate effectively to this process.

**KEYWORDS:** Turkish social work system, deprofessionalization, research, professional body

# **Promoting rehabilitation and restorative opportunities for young offenders, through socio-educational strategies, legislation and policies, in a European perspective.**

**Elisabetta Colla & Elena Zizioli**

**Tor Vergata University**

The presentation of this idea comes from a Doctoral research (not yet completed), which includes theoretical and empirical aspects on the subject of educational and social interventions and strategies concerning young people who commit crimes or who are in situations of 'risk', in a comparative perspective. Many countries (not only in Europe) adopted specific laws, interventions and international agreement aimed to protect and promote children and adolescents rights - especially if they are 'in troubles' - and to ensure equal opportunities to provide answers to their needs, at social and educational level, in the contexts where they live. During the adolescence - a period of transition to adulthood - at times, certain acts and behaviors occur characterized by a willingness to take risks, and that can involve the entry into deviant circuits. Therefore, the legal protection of minors implies specific, educational responses from the society and justice, capable of activating growth and accountability processes in youngsters to overcome the deviant behavior from a social perspective restorative and (re)socializing. It is possible to do this, e.g., implementing rehabilitative potential, through activities and techniques of formal and informal education (school, talk and self-narration), or with the job, or with 'mediation' between victim and offenders (VOM). The mediation - a strategy of conflicts management, widely used in many countries as a privileged instrument of crime prevention in the so-called Restorative Justice (RJ) - can encourage the encounter between offender and victim, involving the whole Community in a common attempt at rebuild relationships and balances, in an age marked by a struggle between public and private crises and conflicts. The main question of the present research is: what in this field works or doesn't work? And why? Are the current politics and laws and the socio-educational approaches 'strong' and 'adequate' enough? The research try to explore these topics, in a European comparative perspective, through a collection of practitioners 'opinions' about the current interventions models, carried out through a questionnaire (a scale of attitudes, with also some open questions) subjected to educators, psychologists and social workers and through interviews with privileged witnesses who are working with young offenders. We are still working around the research 'results'.

Key words: Young offenders, restorative justice, rehabilitation, children protection and rights, social and educational policies

# **Social Workers and Policy Practice in the Portuguese Context**

**Francisco Branco  
Inês Amaro, Inês Vieira**

**Catholic University - Portugal**

This presentation is based on an exploratory research about social work policy practices in Portugal, considering the influence of different factors in policy practice, namely at personal level (perceptions regarding political dimension of social work profession, policy practice training, personal resources, personal predisposition to politics) and organisational level (labour fields, job attributions, workplace conditions, organisational culture towards involvement in policy practice). This is a qualitative research in progress based on in-depth interviews with a significative sample of social workers in the most significant fields of activity of social work in Portugal, including the primary health care and hospital health care, public and non-governmental organisations of welfare and social assistance, local government and justice, considering both professionals with management responsibilities and social workers involved in the direct provision of services to the population. The presentation will be structured considering the theoretical framework, the methodological design of research and a preliminary data analysis and findings. The presentation addresses to one of the major themes of the conference – social work and policy action and aims not only to contribute to social work theory and practice as to strengthening their dissemination, in this case clearly relevant considering the enhanced relationship with the international research in the field (cf. Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013). The research that supports this presentation is integrated in a more broader research project on social work policy practice in Portugal and is affiliated with an international network ongoing research in this field.

Keywords: social work, social policy, policy practice, Portugal.

# **Precarity: causes, effects and consequences of insecure working and living conditions in South Tyrol**

**Christine Tschoell**

**Free University of Bozen - Bolzano**

The research project analyses the current issue of precarity, its causes, mechanisms, effects, consequences and interprets risks in a theoretically way in order to demonstrate the existing situation in South Tyrol and identify possible innovative solutions with implications for the future. The introduction begins with the definition of work and its meaning in the course of time. Then the concept of work will be related to for all securitized fundamental rights, their socialization context and the global change of values and the social change in our welfare state to finally shed light on the situation of the "excluded" from the employment system. Based on statistics the change of work in the social context will be illustrated with numbers and graphs. The various theoretical aspects of precarity are treated, beginning with the clarification of the most important terminologies, then specifying the causes and perpetuation of insecure working and living conditions in order to conclude with the analysis of effects of precarity and the social change process, we are involved. The research project discusses also the labour market situation in South Tyrol. Starting with the assessment of the South Tyrolean labour market as a social policy field in the European context, the development of law in the Italian labour market which directly influences on South Tyrol, is deepened subsequently and indicates the corresponding change of trend in the province of Bolzano. Case studies of two women and two men were chosen, having completed a university education, they are between 30 and 49 years old and have or have had until recently a temporary employment in South Tyrol. The final part shows ways on how the theoretical framework, the information obtained in the case studies can contribute to the future innovative labour and social policy.

# **Language of social policy as matter for social work action**

**Laimute Zalimiene**

**Vilnius University, Department of Social work**

Language of social policy could be analysed through power relations between those, who have the mandate to develop this language (i.e., legislators, local government officials, social service organizers, social workers) and those, for whom language has an impact on their lives – social policy subjects, social services recipients. The presentation aims to draw attention, provide some insights about how inappropriate and insensitive use of terminology in social policy (legislation) generates power-based, paternalistic relationships, culture of control, which attaches itself to service organization and have an impact on direct social work with client. Language, used in social policy documents and social service organizations could be analysed as a tool of power by which more powerful actors (policy-makers, service organizers and providers) impose their views and values on the less powerful individuals (disabled, aged people, children in foster care, long-term unemployed, drug addicts, etc.). For instance terminology labelling social welfare recipients family at social risk, socially weak families, poor families etc. or could be found in social policy legislation and this terminology is further resettled and into practical level by social service administrators . Thus, it is important to analyse the language that national social policy employs in describing its main subjects, principles etc. and how this language is reflected on the local practical level of social services and direct social work. Researches that explores the language and terminology of social policy is important for improving social work practice. Besides, this kind of knowledge could be the cause for a more active social workers' participation in political action, in order to improve social policy rhetoric. It is worth to take into consideration that on the level of social policy do not always work people able to understand the importance of language, as symbolic capital (Bourdieu 2001).

# **Goals and strategies for service development in welfare service agencies.**

**Anne Halvorsen**

**University of Agder**

Goal: to study to which degree participating in (inter alia) collaborative research is prioritised in welfare service agencies in terms of goal setting and strategic planning. Questions that will be asked are for example a) provided that formal plans exist, what are the goals and strategies with respect to innovation, service development and collaborative research; b) how are the concept of service development perceived and defined, and how does it relate to professional development; c) which actors are involved; d) what kinds of activities are prioritised; e) to what degree do they collaborate with others (e.g. other agencies, researchers, across professions/sectors?). Method: Data collection will encompass questionnaires to leaders and development managers, document analysis, and focus group interviews with a sub sample (in order to get their elaborations of the results from the survey). Background: Many of us have learnt that it is both possible and fruitful to engage practitioners more or less directly and actively in research, and also that such collaboration has had positive effects on both parties. But we also know that practitioners find it hard to prioritise participation in research and development work (R&D). They often refer to heavy workloads as reason for this, but also blame their leaders/organisations for not making room (time, space, support) for such activities. In this project the focus is on the "practice end" of collaborative research, and on how social work organisations/agencies see their role in knowledge creation and innovation. The study builds on results and experiences from case studies in three Norwegian welfare service organisations during 2010-11, on what kinds of development work they engage in and how they perceive the concept of professional development. It is part of a larger project: Innovation and Service Development through evolving Forms of Collaboration (INNOS).

# Seeing 'unintelligible' experiences as the clue to more inclusive knowledge making

Sui Ting Kong

The University of York

This presentation discusses how the focus on 'unintelligible' events, experiences, performances and speeches could facilitate the co-learning process in a co-operative grounded inquiry conducted with formerly abused women in Hong Kong. It is an endeavour to remediate the absence of voices of formerly abused women in domestic violence service design, development and delivery as reflected by shortage of follow-up services in Hong Kong. Instead of seeing the achievement of consensus as the ultimate success of co-construction of knowledge, findings of this research alternatively illuminate on the contingent and possible exclusive nature of consensus to outlying lived experiences and practices expressed/observed/developed along the inquiry. The inquiring group ventured to the construction of victim-survivor identities, and co-constructed the 'either victim or chung sengjia\*' framework in the early stage of the inquiry as a strategy to refocus on personal strengths and depart from victimhood. However, it later failed to capture members' fluctuations in emotional expression, health conditions, level of confidence and exercising of strengths that played out in the inquiry process. These outlying experiences, speeches and performances became 'unintelligible' within the 'either victim or survivor' framework; while, lingering to which was also found to be risking exclusion of some participants' lived experiences from the knowledge making process. Only when the 'unintelligible' was nailed down for further articulation and sense making, and the contingent and possible exclusive nature of the previously 'agreed' identity framework was made explicit and contested, an alternative identity construct, i.e. 'chung sengjia-becoming', was developed to accommodate to the emerging needs of participants. Therefore, social workers should carry out identity work with sensitivity to its contingent nature, so to avoid exclusion of outlying experiences and practices played out in the process of service delivery. Attention to experiences, expressions, speeches and performances which appear to be immediately 'unintelligible' is crucial because they highlight the boundary of the linguistic concepts/framework in use. Further articulation and sense making of the 'unintelligible' with formerly abused women are key to construct more inclusive understanding that enable more inclusive practice of 'care and service rendering' \*This translation is chosen to highlight that formerly abused women are 'reborn' to live a life with strengths, dignity and beauty. This choice is made between 'Chung Seng Jia' and 'Heng Chuen Jia'(?); where the latter means people left alive after disaster. 'Heng Chuen Jia' is not chosen because it was said to render their effort in making a new life a consequence of luck.

# **Challenges from an aging population. Legality, Professionalism, and Practical Ethics in Care for Older People in Latvia, Lithuania and Norway**

**Monica Kjorstad**

**Oslo and Akershus University College. Faculty of Social Sciences**

**Aims and objectives** This is a comparative study of how values and norms may influence the delivery of care for older people in the public service sector of three countries in the Baltic Sea Region. The research focuses on the criteria for making decisions that prevail when professional social workers at the street level in bureaucracy are expected to make good and thorough assessments regarding the care for older people. **Methodology and design** The study has a multidimensional design that is supposed to include the dynamic relations between structural, discursive and practical level. Both qualitative and quantitative data is collected. The interviews are based on two vignettes that describe authentic cases that could have been "real" cases relevant to the care for older people in all three countries. **Results:** The results show that there are several policy differences between our countries with respect to the assessments procedures and care for older people. However, with regard to professionalism and practical ethics, this study shows that there are several interrelated and overarching norms at the heart of professional/practical ethics in the care for older people in the three countries. **Implications** Using vignettes as a research method combined with other qualitative methods, makes it possible to go "under the surface" discussing different social work practices and ethical dilemmas that social workers are confronted with in their everyday work. A question raised, but not yet answered, is how this knowledge could be used towards the political and administrative authorities at local and national levels, and how it could promote human rights perspectives for the aging population across the national borders.

# **Standardized Elements in the constitution of cases within social service organizations**

**Roland Becker-Lenz**

**University of Applied Science Northwest Switzerland, School of Social Work**

Our presentation is related to a qualitative research project on the relevance of non-standardizable knowledge and non-methodizable skills for social work diagnosis in the area of children and youth welfare. As a second part of the project we examine the working relationship between social work professionals and clients, trying to identify different types. We consider diagnostics and working relationships as very essential parts of the case constitution. With "case constitution" we refer to how the case is constructed by actors, organizations, professional rules, laws and political decisions. In our presentation we focus on the standardized elements in the constitution of cases within a selected social service organization. Our data material consists of case-files, process-definitions, expert interviews and organizational concepts. With a hermeneutic research method, objective hermeneutics, we analyze in which way, from and to which degree cases are constituted by laws, rules, routines and standardized procedures within a social service organization in Switzerland. This step is important for our project, because the relevance of the non-standardizable knowledge and skills can only be analyzed and estimated in relation to and in the framework of these standardized elements. We will also try to explain the function and the existence of these elements in a more general way, besides the effects in the concrete cases. We hypothesize that there is a difference between the standardization of processes and the standardization of methods and procedures and that we will find different relevance of non-standardized knowledge and non-methodized skills according to this kinds of standardizations. Finally we will draw conclusions about the potential relevance and the function of non-standardizable elements in diagnostics and working relationships. We'll discuss these findings in the light of the current discourse on the theory of professions.

# **Cyprus Juvenile Delinquency: Lessons learned from the programme's evaluation**

**Stefanos Spaneas**

**University of Nicosia**

Over the last two decades a rapid increase of minor and young adult delinquency in Europe has raised concerns among experts, the society and the State. The interest lies on the one hand in preventing violation of established rules for probation, and on the other hand in setting up effective mechanisms to deter both offenders and others from committing offending acts. Cyprus established a policy framework of dealing with young offenders; the probation order. It is an alternative method to imprisonment, by placing the offender under the supervision of a probation officer of the Social Welfare Office. An evaluation study was carried out in 2012 to assess the level of operational success and focused on the Cypriot probation system including the case of community sentencing as an effort of developing a rehabilitative behaviour. It took into consideration the views of all actors (offenders and their families, professionals and agencies) and critically assessed the quality of service provision, administration, the level of collaboration among the public service and the other involved organisations and local authorities. Finally it also assessed the offenders' rehabilitative behaviour regarding the frequency of repeated or similar illegal acts, as well as the Programme's influence to prevent other more severe anti-social and/or criminal behaviours. The study adopted a view that juvenile delinquency is a complex phenomenon with many facets: it is an individual or group interactive phenomenon, as well as social. The empirical part used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gather reliable and valid data. Qualitative research (semi-structured interviews) to collect data regarding the views of professionals and representatives of organizations involved in the implementations and monitoring of the probation Programmes well as a sample of offenders and their families – 39 Thirty nine interviewees responded. Questionnaires were constructed to collect the views of juvenile and adult offenders, to assess their own point of view, the degree of reformation, the criminality reduction level, as well as the level of success for the prevention of more serious offences – 667 persons responded to this stage; a systematic random sampling approach was followed. Interviews' analysis showed that the system of restorative justice is being organized around the prevention of repeating offending behavior with particular concentration on young people and their families. They also stressed the importance of professionals and agencies collaboration with the offender. They mentioned specific social and organisational challenges which hinder its further development such as the lack of flexibility and places for fulfilling the community sentencing. Responders from the second phase expressed their relevant satisfaction for both the system and for the professionals they implement it. However, it was noticed a difference in understanding the value of programme. The results indicated ( $p < .001$ ) that the degree of offenders' understanding with convictions without community sentence (Average = 3.32, standard deviation = 1.21) was lower than the proportion of offenders with community sentence

(Average = 3.79, standard deviation = 1.20). Related issues noticed were the level of education and unemployment. A trend to match delinquency with lower level of education and unemployment was revealed. This complicated situation creates and maintains challenges for social work practice. It is argued that the development of theoretical and experiential learning is of value as a means of meeting this challenge. It is anticipated the notion that social work practice needs to be characterised by the generation of local knowledge in relation to the contemporary social and economical problems.

# **The Development of A Contemporary Latvian Teenager's Social Identity as**

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Andra Mite**

**Baltic International Academy**

Social identity relates to how one identifies himself in relation to others and different roles that he/she plays in society can help a person realize his/her overall identity. For the years of adolescence teenagers undergo the process of the determination of their social identity by trying to use different styles of behaviour and changing hairstyles, groups of people to belong, the preferences of music and dress sometimes by changing spiritual values.

.The urgency of the present research is stipulated by the discrepant tendencies of development of the modern society and the complicated social situation in Latvia. The crisis of personality is strengthened by the background of the social and economical crisis. A teenager, who is forced to reappraise his/her values and beliefs, comes into collision with the problem of the crisis of own identity and should look for the Self in the situation of instability of new reality in Latvia.

In order to solve this urgent problem one should analyze the conditions of forming own social as well as personal identity at the teenager's age that is the most optimal period of forming and the development of his /her identity and personal self realization.

It is very important for a teenager to realize that he/she belongs to a certain social group. People derive his/h identity or sense of the Self largely from the social categories to which they belong (Hogg& Abrams, 1988).

In The Identity Theory, the essence of identity is determined as the categorization of the Self as a player of a role and the integration of the Self of the meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance ( Burke & Tully, 1977; Thoits, 1986).

These expectations and meanings form a set of standards that guide behaviour ( Burke, 1991; Burke & Reitzes, 1981). The Self - categorization is equally relevant to the formation of one's identity in which categorization depends upon a named and classified world(Strucker, 1980).

Scientists believe that individuals view themselves in terms of meanings imparted by a structured society( McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980; Turner, 1987).

The Aim of the research is analysing of development of the teenager's social identity in Latvia.

The Methods of the research are:

- the theoretical analysis of the psychological literature on the approaches to the problem of personal and social identity (James, W.), The Theory of Identity and The Conception of Psychosocial Identity (Erikson, E., Cooley, Ch.), the Theories of Structure and Development of Personality (Vigotsky, L.), The Conception of Self-Actualized Personality (Havighurst, R., Maslow, A.), The Empirical Approach and the Statuses Model of Identity (Marcia J.);The Theory of Identity(Burke, & Tully, 1977; Freud, 1886; Thoits, 1986; Strucker, 1980, Burke & Reizes,1981, Turner, 1987);

- the empirical analysis of the obtained data related to the given problem.

The Results of the research are the following: data obtained and analyzed in the result of the theoretical analysis of the scientific psychological and sociological literature on the problem of the research with the help of principles of development and systematization and the scientific analysis of obtained empirical data allow us to determine the major ways of optimization of the process of recognition and development of the teenager's personal identity, his/her adaptation to the Latvian community decreasing the existing difficulties of forming his/her identity.

Keywords: identity, teenager, realization, crisis, Self, personality, community, adaptation, recognition, society.